

RMB Newsletter Vol 8:2 Pet-food scourge June 2008

Dear Reader,

How's your year going? Hope things progress well.

Here in Sydney, Australia the days are sunny and good for working; with nights that are cold and good for sleeping. Already it's mid year and time for the second RMB Newsletter of 2008.

In this Newsletter I'd like to welcome new subscribers and thank subscribers who have provided support since publication of the first RMB Newsletter in 2001 <http://seureshop.rawmeatybones.com/newsletter/browse.epl>.

Did you check out George Bernard Shaw's 1906 preface to the Doctor's Dilemma mentioned in the last Newsletter? Please take a look at: <http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/32/6/910> The old genius was definitely onto something when he said that 'All professions are conspiracies against the laity.'

Loosely speaking, we're all members of professions or clubs of one sort or another. So in reality, Shaw was speaking about the human condition: That when we form into groups we tend to place our perceived group interests above those of the wider community.

Groucho Marks put group behaviour in context when he quipped: 'I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member.'

As both hunters and hunted, cunning and devious, humans have a long history of putting the interests of their group/club/profession ahead of the interests of the wider community. We're genetically programmed to overlook the shortcomings of ourselves and our peers as we push our luck promoting our group interests.

We can generalise that many, perhaps most, vets conspire against their clients and injure the health of their carnivore patients. Figuratively, if not literally, the vet profession gets away with murder. Why is this so and what's to be done about it?

To my way of thinking, it's to do with the honest vets being too timid to speak up and pet owners being too accepting of the mass poisoning of pets. Dogs, cats, ferrets and captive wild carnivores deserve better.

In this Newsletter we take another look at the dismal state of things with a view to sparking debate and a resolution of the pet-food scourge.

Best wishes,

Tom Lonsdale

2008 ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS ELECTIONS.

Each year since 1997 I've contested elections to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Council. <http://www.rawmeatybones.com/elections.php>
It's been the best, effectively the only way, to communicate with the over 21,000 vets registered to practise in the UK.

The RCVS sends candidates' manifestos out to voters. And with a measly quota of 300 words only brief information about the benefits of natural food/medicine gets placed before the voters. It's a mere drop in the ocean when you consider the TV ads, magazine ads, vet school propaganda, vet conference humbug and endless 'learned' papers that swamp the global community with disinformation.

As in past years Roger Meacock and longstanding Raw Meaty Bones ally, Alan Bennet, nominated me for the election.

Here's the 2008 manifesto:

(quote)

'Another year slips by as the veterinary profession slips deeper into the junk pet-food mire. Thousands more pets are forced to consume junk food by a profession that either does know or should know better. Hundreds more school leavers enter veterinary schools to begin their programming in diagnosis and treatment, but not prevention, of the pandemic of junk pet-food induced diseases.

In 1995, Past President of the RCVS, Henry Carter wrote:

"For 45 years I have observed Pedigree Petfoods (and its predecessor, Chappie Ltd) seeking to influence veterinary students and practitioners.

For over 25 years I have observed Pedigree Petfoods and other pet food manufacturers exerting what some may consider to be undue influence on the BSAVA. ...

As a former editor of the Journal of Small Animal Practice, I believe that your letter [Revitalising veterinary science <http://www.rawmeatybones.com/Revital.html>] should have been published ... If the board of management had overturned my decision as editor, I would have resigned on the spot. I believe in open government and free debate in the veterinary press.

You may use these comments in any way you choose."

Ignoring professed standards and suppressing core issues seems to be a strategy favoured by the veterinary authorities. The RCVS promotes Pet Food Manufacturers' Association propaganda:

<http://www.ukrmb.co.uk/showcontent.toy?contentid=17759>

In October 2007, veterinary students, betrayed by their universities and caught in the junk pet-food mire, attempted to make sense of their situation by convening a debate: <http://seureshop.rawmeatybones.com/newsletter/view.epl?id=48>

If 'self-regulation' holds any meaning then veterinary institutions and those at the

helm must be held morally, politically and legally accountable. We need — our clients and their animals need — urgent resolution of the junk pet-food debacle, the most important issue facing the veterinary profession in the 21st Century. I have the experience, am ready to serve and seek your vote. Thank you.’ (end quote)

Now for the good news: 359 vets voted in support of the manifesto. If assembled in one room that would be a sizeable crowd of vets who want a better life for pets, pet owners and a more honourable vet profession.

