

## **RMB Newsletter 6:4 August 2006**

Spin doctors

Dear Reader,

How's things with you? Good I trust.

These last few weeks on the RMB U-Turn Tour there has been action-a-plenty. Debbie Hill did a fine job hosting the Wisbech, Cambridge seminar on 6 August. A well known UK vet attended as did a couple of representatives from the local Nestlé/Purina factory. Jackie Marriott, UKRMB convenor, made the journey up from Brighton. Thank you Debbie for hard work and generous hospitality coping with three extra house guests. We much enjoyed the rural charm and meeting your dogs, pigs, goats, ducks and chickens.

Natural Health Seminar, Victoria, Australia:

On 10 September the Victorian Canine Association are convening a seminar in Skye, Victoria. [http://www.rawmeatybones.com/speaking\\_2006.html](http://www.rawmeatybones.com/speaking_2006.html)

Online Seminar:

Jeannie Thomason and Kim Bloomer have put together The First Online Dog Expo September 22-24 at <http://www.virtualdogexpo.com> The 'virtual' system holds immense potential. Congratulations to Jeannie and Kim on their initiative. In the Raw Meaty Bones segment introduction I say: 'For too long the junk pet-food industry/veterinary alliance has exploited pets, pet owners and the global community. A majority of the world's pets are sick and dying of diet-induced diseases. We need to identify the issues, increase our understanding and fight back. The Virtual Dog Exposition provides a fine opportunity to do all three.' Here's hoping to meet you there.

Excellent movie

As I write this I'm in Guangzhou, China, the last stop on the way home to Australia. Whilst sitting high above the clouds on the night flight from London to China, and unusual for me, I actually watched a movie. Thank You For Smoking follows tobacco spin doctor Nick Naylor as he spins and

twists the English language to better serve Big Tobacco because, as he says, he 'needs to pay the mortgage'.

In this newsletter we take a brief look at some junk pet-food spin doctors. For now the written word must suffice. Ideally though, we need the movie. Anyone know a Hollywood director or two?

Best wishes,

Tom Lonsdale

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JUNK PET-FOOD INDUSTRY SPIN DOCTORS:

Mars Corporation

Don't know what motivates the junk pet-food spin doctors – some of them must have mighty big mortgages. For instance the Mars heirs, Forrest, Jacqueline and John are reputed to be worth \$10 billion each

[http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/10/Worth\\_2.html](http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/10/Worth_2.html) . With money like that they could fund massive anti-cruelty, good-health initiatives – instead they are the biggest junk-pet food makers on the planet.

Take a look at their company website: <http://www.mars.com/>

Nancy McIntyre comments:

'From the spiel on "responsibility" you get a lovely double-think: "Communication and team-work turning common business goals into shared aspirations"

but

"Respect for the individual is at the heart of the Responsibility principle"

\*\* pause for a quiet vomit.

But the visual represents the underlying aim of disinformation perfectly:

It's circular, unpredictable, mazelike and it \*\*\*spins\*\*\* Ha!'

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Dr Ian Billingham

Recently UK magazine Dogs Today published a two-part evaluation of Billingham's 'barf' diet as compared with a diet based on raw meaty bones

(1) <http://www.rawmeatybones.com/presscoverings.html>

Author Hsin-Yi Cohen and publisher Beverley Cuddy are to be congratulated on their extensive coverage. Journalists have a strict code, at least early on in a debate, of leaving readers to draw their own conclusions. Mind you the caricature of spin doctor Billinghurst with his barf machine disgorging dollar and pound signs makes a telling statement enhanced by Billinghurst's comment: 'The bottom line is, for those owners who either can't or don't want to feed whole bones, the patties on their own provide a perfect solution. While dogs which do not get to gnaw on whole bones will miss out on the physical and psychological benefits this brings, they at least benefit from the enormous nutritional benefits.'

It's a far cry from the early 1990s when Dr Billinghurst applied to join the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby of concerned veterinarians. We were a small group of Sydney veterinarians who, as the name implied, stressed the pivotal role of raw meaty bones in carnivore biology. We were dedicated to:

- a.) Affirming that first and foremost domestic dogs, cats and ferrets are CARNIVORES and that providing people feed raw meaty bones then most other things fall neatly into place.
- b.) Raising awareness of the ravages of periodontal disease (mouth rot) in domestic pets – not only as a foul smelling and painful affliction of the mouth but also the origin of a range of diseases including diseases of the kidney, heart, liver, and immune system. A diet of predominantly raw meaty bones was (and is) the simple preventative for a vast array of problems.
- c.) Informing the veterinary profession of the perils of junk pet food – easily offset by a diet based on raw meaty bones.
- d.) Campaigning, both within and without the veterinary profession, against the corrupt junk pet-food industry/veterinary profession alliance.

At the time we welcomed Dr Billinghurst into the lobby group and shared with him our findings about the essential nature of raw meaty bones. Judging by his 1993 statement published in the Sydney University Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science newsletter he appeared to understand and accept our advice:

<quote>'Tom Londale has started the ball rolling. He has been a lone voice, crying in the wilderness. Now is the time for the profession to get behind this man and share his vision.'

Have a good look at what Tom is seeing.

At the moment he is seeing a [veterinary] profession that is blinkered, may be blinded and possibly hoodwinked into promoting products that are not worthy of our professional approval.

He is seeing that we are doing our clients a disservice every time we advise them to feed their pets commercial pet food.

