

# **We elders should take responsibility on food**

Dear editor,

"I've never seen a pet suffer from eating a good-quality, commercially prepared food, admittedly with something to chew on for the sake of dental health," stated Martin Atkinson in his letter "What sins are we paying for, Mr Lonsdale?" (January 28 issue). As a young vet, I said much the same thing. As far as I was concerned, I practised quality veterinary medicine and knew that commercial food was best for pets.

But on both counts, I was utterly and comprehensively wrong. Old, decrepit animals breathed new life when switched to a raw meaty bones diet. "Like a puppy/kitten again," said rapturous owners. At first, I had difficulty accepting my previous errors. When the truth finally sunk in, I resolved to make amends. That was 20 years ago.

If you thought penicillin was a wonder drug, then try raw meaty bones for effect. Otherwise intractable bowel, skin, immune system, dental and other chronic diseases melt away as if by magic. Owners are dumbfounded and ask: "Why were we not told before?"

"It's taboo, it seems. There's an almost complete blackout of information – and ignorance is bliss," I reply. But ignorance is no defence and we can no longer ignore the pet food monster in the living room. For the sake of the veterinary profession, and our dependent patients, we must learn from our mistakes and atone for our sins. I qualified in 1972; Mr Atkinson qualified in 1975. As elders of the profession we must take responsibility, not burden future generations.

Yours faithfully,

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