The not such good news is that once again I trailed the poll coming a distant last. 3,378 votes were cast for the other candidates.

<http://www.rcvs.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=307915>

Worse news still is that a total of 21,693 UK registered vets could have voted, but only 1.6% chose to support proposals to do something about the junk pet-food scourge, ‘the most important issue facing the veterinary profession in the 21st Century’.

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PERVERSE INCENTIVES FOR VETS

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IS IT WONDER NUTRITION OR A MODERN SCOURGE? asks journalist Wendy Knowler in the South African newspaper The Star.

Posing the question in such a way provokes interesting answers from the junk food exponents. None of them claim their junk is ‘wonder nutrition’. They dissemble, cheat and lie as per usual.

http://www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=139&art_id=vn20080526054827996C330235

Wendy Knowler tells us about ‘Perverse Incentives’, a term that’s new to me.

(Quote)

‘In South Africa, most vets have packets of pellets piled high in the reception area of the practice.

I’m told that the receptionists are treated to lavish lunches and other "spoils" by the pet food companies, and vets routinely attend training seminars at luxury locations, also hosted by the industry.

The (human) medical profession has a name for such perks: perverse incentives.

Medical reps used to give doctors expensive gifts; doctors were invited to lavish "speaker functions" with their spouses, as well as fully-paid medical conferences, often overseas.

But thanks to the Perverse Incentives Policy - implemented as part of the Medicines Control Act’s Marketing Code in 2004 - the drug company freebies are now extremely limited.

ferrets devastated by junk food – teeth ground to the pulp cavity by abrasive kibble, broken teeth, missing teeth, rampant periodontal disease, osteomyelitis, jaw bone abscesses and infection tracking throughout the skulls. By contrast his examinations of skulls from ferrets that had lived in the wild revealed little or no pathology. Dried, bleached ferret skulls can't tell the whole sorry story – but they add information to that well known from reliable veterinary, medical, dental and nutritional sources.

Unfortunately Bob Church disregards existing sources of information and jumps to absurd conclusions far removed from his own data -- data that, when accurately interpreted, reveals the ravages of junk pet-food and the connivance of an incompetent veterinary profession. Here's a summary of his 'Recommendations' from the 2007 Edition of Ferret Husbandry, Medicine and Surgery:

(quote).

'Ferrets require regular tooth brushing with a non-fluoridated dentifrice, with periodic inspection with probing, cleaning and polishing by a qualified veterinarian or veterinary technician. Cages should be modified to prevent a ferret from using their teeth [sic] in an attempt to escape. If a softer diet cannot be provided, kibble should be softened to minimize its abrasive effect on the teeth. If a ferret consistently desires to chew fabrics, they [sic] should be removed (shredded paper is a good substitute for cloth bedding). Ferrets with bad breath, facial swellings, loose teeth and bleeding, red or puffy gums should have dental X-rays made to check for abscesses, bad teeth and bone loss. Veterinarians should start regarding periodontal disease as a serious threat to a ferret's long-term health, rather than assuming it is just a minor problem that does not need to be aggressively addressed. Commercially available chewing treats, such as gelatin chews or edible sticks, should be provided for stimulating the gums and satisfying the urge to chew. Research needs to be done on the impact of periodontal disease on ferret health, including its involvement in other organ diseases.' (end quote)

That Mr Church intersperses elements of truth along with nonsensical 'Recommendations' worsens the impact. How can pet owners distinguish truth from falsehood, what to accept and what to reject? That Bob Church's 'Recommendations' are now printed and bound in a textbook ensures that they will circulate and do harm for years to come.

The animals have suffered long enough, they deserve better. It's up to us to speak on their behalf – expose and root out the nonsense peddled by pet-food companies, vets and assorted self-styled experts.

Wishing you courage and strength in the mighty struggles ahead,

Tom Lonsdale