

Old Chinese Proverb

Ever on the look out for essential truths I incorporated the saying into subsequent lectures because it seems to me we are stepping out in a new direction and need the support and encouragement of clear-sighted folks like Kim and the ancient Chinese.

In June, Swanie Simon organised the second anniversary get together of the Gesundeunde (healthy dogs) Internet discussion group. And what a delightful week it was. I'm smiling as I write this thinking of the happy folks and contented canines who gathered in a marquee in a sports ground somewhere in the middle of Germany an hour from Frankfurt. There are some pictures at www.rawmeatybones.com.

At first I was apprehensive about speaking, given my lack of German, but I was mistaken. Swanie, Christiane and Sylvia were superb. They translated the questions for me and made my answers intelligible to the audience - and the enforced wait between questions gave me time to think about the subject under discussion. I almost wish all audiences could be German.

The dogs of all shapes and sizes were catered to - a raw meaty bones truck pulled up with supplies. Lots of good food, good weather and good cheer marked this major initiative by Swanie and her helpers. I'm filled with admiration.

Tony and Carol O'Herlihy of Bark Busters UK organised the most ambitious series of lectures through August at various venues in the UK. It's true they enlisted the help and resources of an enthusiastic force of Bark Busters licencees, but even so I cannot help but be in awe at the thought, commitment and effort that went into ensuring the success of the tour.

Everyone in Bark Busters UK www.barkbusters.co.uk, on a daily basis, sees and understands the need for carnivores to be fed as closely as possible to the way Nature planned it. They feed their own animals a predominantly raw meaty bones diet, help their dog training clients find information and supplies and generally advance the cause of dog health and behaviour across the UK. I am grateful to have been hosted by such a health conscious enterprise.

Next stop after the UK was Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Alison Tyler is a renowned 'raw feeder', Internet discussion list owner and moderator, organiser of the South Eastern Natural Rearing group and raw meaty bones cooperative. Besides holding down a busy professional career and feeding 22 carnivores she still managed to organise a four city tour of the USA.

The 4 August, 'Welcome to the USA and Raw Meaty Bones book launch' was held in the grand Atlanta residence of Glo Ghegan - Southern style and hospitality at its finest. More a social event than a work gathering, the

occasion marked the announcement of the proposed Class Action proceedings against the artificial pet food industry www.rawmeatybones.com

Alison and her helpers put on four wonderful all-day discussions. My thanks go to Sue Cosby in New Jersey, Chris Ostrowski in California and all those who helped make my stay so enjoyable.

The bad

Whilst the few toiled valiantly communicating the raw meaty bones message, Nature's message, the majority were otherwise engaged. In Australia three veterinarians came to the Raw Meaty Bones talks, in Germany one, in the USA three and in the UK eight veterinarians attended.

We cannot know for sure why veterinarians prefer the tried, tested and failed methods they were taught in veterinary school. We cannot know why, for them, ignorance is bliss and why they prefer not to see, hear or speak evil against the poisonous artificial pet foods. But we do know that the majority of the world's pets are fed artificial foods and we also know that veterinarians are kept busy attempting to treat the diseases directly or indirectly arising from the consumption by pets of the manufacturers' offerings.

The dark satanic pet food mills churn out thousands of tons of disgusting pap which is then packaged in glossy packaging promising good health, longevity and vitality -- a message reinforced by glossy advertising ratified by indolent regulators. But behind the façade not all is well with the artificial pet food industry. After much goading and provoking they seem to be prepared to acknowledge they have a problem with periodontal disease. Their public utterances don't say as much, but we know that they know processed pap does nothing to clean the teeth of carnivores. And failure to clean the teeth sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, but always surely, brings about nasty periodontal disease. (Waltham statistics show 100% of dogs over 12 years suffer from the disease.)

You and I, if we knew we had sold products which were 'linked to vital organ disease - most notably kidney and liver' - and if we knew our products were the 'most common reason for anaesthesia' then we would most likely withdraw those products immediately and hope to avoid massive damages claims. If we knew, as we do, that chewing on raw meaty bones is essential to ward off periodontal disease that gives rise to the kidney and liver disease and need for anaesthesia then we would recommend raw bones.

But in the case of the Mars Corporation, aided by elements of the veterinary publishing industry and the veterinary profession generally, they recommend and sell not raw meaty bones, but biscuits shaped like a bone.

