

Why Not 'BARF'?

People new to the idea of feeding their carnivorous pets a raw diet may be unaware of the differences between the original [Raw Meaty Bones Diet](#) and the so-called BARF Diet.

First some history: Finally, after years of deception, there was a glimmer of hope for pets and their owners. In the late 1980s a small group of Sydney vets stumbled upon an obvious truth: Carnivores (dogs, cats and ferrets) need a diet close to that of their wild cousins — whole carcasses or raw meaty bones. Subsequently known as the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby, we emphasised that a natural diet provides optimum nutrients *and* the tough chewy texture necessary for the dental, mental and physical good health of carnivores.

Besides treating the pets immediately under our care, we lobbied *for* pets and their owners and lobbied *against* the pet-food industry/veterinary machine. We identified cheap, available sources of raw meaty bones and recommended the feeding of a few table scraps because they are free and provide nutritional value akin to the gut contents of prey animals. Importantly, we conducted [research](#) and [campaigned in print](#), on [radio](#) and [TV](#) against the veterinary establishment and the junk pet-food industry. In Australia, in the early 1990s, we began to make progress.

Although holding the erroneous belief that dogs are omnivores, Dr Ian Billinghurst noticed the success of the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby and applied to join the group. For a time Dr Billinghurst was a signatory to our campaigning efforts and gave the impression he supported the Raw Meaty Bones cause. In fact he incorporated much Raw Meaty Bones information in his first book published in 1993. Abruptly in 1997, at the height of our battle with the pet-food companies, Dr Billinghurst sent a letter of resignation from the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby:

Worldwide my credibility is rising ... I am here to educate whoever will listen. Pet owners, vets and even pet food companies — if they are interested. It is not necessary; in fact it is counterproductive for me to participate in the politics of this debate.

If I am to be of use I need to be seen as outside the political arena. Someone who has the respect of the profession, whilst retaining strong views and unequivocal beliefs — supported of course by good evidence. My aim is to make a positive difference in this debate, and continue to make a living.

Unfortunately for many pets and their owners in the USA and UK, Dr Billinghurst used his 'credibility' to falsely persuade them that dogs are omnivores! He 'continued to make a living' telling pet owners that dogs, besides needing raw meaty bones, should be fed copious amounts of vegetables, fruit, milk products, high priced bottled supplements and grain. Dr Billinghurst's followers developed a near religious devotion and began referring to themselves as Born Again Raw Feeders. When contracted that becomes 'BARF', a colloquial term for vomit and now widely used as a name for minced diet concoctions.

But as with so many diet fads the vulnerable followers had been duped. Dr Billinghurst is on the record as saying:

Fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a dog's diet. An essential part, not an optional part. Meat is optional, fruit and vegetables are not. (Canine Nutrition—A Point of View 1988)

In his BARF books Dr Billinghurst mentions some of the benefits of whole raw meaty bones but, once persuaded, he then encourages his audience to accept the switch to *finely ground* bones in his BARF pap:

I strongly urge you to consider feeding your pet(s) a form of BARF diet where all bones are finely ground (together with the meat) before feeding. Although this means

some of the benefits of the BARF diet are lost, including teeth cleaning and psychological and physical benefits, the nutritional benefits remain. There are electric grinders you can purchase to do the job, or you can adopt the more primitive approach of a cleaver or a hammer to smash the bones. An even simpler approach is to purchase one of the “Dr Billingham’s Meat and Bone Minces”— in those areas where they are available. Feeding the raw meaty bones in ground form is of course the way we feed the BARF diet when feeding the BARF patties of various kinds. (*The Barf Diet* 2001)

Nowadays, the world over, numerous raw pet-food merchants dismiss the vital importance of whole raw meaty bones as they cash in on the BARF craze. Vulnerable pet owners are lured into buying concoctions of ground meat and vegetables four times the price of the equivalent whole raw meaty bones. Dr Billingham even claims that his BARF pap somehow ‘Eliminates Bad Breath’ and makes for ‘Healthier Teeth’!

Why would you pay exorbitant prices for products which don’t supply your dog/cat/ferret with what they need, when the natural, whole, healthful raw meaty bones are available for a fraction of the price? It’s time to repudiate the BARF scam and reassert the original Raw Meaty Bones values for the betterment of pets, people and the wider environment.

For more information on the Raw Meaty Bones Diet & Campaign please see articles, videos and testimonials at www.rawmeatybones.com

For commentary on the BARF Diet please see newsletters at:

[RMB Newsletter Vol 7:2 Raw Meaty Bones Diet & Campaign](#)

[RMB Newsletter Vol 6:5 Three Part Test](#)

[RMB Newsletter Vol 6:4 Spin doctors](#)

[RMB Newsletter Vol 6:2 Barfmania: The junk raw pet-food scam](#)

[RMB Newsletter Vol 2:3 The good, the bad and the misguided November 2002](#)

This article may be copied and distributed for personal use.

Wishing you and yours the best of good health,
Tom Lonsdale, October 2007

