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This is part of an ongoing series on veterinary medicine and related topics. Please remember that anything written by an individual reflects only what that person believes he has seen. Two eye witnesses to the same event will have differing versions of what has happened. What I will talk about will be my impressions of what I had seen over the last 25 or so years. Others may have come to different conclusions. **This Is How We Learn.**

## **FINDING A WHOLESOME FOOD**

A high quality, well-balanced diet is an absolute requirement if one is to remain healthy and to live a long disease free life. This is as true for our pets as it is for us. To keep your pet as healthy as possible you must become what I call a “label detective”. On the label of all pet foods there is a “**list of ingredients**” which must show all of the ingredients contained in the food. These ingredients are listed according to how much of each is contained in the food. The first item in the list has the greatest quantity and the last in the list has the least.

What I talk about comes from personal experience since I have worked on a cattle ranch as a cowboy, a beef feed lot, a slaughter house, one of the last Monterey fish canneries when I was stationed at the Presidio of Monterey language school while a GI in the army and worked for a year as an artificial inseminator of dairy cows. I have a degree in animal science from the University of California at Davis and while waiting for acceptance into the School of veterinary medicine completed most of the animal science courses offered at UCD. I studied electrical engineering at Cal Poly before transferring to UCD. At UCD I worked my way through vet school as a chemist analyzing and monitoring the purity of the water used by all of the UCD field stations. By the time I graduated from the UCD Vet School I had finished 14 years of college.

## **AVOID**

- 1- **BY-PRODUCTS** are animal parts that are unfit for human consumption. Normally these parts are washed from the slaughterhouse floor into a holding tank owned by the rendering plant. By-products are what you throw away when you clean fish you have caught. **There is no meat in by-products.**
- 2- **MEAL** of any kind made from animals. This is the residue remaining in the tank after rendering. It can consist of the cooked (“rendered”) animal parts (Dr. Belfield’s 4D’s) and bodies sent to the rendering plant by slaughterhouses animal shelters and other similar institutions. The rendering process is similar to the treatment of solids in a sewage treatment plant. In sewage plants the solid refuse is pumped into large tanks called digesters. Here it is heated to break it down (digest) further. The residue remaining on the bottom of digester tanks is called sludge. It is made into fertilizer. I suspect that if it were analyzed it would show similar “food values” to the meal coming from rendering plants.

Any item called meal on the list of ingredients could be anything of animal origin unfit for human consumption. The rejected parts trimmed from the animal carcasses land on the floor of the slaughter house and are periodically swept or shoveled into a large floor drain which empties into a railroad tank car or truck trailer owned by a rendering plant. This huge

tank in kept parked under the floor drain of the slaughterhouse until filled. When this tank is finally full it is hauled to the rendering plant. Here it is heated (rendered) to cause the fats to rise to the top of the tank. This fat is then skimmed off and sold. The sludge left in the tank used to be made into fertilizer. Someone has analyzed this and it resembles food. Recently it has been used as the source of animal protein in some pet foods. **Read the label very carefully.**

The meal that comes from rendering plants may contain the cooked (rendered) body parts of animals that died in transit to slaughterhouses, or died for any reason while on the slaughterhouse premises before they reached the killing floor. If your horse dies and you are not up to digging a big enough hole in your back yard behind the swimming pool the person you pay to remove the body sells it to a rendering plant. This meal may also contain bodies sold by animal control facilities to the rendering plants. Ask your local SPCA, Humane Society or animal control facility what happens to theirs. **Would you eat this stuff? If not, then don't feed it to your best friend.**

When a pet food manufacturer buys “meal” to put into their food it is impossible to easily know whether the animal protein is of beef, fish, lamb, pork, dog, cat or unidentifiable road kill origin or a mixture of all of the above. **Only DNA testing could tell for sure exactly what was the origin of the animal protein in the pet food.**

By-products and rendering plant meal are what I call “**Junk Proteins**”. They are used in pet food because they are cheap, have an analysis that gives the illusion of food and create higher profits than does the fertilizer that they should have been used for. These junk proteins have been analyzed only for their crude content of protein, carbohydrate and fat. On the basis of these tests this stuff bears a resemblance to food. The difference between this junk protein and food is the absence of wholesomeness and nutritive value. Tricky advertising and slick packaging are then used to mask their true origin and to con the buyer into believing that “all they need add is love.”

