

## FDA's Dire Warnings Create a Laughingstock

They did their utmost to disseminate their propaganda and try to scare you. Yet, you'd be stunned by the degree to which it's having the opposite effect. The numbers are simply staggering. So are these survey results. So which camp are you in?

Reviewed by Dr. Becker

### STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- According to sales trends, U.S. pet owners aren't buying the anti-raw pet food propaganda being disseminated by veterinary associations, the FDA, big kibble manufacturers, and many companies that influence the pet food industry
- From mid-2014 to mid-2015, sales of raw frozen pet food increased by 32%, and raw freeze-dried by twice that amount
- A pet food preference survey showed that over half of respondents would prefer to feed their dog or cat fresh food
- Increasingly, pet guardians are making the connection between biologically inappropriate processed pet food and many of the disorders dogs and cats suffer from these days

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Not long ago a pet food industry journal ran an article that says, "More Americans consider raw pet diets amid safety issues: Sales of raw pet food have increased sharply".<sup>1</sup>

It's amusing because it seems the best efforts of the U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA), the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), many board-certified veterinary nutritionists, and a variety of other pet food industry organizations and individual special interest groups to scare people away from raw pet diets aren't having the intended effect.

### Pet Owner Interest in Fresh Food and Natural Diets Continues to Rise

According to market research company GfK, from mid-2014 to mid-2015, sales of raw freeze-dried pet food rose 64%, and raw frozen pet food sales increased by 32%.<sup>2</sup>

Around the same time, a raw pet food company surveyed 1,826 U.S. cat and dog owners about their pet food preferences, and learned that over a third are interested in a fresh raw food diet for their animal companion.<sup>3</sup> Additional survey results were also interesting:

- 13% of respondents were already feeding a raw diet to their pets
- Pet health is the number 1 factor (94%) in selecting a pet food

- Freshness and quality (89%) are the second motivating factors for purchase; cost is the third consideration (65%)
- 89% of pet guardians feed processed pet foods and starchy fillers
- 23% of those who feed processed pet food report that their dog or cat suffers from skin conditions, arthritis, kidney problems, or food allergies; all of those pet owners report their veterinarians have suggested dietary changes to treat those conditions
- 55% would prefer to feed their dog or cat fresh food that can be served raw or cooked

As more and more pet guardians become aware of the link between processed pet food and many of the disorders and diseases occurring in today's dogs and cats, sales of healthier pet diets is expected to continue to increase.

Pet food industry insiders call rising consumer interest in fresh and raw diets part of the "humanization" of pet food.<sup>4</sup> However, they're missing the point. After all, most humans don't eat raw meat diets.

The explanation is simply that a growing number of pet parents are realizing the benefit of species-appropriate food for their pets, recognizing that dogs and cats are not human and do best when fed unprocessed, meat-based diets with nutrient profiles that closely match the diets of wild dogs and cats (and go far beyond AAFCO nutrient standards).

It shouldn't be a surprise that our pets thrive on a well-constructed, fresh ancestral diet.

## **Processed Pet Food Is Biologically Inappropriate for Dogs and Cats**

Commercially available processed dog and cat food has only been around a little over a hundred years. However, animals have hunted prey or, in the case of dogs, scavenged, for millions of years.

And although research suggests domesticated carnivores were able to adapt to some degree to starch in the diet as humans became planters and farmers of grains, this does not mean dogs and cats have evolved into vegetarians.

Over the last hundred years, major pet food companies have produced most of their products using a base of corn (which is now genetically modified), wheat, rice, or potato (with a glycemic index that is off the charts).

These ingredients are blended with rendered, poor quality proteins and a synthetic vitamin/mineral mix. They are extruded, then processed again at very high temperatures. However, our carnivorous pets have not evolved to be able to process these substantially altered, foreign foods

The good news is dogs and cats are adaptable and resilient. But unfortunately, this means they are able to withstand significant nutritional abuse; they can be fed a nutrient deficient, biologically incorrect diet without immediately dying.

Immunologic and physiologic degeneration occurs as the result of an inappropriate diet, but sudden death does not, which is why we've convinced ourselves convenient, entirely processed pet foods are acceptable, or "good" for dogs and cats.

As Dr. Richard Patton states, "nutrition only becomes a problem when there's a crisis."