He is seeing the importance of feeding an animal a diet which matches the one it evolved upon. In the case of cats and dogs, that means a diet based on raw, meaty bones.

He is looking into the future and seeing a veterinary profession with a clear vision and a clear conscience, advising their clients as only true professionals can, with honesty and understanding.

That understanding includes the very simple healthy and cost effective way to feed cats and dogs . . . without using commercial pet foods.(2)<end quote>

Nowadays Billinghamurst forgets the essential vision of the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby; turns fundamental scientific concepts, English usage and common sense on their collective head and insists that ‘both dogs and wolves are omnivores’.(1)

The Dogs Today article showcases Billinghamurst-style spin: ‘Apparently, carnivores in zoos fed a diet of ground-up raw food show no periodontal disease, implying that the chemical nature of raw foods plays a role in the prevention of gum disease, even if the physical cleaning benefits (from gnawing bones) are missing.’(1)

Susan Chrissy Director of Nutrition Services, Brookfield Zoo, Chicago when attempting to defend the use of ground-up raw food in zoos torpedoed the Billinghamurst spin when she admitted: ‘Well, the raw meat usually comes like the consistency of hamburger, and so therefore, we get plaque build up and we get dental problems unless there is some way that we can make sure that

that plaque isn't built up. Sometimes it's tranquilizing the animal and actually doing a teeth cleaning, which we don't like to do at all, but if it has more of a crunchy diet that would certainly help in that respect.'(3)

And on the Internet you can find a whole website run by veterinary dentists and dedicated to Sir Frank Colyer, Past President of the British Dental Association who in 1947 wrote 'cats and dogs which lead a freer life and obtain a diet more nearly approaching their natural food, are practically free from [periodontal] disease'. [www.colyerinstitute.org](http://www.colyerinstitute.org)

Although nominally a member of the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby Group, Billinghurst was more a passenger rather than a driver. In 1997, at the height of the battle with veterinary and pet food industry forces he resigned abruptly. In his letter of resignation he wrote:

<quote>Worldwide my credibility is rising. . . I am here to educate whoever will listen. Pet owners, vets and even pet food companies - if they are interested. It is not necessary; in fact it is counterproductive for me to participate in the politics of this debate.

If I am to be of use I need to be seen as outside the political arena. Someone who has the respect of the profession, whilst retaining strong views and unequivocal beliefs - supported of course by good evidence. My aim is to make a positive difference in this debate, and continue to make a living. <end quote>

Spin mesmerizes and confuses. Spin doctors assign new meanings to old words or -- a cunning trick -- fabricate new terms to suit hidden agendas. And so it was with BARF, a contraction of Born Again Raw Feeders, first coined by Debbie Tripp. Being synonymous with vomit, barf was a faintly amusing term that meant different things to different people. Various self-styled experts latched onto the term, bending it to suit their agendas. Sales of meat and vegetable grinding machines soared. Niche marketers raced to grab a share of the junk raw pet-food market.

In December 2001, four years after resigning from the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby, spin doctor Billinghurst published his Barf Diet recipe book and subsequently took out trademark protection on the word 'barf'. Nowadays Billinghurst produces a line of junk raw pet food -- presumably to 'make a living', even to 'pay the mortgage'.

#### References:

- 1.) Cohen, Hsin-Yi, (September 2006) Bones of Contention, Dogs Today, pp 38-44

2.) Billingham I, (1993) Commercial Dog Food vs Bones: Myth or Science., University of Sydney Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science Control and Therapy Vol 174 No 3443

3.) Public Interest with Kojo Nnamdi, National Public Radio, 8 August 2002, <http://www.rawmeatybones.com/radio.html>

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Preview on Privy Council [www.privy-council.org.uk](http://www.privy-council.org.uk)

The Privy Council is an important arm of the British Government that fulfills several regulatory roles. One of which is to send four representatives to the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Martyn Jones MP is one of the four Privy Council delegates to the RCVS Council. On their letterhead The Privy Council says: ‘Serving Crown, Parliament and People’. In light of which please see Jones’s recent contribution at: <http://ukrmb.co.uk/images/VetTimes070806.pdf>

Discussion is under way with the Privy Council to see what can be done about Mr Jones. If you have any additional information on Martyn Jones or wish to comment on his conduct then please send to [tom@rawmeatybones.com](mailto:tom@rawmeatybones.com)

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Harvard Law Student examines junk pet-food industry muddle.

The following web address dropped into my inbox recently:

<http://leda.law.harvard.edu/leda/data/784/Patrick06.html>

It’s long, but if you have time please take a look and if possible provide comment to [tom@rawmeatybones.com](mailto:tom@rawmeatybones.com)

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### Barfer Spin Award (BS Award)

Announcing the Barfer Spin Award. Here’s your chance to win a copy of *Work Wonders: Feed your dog raw meaty bones*. Over the coming months we shall be publishing examples of Barfer Spin

ranging from the mad to the barking mad. If you know the whereabouts of standout BS please do send it to us, verifying source and date. Ideally you should include your name and address for publication. However, if you prefer to remain anonymous we shall respect that wish.

Here's an example of barfer spin, somewhere on the scale between mad and barking mad.

<http://www.ukbarfclub.co.uk/nm/anmviewer.asp?a=68&z=2>

Please send entries to [bsaward@rawmeatybones.com](mailto:bsaward@rawmeatybones.com)