- 3- **CHEMICAL PRESERVATIVES, ARTIFICIAL COLORS and FLAVORS.** These **articles** have been borrowed from the embalmer's art and have no place in food. They are used to give human or pet food a false illusion of freshness when held for a long time before being used. They prevent the food from showing the normal signs of aging and spoilage that would indicate that the food is unfit and possibly dangerous to eat. These additives create an artificial picture of wholesomeness.

#### **WHAT THESE TERMS MEAN**

- 1- **FISH BY-PRODUCTS** must consist of non-rendered (not cooked), clean, uncompensated portions of fish (such as, **but are not limited to**, heads, fins, tails, ends, skin, bone and viscera), which result from the fish-processing industry.
- 2- **MEAT BY-PRODUCTS** are the non-rendered, (not cooked) clean parts, **other than meat**, derived from slaughtered animals. They include, **but are not limited to**, lungs, spleen, kidneys, brain, livers, blood, bone, partially defatted low-temperature fatty tissue, and stomachs and intestines freed of their contents.
- 3- **POULTRY BY-PRODUCTS** must consist of non-rendered (not cooked) clean parts of carcasses of slaughtered poultry such as heads, feet, viscera, free from fecal content and

foreign matter except in trace amounts as might occur unavoidably in good factory practice.

- 4- **MEAL** is the rendered (**cooked at a rendering plant**) product from mammal tissues, including bone, and (**if from a slaughter house**) is exclusive of blood, hair, hoof, horn, hide trimmings, manure, stomach and rumen contents, except in such amounts as may occur unavoidably in good processing practices.

Some pet food manufacturers are able to hide what is really in their food by being creative with the list of ingredients, An example is a diet labeled as Lamb and Rice. What picture comes to mind when you see the term “lamb and rice?” The ad agencies want you to picture a roast of lamb in a plate of rice. These diets will often be used for pets with skin allergies in an attempt to avoid other ingredients in their diet.

Carefully study these ingredient lists and ask a lot of questions. Patronize a pet food store whose owner and employees are willing to listen to your questions and to take the time to go over list of ingredients with you and who will stock the brands you want. Support these people by sending your friends to them.

There are many forms of high quality food available now. They may be dry, canned, frozen, or fresh. They can complete by themselves or may be basic ingredients to which you must add fresh ingredients to balance them. Buy in small quantities to guarantee freshness. How long can you keep a loaf of fresh bread that has no preservatives? You shouldn't expect your pet's food to remain fresh any longer. If the loaf of bread grows mold and the dry pet food still looks good maybe someone lied about the preservatives in their food.

Most table scraps if fresh or only slightly cooked may be added to the pet food, we have been lied to about the value of our food for our pets. Avoid pork products, cooked bones or foods fried or cooked with fat that has been over heated. Try to avoid heating your pet food in the microwave. Recent evidence shows that the high temps created by microwaves change the healthy fats to a very dangerous form. Watch your pet carefully and make any necessary changes in the diet or the amount fed if there is a loss or gain of weight. “Crash” diets are as harmful for your pet as they can be for you.

A US Senate document from the 1930's stated that our soil in the US is deficient in essential trace minerals. All of the food grown for our pets and us since then is without these essential trace minerals. These trace mineral deficiencies in our diets may be partly responsibility for the increase in chronic degenerative diseases. It is essential that we all take a daily supplement of trace minerals with our food.

#### **PET FOOD LABELS FROM FEB 1990 SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE**

“Pet owners trying to control what they feed their animals face a formidable obstacle: the label on the bag or can. Although standardized by government regulation and industry agreement, the labels contain terms hazy enough to baffle most postgraduate scientists. What, for example, is a digest of poultry by-products or wheat middlings or meat and bone meal?

The labels also fail to indicate that a percentage of the ingredients used in pet food called meat and bone meal consists of dogs and cats that have been rendered after they die. Nor is it easy to discover that animal stomachs, poultry feathers, chicken feet or fish heads are common ingredients.

Expensive advertisements lend the impression that only the choicest grades of steaks and chips are ground up and served to finicky cats and dogs. In reality, the meat content in pet food consists mostly of by-products rejected for human consumption of health or aesthetic reasons.

Government health officials, scientists and pet-food industry executives insist that such criticism is unproven. "Might hurt business (WM)."

