


FOOD PETS DIE FOR

The Multi-Billion Dollar Lie About Your Pets' Food



We see pictures of whole grains, prime cuts of meat and human grade vegetables on the bag, and we assume there's some chef in a pet food kitchen cooking up the best for our loved ones. Unfortunately, this is far from the truth. Most of what makes up dog and cat food comes from the rendering plant.

Many pet foods —and almost all kibbled foods — are imported into South Africa. This article, although written for American readers, therefore applies to South Africans as well.

To render, as defined in Webster's Dictionary, is "to process as for industrial use: to render livestock carcasses and to extract oil from fat, blubber, etc. , by melting."

When chickens, lambs, cattle and other animals are slaughtered for food, usually only the lean muscle is cut off for human consumption. This leaves about 50 percent of a carcass left over. These leftovers are what become what we so commonly find on pet food labels, such as 'meat-and-bone-meal' or 'by-products'. So basically, what pets eat are lungs, ligaments, bones, blood and intestines. Some other things that go into rendering to make cat and dog food are:

- » Euthanized companion animals — cats and dogs
- » Spoiled meat from the supermarket
- » Road kill that can't be buried on the roadside
- » The 4 D's of cattle: dead, dying, diseased and disabled
- » Rancid restaurant oil

When dead animals from cow pastures are picked up, they may not be rendered until up to a week after they are dead. Because of this, it is estimated that E. coli bacteria contaminate more than 50 percent of meat meals.

The rendering process destroys the bacteria, but it does not eliminate the endotoxins bacteria release when they die.

These endotoxins, which can cause sickness and disease, are not tested for by pet food manufacturers. When all this comes to the rendering plant, it's put in a huge vat and shredded. Then it's cooked at 100 to 130°C for 20 to 60 minutes. After it cools, the grease is skimmed off the top.

This is 'animal fat'. The rest is pressed and dried. This is 'meat and bone meal'. Dogs wouldn't eat this stuff in the wild, so why will they eat it out of their bowls? Their noses are tricked by the smell of it. The smell of animal fats for dogs and fish oil for cats is sprayed on the dry, bland kibble bits to make them appetizing. These flavors usually come from rendered restaurant grease, animal fat, or other oils unfit for human consumption. Huge conglomerates use pet food companies as a cheap, and even profitable, way of disposing of the waste from their human food companies. Three of the five major pet food companies are owned by these huge corporations.

WHO OWNS WHAT? CORPORATION & PET FOODS:

NESTLE: Alpo, Fancy Feast, Friskies, Mighty Dog, Purina One
HEINZ: 9 Lives, Amore, Gravy Train, Kibbles-n-Bits, Nature's Recipe
COLGATE-PALMOLIVE: Hill's Science Diet
PROCTOR & GAMBLE: Eukanuba and Iams
MARS: Kal Kan, Mealttime, Pedigree, Sheba, Waltham's
RAINBOW CHICKEN: Epol

WHY DON'T VETS WARN PEOPLE?

The question should be, what makes veterinarians think they can recommend food. In her book *Food Pets Die For*, Ann Martin says "Our family physician doesn't display weight loss products in the reception room, so why is this going on in veterinary clinics that do not specialize in nutrition?"

She says she considers it unethical for vets to sell pet food unless they are trained in pet nutrition. The reason your vet thinks so highly of the pet food they sell probably has more to do with money than nutrition. In vet school, the only classes offered on nutrition usually last a few weeks, and are taught by representatives from the pet food companies.

Vet students may also receive free food for their own dogs and cats at home. They could get an Iams notebook, a Purina purse and some free pizza. The companies also hire students to be representatives for the company and to promote their products to other students. This issue was even placed on the agenda for an Executive Committee meeting at the vet school at Colorado State University.

According to the minutes, a discussion was held on how to handle dealing with pet food companies and their donations of pet food to the university. It was agreed to put together a task force to discuss this issue, investigate the possibilities, and make suggestions to the Executive Council on how to work with the numerous pet food companies that want to donate to CSU. There was no further mention of this topic in meetings since.

In May 2000, Purina made the announcement that in an effort to help university, veterinary hospitals provide optimal nutrition recommendations for dogs and cats, Ralston Purina is funding three new veterinary diet technician positions. They donated \$100,000 to support these positions for the first year. How would you feel about a company that paid your salary?

CHEMICALS IN PET FOOD

Because the ingredients in pet food aren't exactly as pure as consumers are made to believe, not only is the food unhealthy, it may also be poisonous. When the "food" comes out of the rendering plant, there's no way it would be bought by a consumer or eaten by a dog. To make it more pleasing to the eyes of owners and the mouths of animals, the producers of pet food add a myriad of chemicals. To keep the food fresh, the first thing added is a preservative. The bags of food must stay fresh through shipping and on the shelf. There are several synthetic preservatives out there:

- » Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA)
- » Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT)
- » Propylene glycol (also used as antifreeze)
- » Ethoxyquin

There is little known about the effect these chemicals may have on an animal. Some experts and veterinarians claim ethoxyquin is the best and safest preservative on the market, others claim it is a potential carcinogen, causing skin problems and infertility in dogs. Some other things that may be added to your dog or cat food are:

- » Colouring agents
- » Drying agents
- » Flavouring agents
- » Lubricants
- » Nutritive Sweeteners
- » Texturizers

IS THERE CAT AND DOG IN PET FOOD?

