

ASCWTA

The Prairie Wheaten

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The Pet Food Issue

Health Concern by Roz Bacon and Carolyn Fox

“America is the richest nation in the world but its people are malnourished, despite all the media hype about good health in a bag or a can, so are our pets.” Diane Stern in her book The Natural Remedy for Dogs and Cats

In the last issue Roz Bacon and I began a series of articles on health concerns. We received positive feedback on “The Vaccination Controversy” so are continuing our quest to keep you informed of important health issues. Food is a BIG concern, one I did not fully understand until Roz made me aware of the facts, got me reading her books and searching on the Internet. In this “Health Concern Team”, Roz is the one who over the years has done all the studying and reading to learn the facts. She passes the ideas and knowledge on to me, then I write about it. I was horrified and sickened by what I learned about commercial pet foods. After reading this “all about food” issue perhaps you too will start baking your own dog treats, looking for a better pet diet or adding nutritious supplements to your pet’s food.

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History Of Pet Food

The first commercial dog foods appeared in England during the 1860's. James Spratt was selling his Spratt's Dog Cakes, a mixture of wheat meal, beetroot, meat and vegetables. These biscuits could be stored or transported and be easily combined with fresh meat without losing value. A few years later, when grain meal appeared as a by-product of breakfast cereal companies, the meal was combined with dried meat to make a more complete dog food. When canning developed, the less desirable portions of meat were canned for dogs. The human food industry now had a market for utilizing both the grain and meat by-products. Today many companies and conglomerates unite to make human foods and pet foods.

Early in the twentieth century horses were replaced by tractors and automobiles so

great quantities of horse meat were turned into dog food. As companies learned how to process and preserve their by-products, the shelf life of foods was extended. Semi-moist and dry dog food soon hit the market. To prevent the fats from going rancid additives such as BHT, BHA and Ethoxyquin were developed as chemical fat preservers. The patenting and sale of additives has become a lucrative part of the pet food business.

Pet Food itself has become a lucrative business. From the financial pages of the National Post: "Nestlé set to swallow pet food giant" - January 16, 2001 and "Ralston purchase brings key brands" - January 17, 2001, I quote, "The U.S. pet food industry is growing at 6.5%, twice the rate of food for people, yet acquisitions are cheaper." A U.S. \$11.2 billion deal

makes Nestlé the world's biggest pet food manufacturer by adding Purina Dog Chow and Meow Mix to its Alpo and Friskies brands. These articles mention the "very good world-wide position in a growing area with high margins." Four hundred new cat and dog food products were introduced in the last year, twice as many as three years ago. Owners are increasingly willing to pamper and take good care of their pets. The dog population increases 1.5% annually, and cats 2.3%. It is big business.

There is a lot of research on better taste, a longer shelf life, a brighter colour, more attractive packaging and catchier phrases to make us think we're buying the best. There is little research being done on the nutritional and health qualities of the food we're feeding our pets.

The Shocking Truth About Pet Food Ingredients

WARNING: This article contains information of a disturbing and repugnant nature.

When shopping for pet food we see the colourful packaging that savvy companies have designed to attract us, along with phrases such as "balanced", "all natural" and "complete". By what we read on those packages and see and hear from advertisements we think we're doing the best for our beloved companions. Think again!

We may think we're buying a wholesome nutritious food full of the best cuts of beef or plump whole chickens and fresh nutritious grains, but because most pet food companies are subsidiaries of conglomerates, an ideal situation exists for utilizing waste materials in the pet food divisions. Before getting into the disturbing details, I should say that because informed consumers are demanding better quality food for their pets a few

companies are manufacturing some premium foods.

As much as 95% of a pet food is made from ingredients unfit for human consumption. The meat industry provides many of these waste ingredients. Only half of every cow and one-third of each pig is used for human consumption. There are heads, intestines, hoofs, horns, blood, stomach, and offal left as waste to be used in pet food. (In Europe many of these animal parts have been banned from all animal feeds to prevent the spread of mad cow disease and wasting diseases. In North America the only ban is on cattle feed.) As well as slaughter house waste, there are millions of tons of other dead animals each year that become pet food ingredients. This is where the rendering plant comes in. Rendering is a multi-billion dollar industry with plants across North America disposing of over 100 million pounds of dead animals and meat waste

and fat every day. A reporter visited a rendering plant in his American city a few years ago to find a collection of dead dogs, cats, raccoons, opossums, deer, foxes, snakes, a baby circus elephant and the remains of a police department horse about to be rendered. The end product is dependent upon the deaths of the day.

"It's a dog eat dog world" may be closer to the truth than you think. Many vet clinics have a pick up service to collect the bodies of euthanised animals. One small rendering plant in Quebec renders up to 10 tons of dogs and cats per week. Millions of dogs and cats throughout North America meet their fate in this way. Worse yet, time is not taken to remove flea and tick collars, identification tags, the fur, or the green plastic bags in which the bodies arrive. Road kill, rejects from slaughter houses and animals that die in

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transport to packing plants are also accepted for pet food under the “4D” rule - diseased, disabled, dead and dying. Steroids, growth hormones, antibiotics, and chemicals used for cattle infestations end up in the toxic mix along with flea and tick collar insecticide and the sodium pentobarbital used in euthanasia.

