

RMB Newsletter Vol 1:3

A pet food vet speaks on the radio 18 December 2001

Dear Reader,

Christmas is coming and it's a time for relaxing with the family - in front of the TV maybe. Will the pet food ad-men give us a break? Or will we, and our children, be treated to the usual stream of carefully crafted messages delivered with high tech precision?

But what do the pet food people say when they are not scripted, when someone asks them a few straight questions? Recently Uncle Ben's, the Australian pet food division of Mars Inc., were asked for public comment. In this edition of the RMB Newsletter we bring you two (lightly edited) transcripts from ABC radio. Long-time Mars vet Duncan Hall was the company spokesperson in both interviews - in the first via a 'hands-free-speaker-phone'.

We welcome your comments on Dr Hall's contribution to the raw vs processed debate.

Until next time,

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

Tom Lonsdale and the Raw Meaty Bones crew

A pet food vet speaks on the radio

Derek Guille ABC Radio 3LO 774 Melbourne, Australia interviews Dr Duncan Hall, External Affairs Manager, Uncle Ben's of Australia 20 August 2001.

Interviewer – Duncan Hall, good afternoon, welcome.

DH – Good afternoon Derek and thank you very much.

Interviewer – You've had a chance to listen to some of the things that Tom Lonsdale is saying. First of all I guess we would all agree that, yes, in the best of possible worlds a raw meat, raw meaty bones diet with a few supplementary table scraps or whatever you'd like to call them, would be a great diet for a dog.

DH – Thanks Derek, there's a few things there. Firstly, we would certainly endorse feeding of the occasional large uncooked bone to dogs as part of an overall dietary plan -- providing that the bones are not cooked -- providing that they are not chop bones and providing that the dog doesn't have an underlying veterinary problem -- say an enlarged prostate or some sort of colonic problem that could lead to constipation.

So if people want to feed the occasional bone on top of a good quality diet, we have no problem with that. I think it's important though to recognise that raw meaty bones are a long way from nutritionally complete, they don't provide the whole range of nutrients required and that what we do, with good quality manufacturers, is make sure that in consuming a meal made of high quality prepared pet food the whole gambit of nutrients, being protein, you know carbohydrate -- rather the whole series are consumed in the right level. So for good bone development of puppies you need very close mix of calcium and phosphorus -- minerals in the diet so they get strong bones and healthy teeth to start them off right.

Interviewer – Duncan, sorry the technical problem from our operator, are you on a hands free speaker phone?

DH – Ah yes.

Interviewer – Yeah cause it's difficult for us to hear you unfortunately, it's not coming through very clearly, would you be able to pick the phone up?

DH – Ah I can't do it....I can dial in again.

Interviewer – Oh we'll keep going and see what we can get from the position you're in then.

DH – OK

Interviewer – So you're suggesting that a variety, or a diet of raw meat and meaty bones is not going to provide the nutritional requirements even though it might be much closer to what a natural diet in the wild would be.

DH – Oh I think that in the wild -- if you do look at animals in the wild -- they do consume the whole carcass and what we're effectively doing is we're providing the whole range of nutrients in a convenient and nutritious format.

Interviewer – So there's the equivalent of eating offal of eating the stomach contents of prey, those sorts of things.

DH – Absolutely because that's the balance of vitamins and minerals that are provided in a quality prepared food. The, the issue really is.....also is what we've done is, we've done all the hard work of balancing up the nutrients, we've made sure that the digestibility of the food is good so that the animal can easily digest it and extract those

nutrients and we've provided it in a convenient format in different versatile formats like dry or canned -- format so people can mix and match whatever suits both them and what their pet prefers.

Interviewer – Well I mean that's a really interesting question. Is it really about convenience for pet owners rather in the best interest of the dog or do you believe you've found a balance for both.

DH – Oh it's all so paramount, to us is the nutritional integrity and one thing that prepared pet foods offer is validated nutrition in as much as the testing has been done and we know what the levels of those nutrients are on a daily basis. Now, people can certainly feed dogs on a variety of different formats and if you put the work in, yes people can feed good quality prepared, sorry, home prepared meals for their dogs. The way our lifestyle has developed though is that, you know, many people are not prepared to put the work in to finding out what the nutrient profiles of all of those raw materials are, therefore what we offer are high quality prepared pet foods that are ready to go that we know will provide a good balance of nutrition for that pet.

Interviewer – Good, Duncan, well thank you very much for being with us this afternoon.