

(quote)Dear Editor,

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENTS OF RCVS AND BVA

In 1991 the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby of concerned veterinarians blew the whistle on the gathering pet-food crisis.(1) The global veterinary authorities refused to hear the allegations. Ten years later in 2001 Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health the fully referenced, evidence based exposition was published but widely suppressed.(2) In 2004 the House of Commons Early Day Motion, PROCESSED PET FOODS AND VETS, gained 55 signatures.(3) In October 2007, in the absence of leadership from the veterinary authorities, the Association of Veterinary Students of Great Britain and Ireland took the initiative and debated the motion that: "This House Believes Vets Should Advocate Feeding Manufactured Pet Food."(4) (Perhaps young doctors will advocate the feeding of manufactured diets too!)

Incongruous as it may be, after 65 million years' evolution during the Age of Mammals, some vets were prepared to stand up and argue for the motion. Without offering a shred of evidence Mr Mike Jessop suggested that "the high quality of modern pet food was extending the lifespan of pets". Mr Chris Laurence sought to rattle his complete and balanced manufactured sabre by invoking the Animal Welfare Act in support of manufactured diets. He emphasised that under the Act dogs, cats and rabbits have three essential needs:

- 1.) To be provided with a suitable diet.
- 2.) To be protected from pain, injury, suffering and disease.
- 3.) To express normal behaviour patterns.

Of course the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby provides extensive evidence to demonstrate those needs can only be satisfactorily met by feeding a natural diet.(2) Mr Laurence rather helpfully suggested in respect to the need to express normal behaviour:

"Now normal behaviour patterns for dogs and cats includes chewing. And I don't think any commercial manufacturer would suggest that all you should ever feed is their commercial food -- that you shouldn't give them something to chew and to exercise their gums and teeth on because that's the need to express natural behaviour."

Are we about to see Mr Laurence fall on his sabre? Perhaps he will be an early casualty when the prosecutions begin against those who disregard the Animal Welfare Act and force defenceless pets to consume junk food and force defenceless veterinary students to swallow hogwash.

Professor Sheila Crispin, an invited guest, abstained during voting. She stressed that she was speaking in a private capacity on behalf of her dogs and "That her dogs are fed a mixture of commercial and home prepared food and that she would like to see more research that compared both commercially prepared and natural diets."

Manufactured pet-food has not been trialled for suitability and safety (unless covertly in pet-food company marketing and research establishments) by comparison with the 65 million year established natural standard. Until advocates of manufactured pet food can present independent data confirming suitability and safety then all those engaged in the promotion and sale of artificial products do so without a shred of evidence.

Unfortunately, as Mr Roger Meacock pointed out during the Cambridge debate, when the truth about manufactured pet foods is finally known it will be the veterinary profession, not the manufacturers, who become the "fall guys".

But is it fair that the sons should pay for the sins of the fathers? In the veterinary context I think not and accordingly ask the President of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and President of the British Veterinary Association to open up debate and hasten a solution to the pet-food crisis.

Yours faithfully
TOM LONSDALE

Notes:

1.) Lonsdale, T (2007) Junk Pet Food And The Damage Done. Nexus Vol 14 No. 6 31-35 October-November Web: www.rawmeatybones.com

2.) Lonsdale, T (2001) Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health. Rivetco P/L, Windsor, NSW, Australia

3.) Taylor, D (2004) House of Commons Early Day Motion 335. Web: <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=26858>

4.) Association of Veterinary Students of Great Britain and Ireland. Should Vets Advocate Feeding Manufactured Pet Food? Report of debate held at Robinson College, University of Cambridge, 24 October 2007 Web: <http://www.srcf.ucam.org/~ac411/> (end quote)