## **Processed Diets Have Created Generations of Sick Pets**

For a hundred years, our pets have been fed inappropriate diets that have kept them alive, but far from thriving like their wild relatives. Instead, we've created dozens of generations of nutritionally weakened animals that suffer from degenerative diseases linked to longstanding nutritional deficiencies.

The truth is our pet population provides a place for recycling waste from the human food industry.

Grains that fail inspection, human food past its expiration date, uninspected pieces and parts of waste from the seafood industry, leftover restaurant grease, deceased livestock, and even roadkill is collected and disposed of through rendering - a process that converts human food industry waste into raw materials for the pet food industry.

Pet food manufacturers purchase these raw materials and blend the rendered fat and meat with starch fillers.

They add bulk vitamin and mineral supplements (most from China), and then they extrude the mix at high temperatures (the process that makes kibble, or dry food), creating all sorts of toxic reactions including advanced glycation end products and cancer causing heterocyclic amines.

They call these crunchy little pellets and canned goo "pet food," and sell it to customers at a handsome profit.

The entire system is flawed, but pet food industry giants are realizing that pet owners are becoming more educated about their flawed system, and they are trying to clean up their image. We are beginning to see words like "natural" and "no byproducts" on labels. But exactly what is "natural"? No GMOs? No factory farmed, nutrient deficient meats? No high-arsenic rice? No synthetic preservatives or vitamins?

The problem is there isn't a set "natural" standard, everyone's perception is different and almost all manufacturers are jumping on the bandwagon and using the term.

We see more "grain-free" on labels as well, and more peas, lentils, chickpeas and other glycemic and unnecessary starches in the bag as clients become aware that corn, wheat and rice have no place in pet food. But the substitutes have significant nutritional implications as well.

Manufacturers are hearing the rumblings of educated pet owners and are updating their marketing to try to regain lost customers by changing their ingredients to regain market share. But the issues remain the same: using poor quality ingredients, relying on synthetic nutrients (instead of nutrient dense foods), and utilizing extensive processing techniques to extend shelf life means most pet food is dead food.

Feeding a lifetime of processed foods makes it impossible for your pet's body to be as vibrantly healthy as it should be.

## **Optimal Nutrition for Dogs and Cats**

Dogs and cats need quality protein, fats, and a small amount of vegetables and fruits (roughage). Vegetables and fruits provide antioxidants and fiber to animals that no longer hunt whole prey.

Natural sources of trace minerals, vitamins, and fatty acids must be added, since the soils in which foods are grown are depleted of many of the nutrients pets need. Also, food storage, whether it's in a freezer or a pantry, decreases critical

essential fatty acid levels in foods.

Pets need unadulterated, fresh, whole foods that are moisture dense. They don't need grains, fillers, artificial preservatives, colors, additives, chemicals, byproducts, or processed foods. Although animals can eat some processed foods, they aren't designed to consume a lifetime of dry or canned diets.

Nutritional goals for pets include a diet that is as species-appropriate as possible (low in carbohydrates, high moisture content, and unprocessed), and a variety of fresh, whole foods that are nutritionally complete and optimal for the species.

## **What if I Can't Afford a 100% Fresh Food Diet to My Pet?**

There are excellent ways you can move towards feeding more fresh foods without breaking the bank.

Many pet parents have creatively made fresh food a reality for their pets, even on a tight budget, the cheapest option being home prepared meals (commercial fresh food diets are expensive).

Shopping sales, utilizing local food co-ops and buying in bulk can often bring the cost of an excellent quality homemade diet to less than the cost of many super premium dry foods on the market today. Make sure to follow a balanced recipe if you do home-prep; homemade nutrient deficient diets aren't the goal. Yes, homemade diets take time and effort, but the payoff is substantially healthier pets with fewer vet bills.

Many folks can only afford one meal of fresh food a day, or several meals a week. It's best to feed as many fresh food meals as you can afford. You will see dramatic improvements in your pet's health by eliminating 25% to 50% of the processed food from her diet.

If you can't afford to make fresh meals for your pet, consider eliminating processed treats and make fresh food treats the way you add some living foods to your pet's diet.

Every bite of food your pet swallows is ultimately a step towards healing or harming; all foods impact the body in some way. The more fresh, living, whole foods your pet consumes is a step towards health, and the best choice you can make for the animals in your care.

### **Sources and References**

<sup>1, 4</sup> [PetfoodIndustry.com August 10, 2015](#)

<sup>2</sup> [GfK](#)

<sup>3</sup> [PetfoodIndustry.com June 29, 2015](#)

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