## **THE BAD GUYS**

### **"DON'T LET THESE TURKEYS GET YOU DOWN."**

They have "book" knowledge but lack the wisdom that can only be gained from experience."

**James Morris**, a professor in the School of Veterinary Medicine at The University of California at Davis states: "To say that products are unwholesome because we Americans don't like to eat them is not correct. There's nothing wrong with eating some of these things, which we won't but some Arabs eat." "(Good public relations WM)"

**Charles Weil, VP of Friskies Division of Carnation Co.**, believes it makes little sense to put high priced human-grade meat products into pet food.

**Professor Russell Devalues, an employee of the UC Berkeley Psychology Department** states: "I think research is a magnificent use of animals." When this was being written he was facing charges for using excessive cruelty with his laboratory animals. Phone or write the dean of UCB. "(I'd love to have him on the street corner next to my clinic with his sign. "Will work for food." WM)"

**Quentin Rogers, another professor at UCD** who tries to discredit those of us who have practical experience working with the dogs and cats states: "There is no tried information about additives. You need to do a double-blind study to confirm anything." Considered by some as an "expert" in animal nutrition, Rogers was one of the committee members appointed by the National Research Council to develop minimum nutritional requirements for pets. Dog and cat food s that meet the 1985 guidelines established by this committee of the NRC can state on the label that the product provides a complete and balanced diet.

*A growing group of veterinarians and specialty pet food manufacturers challenge such opinions. They base their conclusions upon years of "hands on" clinical experience gained from working with pets.*

## **SOME FO THE GOOD GUYS**

Dr. Wendel Belfield of San Jose is the world's leading expert on Vitamin C in veterinary medicine. He spent 17 years as a meat inspector for the army before starting his private practice. Part of his responsibility was to reject for army use so-called 4D tissue-meat that came from animals that were DEAD, DYING, DISEASED, or DISABLED when they reached the slaughter

house. He says: "This rejected material would go in a tank and was taken to a rendering plant and made into meat and bone meal. Meat and bone meal is one of the main ingredients of many of the dry dog foods. This will in time have a deleterious effect on the animals that are being fed this so-called food."

Richard Pit aim, DVM practices classical homeopathic veterinary medicine in Eugene, Oregon. He and his wife Susan have authored a popular book on pets. Dr. Pitcaim says, "The bottom line is a lot of the animals get better just on a good diet alone."

Walt McCall, DVM, who has a holistic veterinary practice in Central California says: "In our election year of 1992 when the people voted Bush and his style of family values out of office, it had become apparent to many Americans that most of our scoundrels were in prison, had been pardoned by ex-presidents and were going to run for public office (congress, governor) or were holding high paying jobs in our government, Seems to me that there are plenty left over that have found havens in other areas of public or semi-public service.

Too many of our so-called experts have never had to earn their living working in the field in which they are considered to be expert. Instead they were the whiz kids who memorized well and could parrot back what they read in texts or had been told by their professors. Too often they never left the university shelter and remained to teach others. Without the advantage of wisdom gained from practical experience our educational system could remain stagnant and continue producing graduate slacking the ability to think for themselves and improved upon established ideas by questioning tradition and authority."

In June 1994 a friend in Southern California (Dr. John Limehouse) told me that Jim Flint in Riverside was starting a company to make wholesome dog and cat food. He would not use chemical preservatives, by-products or other Junk Protein from rendering plants that are the only source of animal protein in most pet foods. The next day Jim Flint called me and explained what he was trying to do. He said that he was buying 3-day-old fish poultry, and lamb from butcher shops and their suppliers to use in his pet food. These were ground up and mixed with the grain flour in his ration and then baked. This simple process got him into trouble with the FDA when he applied for approval of his labels. Since he was using human quality meats and grinding them in before baking the FDA (in their wisdom) insisted he called the ground fish, lamb and poultry a meal. He pointed out to them that meal by their definition is the cooked material coming from rendering plants and not from suppliers of meat. Intended for human consumption. He lost the argument and his labels must contain the erroneous labeling for a while. In the meantime he is appealing to a higher intelligence (if one is to be food in that branch of our government and the labels must be explained to all potential user so his food. This food is available at the clinic.

We, or our friends, will periodically visit the Flint River Franch facilities to assure ourselves that the quality in force at the start of the company is being maintained. In the meantime our patients are doing well on the new food.

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