Reporter John Eckhouse was one of the first people to discover the practice of sending euthanized pets to the rendering plants. He quoted an employee of Sacramento Rendering as saying, "Thousands and thousands of pounds of dogs and cats are picked up and brought here every day."

When a vet tells a grieving owner that they'll "take care" of their dead loved one, they usually mean sending it off with the disposal company for rendering. This is all perfectly legal.

Many veterinarians and especially shelters don't have the money to bury or cremate animals. Although many in the pet food industry deny that they use euthanized animals, proof that the practice goes on continues to surface.

The nutrition 'crazies' have been right all along

Nobody — I mean NOBODY — has told you the truth about what is in those bags of kibble you feed your dogs and cats. It's the biggest little billion dollar secret in our world of pets — because if anybody did tell you the truth about what is going into your

beloved dog or cat's stomach when you pour stuff out of those bags — well, you would freak out, plain and simple. You'd run screaming from the room, grossed out and blind with rage. That's certainly what I did, back when I was first researching the nutrition section of *The Dog Bible* and discovered the horrible hidden truth.

The nutrition “crazies” have been right all along

For years I had been feeding all my dogs Iams kibble, told as everyone else was (including many different excellent vets I used) that dry bagged food was the only thing a dog should eat for optimal health. I used a prescription Science Diet for a dog with bladder stones (not suspecting how terrible those ingredients were for him until a month later when he looked awful).

I thought I was doing the right thing: those dog food bags said they had “government stamps of approval,” that they were tested to be great for “all stages of a dog's life,” that they were all a dog needed for a healthy, balanced diet. The vet believed it too.

We all just trusted what were essentially advertising claims. But everybody I knew was feeding their dogs this same way, from breeders to those who pampered their dogs because they all believed the “common wisdom” of feeding dry food. (Everyone, that is, except a

few revolutionaries, people I had labeled as possible “kooks” because they were feeding raw diets to their dogs and claiming incredible improvements in health and physical beauty. I thought they were exaggerating the danger of dry dog food in a bag.

But then I found out that even most of these brave souls were not even fully aware of the range of horrors that were hidden in most kibbled dog foods — they had usually gone out on a nutritional limb because their dogs had gotten so sick on commercial foods that they had to make a radical change).

4-D animals in the bags: dead, diseased, dying & downer”

But little by little, the truth dawned on me. I researched what the ingredients list means on the side of the dog food bags referring to the protein portion of the food. And then I discovered what is allowed into those vats where they make the kibble.

I read about the flesh from “4-D animals” that is allowed in rendering plants, where a vast variety of “protein sources” are boiled down into a sludge that becomes kibble. A major source of meat by-products and meal

from “4-D animals,” which means “dead, dying, diseased, and ‘downer’ animals” (the latter being cattle wobbling on their last legs).

The bags didn't say “4-D” but in other words, anything not fit for human consumption, no matter what the cause of its death or illness, no matter how long it had been dead, went into the pot. Also, hooves, beaks, feathers, hides, stomach contents and more were all allowed to be called “crude protein,” regardless of whether a dog's system could actually utilize any of that as a source of nutrition.

And regardless of whether the sick flesh of other animals could sicken our animal companions — whether eating tumors could be a road to long-term health in a dog?

I don't think the bag says “roadkill”

I had never taken time to wonder how the good meat I had imagined was in kibble got converted to little pellets — the high heat at which it would have to be reduced to liquid form, or the radiation or other processes used to “sanitize” rotting meat or cancerous tissue. I read all that and thought, “Naw, they can't really be putting dead animals in a stockyard in rigor mortis who died in transport or from illness, pumped full of medication, into our dog's kibble?!”

That couldn't be legal!” I thought. But that was because I didn't know that the US government doesn't really focus on the pet food in-



MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR LIE

dustry: they don't have time or manpower for it (and then there's not much motivation, either, with that powerful multi-billion dollar pet food lobby in Washington). I also thought it couldn't be moral, either, to mix roadkill into pet food — but I didn't stop to think that “morality” is not a word generally associated with any big company that is owned by an even bigger conglomerate — which are the corporations now making the supermarket type brands of kibble.

Is your dog eating your old cat — or vice-versa???

So that would explain how euthanized animals from shelters are also in dog food. An unthinkable thought, isn't it? For awhile I rejected it as a hysterical claim of cannibalism — who could believe that dogs would be fed dogs? That your beloved kitty would be eating someone else's abandoned cat, rendered down into a vat of gruel? But my disbelief came from lazy thinking on my part.

Did I ever stop to wonder “What happens to the tens of thousand of pounds of animals they kill in shelters every week across the country? Or even the hundreds of kilograms of dead companion animals that leave by the back door of a private vet clinic every month?” You probably never stopped to ask, either.

And you can be pretty sure your vet didn't stop to question this, either. A transportation company picks up the corpses — except for the ones paying extra for cremation — and vets pay the carting fee and pass it along to you, nobody asking, “Where are you going with all those dead bodies?”

If it's not true then where are the mass graves or doggy crematoriums?

But we know that dead animals cannot be put in garbage dumps or landfills, it would create a rotting mass of health hazard. We know the corpses are not all trucked to some sort of central crematoriums where the bodies are ceremoniously turned into ashes — it would take too long, cost too much, and create terrible air pollution. Instead, those bodies are “recycled.”