The timing was uncanny, midway through the UK Raw Meaty Bones tour on 15 July 2002 The Veterinary Times which boasts a net circulation of 13,172 copies and introduces itself as 'The weekly news journal for the profession' published a bright yellow four page wrap-around advertising piece.

'Pedigree Denta' they said 'is a range of oral care products developed in close conjunction with the vets at Waltham and designed to improve the overall health of dogs' teeth and gums. 80% of dogs over the age of three have some form of gum disease, so there is plenty of scope for advances in dental health.' They went on to say:

'The major health implications of gum disease has been one of the major motivating factors for the vets at the Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition in their development of new Pedigree Daily DentaStix. "If we can improve the overall oral hygiene of dogs, we hope to improve their long-term health prospects," a WCPN spokesperson said.'

Tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of pounds have been poured into this effort to dumb down the UK veterinary profession, who in turn dumb down their clients into believing that an artificial bone shaped biscuit is the answer to cut down or eliminate life threatening diseases of dogs. (Cats and ferrets don't get a mention.)

The misguided

Where the cooked processed pet food industry is, rightly, concerned about the periodontal implications for dogs fed on pap, the raw processed pet food industry seems rather unconcerned. What's going on, how did it come about and what's to be done?

The road to Hell, or so they say, is paved with good intentions. And that seems to summarise what's happened in the raw processed pet food scramble.

Just stopping feeding manufactured pet foods out of the can or the packet will likely bring about an improvement in the health of carnivores. (It's a bit like stopping banging your head against the wall -- you feel better when you stop). The trouble is those who stop feeding cooked artificial foods often then start feeding cooked or raw recipes processed in the kitchen instead of the factory. The situation becomes confused and further compounded when the cooked grains, vegetable pulp, minced meat and additives are given the credit for the perceived good health.

Juliette de Bairacli Levy, back in 1955, was one of the first to recommend feeding meat raw. Unfortunately in her 'Specimen diet for an average size adult dog' Levy starts by recommending: '100 per cent flaked whole-grain wheat, rye, or barley, softened with either raw milk or

vegetable juice.' Pitcairn subsequently published a series of minced meat, grain and vegetable based recipes in his Natural Health for Dogs and Cats. Billingham, in a 1986 article, quoted Levy and Pitcairn as sources of information.

In 1991 Drs Breck Muir, Alan Bennet and myself, subsequently known as the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby Group, discussed the lamentable state of pet nutrition. As the name suggests the RMB Lobby emphasised that carnivore diets should be based on raw meaty bones. By concentrating on the physical features of carnivore diets the RMB Lobby were able to show that concerns regarding quantity and quality of chemicals -- the fats, vitamins, minerals etc -- assume less significance.

Soon a major campaign within the Australian veterinary press, on the TV and radio brought the fundamental RMB philosophy to a wide audience of Australian vets and pet owners. The simplicity and convenience and health promoting aspects made the message suitable for a much wider audience. But unfortunately the RMB message stayed mostly in Australia.

Part of the message did find its way into various books which then found their way to various parts of the world. But almost without exception the RMB message was adulterated with notions of human vegetarian cooking - the addition of yoghurt, kelp, garlic, vegetables, apple cider vinegar, flax seed oil and a medicine cabinet full of additives.

Word began to circulate that dogs are allegedly not carnivores but omnivores or even vegetarians - and persuading reluctant dogs to eat vegetables became a fetish only reliably achieved by grinding to a paste meaty bones and vegetables in what became known as the BARF (vomit) diet. The fears of bones becoming stuck became magnified in the minds of many pet owners and the craze for grinding - processing -- the food of carnivores took firm hold. (Cats, we were told, should also eat their veges.)

Some well intentioned people, and a few opportunists, saw marketing opportunities and in the ensuing scramble set up a processed raw pet food industry, distinguished from the existing artificial pet food industry in that its products are frozen not cooked. But of course when those ground raw products thaw and are fed to carnivores, apart from any chemical inadequacies, the products do not clean the teeth and gums and thus contribute to the development of periodontal disease with resultant alarming consequences.

In fact the situation is probably much worse.

The diet of free living wild carnivores -- whole carcasses of other animals -- acts as both food and medicine. And it's the same for domestic dogs, cats and ferrets. Sick animals tend to return to health and good health prevails when pet carnivores are fed a natural diet. That's to say the diet exerts a therapeutic (treatment) effect and a disease