By government law, meat rejected by packing plants must be “denatured” to ensure it doesn’t get sold as human grade meat. Fuel oil, kerosene, crude carbolic acid and citronella are the approved denaturing materials. Add that to the mix. Then there’s unsold supermarket meats past their sell by date along with the Styrofoam trays and plastic wrap no one has time to remove. Poultry with feathers and all, fish laced with mercury or DDT, barrels of old used grease collected from restaurants there’s more, but I think you get the picture. All are ingredients destined for the rendering vats.

The raw animal material is finely shredded then rendered in large vats where all the materials are cooked at 280° to remove the moisture and fat. The “meat” is melted away from the bones. This “soup” produces a fat of yellow grease or tallow that rises to the top and is skimmed off. The meat and bones are squeezed of all remaining moisture until pulverized into a gritty powder. Shaker screens sift out excess hair and large bone bits. At the end of the process all that is left is yellow grease, meat meal and bone meal. On the pet food label you will recognize rendered material as: meat meal, poultry meal, fish meal, yellow grease, tallow, beef fat and chicken fat. The rendering process is thought to greatly diminish the nutritional value of the final product but, sodium pentobarbital survives the process without degrading. Pet food companies claim that chemicals are in such low doses they cause no harm. We might wonder however, about the long term effects of years of ingesting them.

Dogs are carnivores but the amount of grain products used in pet food has risen in the last decade, often being the biggest source of protein in a pet food. Cereal

and grain products were once merely fillers but have now become a significant portion of a dog’s meal. The nutrients in some grains such as white rice can be almost completely absorbed by dogs but many grains escape digestion. Moreover, these grain products are not the wholesome grains we might expect. They are usually the “tail of the mill”, meaning the bits left over after the regular processing has been done and can consist of broken grains, hulls, chaff, straw, joints, weed seeds, elevator or mill dust, sand and dirt swept up from the mill floor. (In 1995 and 1999 thousands of tons of dry pet food had to be recalled when a wheat fungus in certain brands produced vomitoxin making some dogs sick and killing others.) Some ingredients such as peanut hulls are used for filler or fiber and have no nutritional value.

Chemicals are added to this mix to improve the taste, appearance and stability. They provide no nutritional value but prevent the water and fat from separating and the fat from turning rancid. Artificial flavours are added so the dog will want to eat the food. Colour is sometimes used so the food looks attractive to consumers. Dogs do not distinguish the colour.

Preservatives extend the shelf life. BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole), BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene), ethoxyquin, propylene glycol (a less toxic version of antifreeze) are synthetic preservatives added to pet food. These chemicals have not been thoroughly tested but are potential cancer causing agents so kept at low levels. Long term build-up in a dog’s system has not been studied. Consumer concern has led some manufactures to switch to “natural” preservatives such as oil of rosemary, clove or other spices, or Vitamin E or C to preserve the fats.

To make this pet “food” nutritious, manufacturers fortify it with vitamins and minerals, usually in minimum amounts. Tests and trials determine if a food tastes good or is chemically balanced but there are no tests for digestibility or biological availability of the nutrients. Some dogs could be starving for nutrients not

digested as the food passes through the body. Others are suffering from allergies and rashes caused by additives and chemicals. There is concern that the genetic make-up of some dogs is being altered and passed on to offspring. Eating a meal of non-nutrient fillers, appetite stimulants and addictive agents such as sugars, salt and artificial flavouring may leave a dog on a borderline state of starvation even when fed regularly. Life expectancies grow shorter every year. Many pets are overweight with dull coats, are undernourished and marginally poisoned.

Fears over animal wasting

OTTAWA • The use of roadkill and dead pets in animal feed has raised concern about the spread of chronic wasting disease, an illness similar to mad cow disease. Canadian law permits the rendering of dead animals into feed, but critics say some North American deer and elk have the fatal disease and current regulations should be tightened. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency insists the disease has not been detected in free ranging deer and elk in Canada, and there is no indication it can be spread to other species.

The above article appeared in the National Post, March 8, 2001. Not long ago, authorities in Britain thought Mad Cow Disease, a disease “similar” to chronic wasting disease, could not be spread to other species through animal feed. They now suspect otherwise.

Something to think about after reading “Shocking Truth”

Before you are in mourning and perhaps not thinking as clearly, give thought to the fate of your pet after death. Cremation is one way to be assured of your pet’s final resting place. Arrangements for cremation can be made through your vet clinic. Ashes can be kept in an urn or as in our BJ’s case, scattered at a special place. Pet burials are possible at Woof’s Whispering Winds Pet Cemetery north of Regina and at Windy Acres Pet Cemetery near Saskatoon. Both are listed in the Yellow Pages.

Your Pet's Six Basic Needs

Water: the most essential nutrient of all, is vital to all living creatures. Pets should have a generous supply of clean, fresh water at all times. If you would refuse to drink your water supply, do not use it for your dog.

Protein: a good quality protein is essential to provide the amino acids with which the body performs vital functions and rebuilds tissue. Meat by-products are not a "good" protein source.

Carbohydrate: these can provide the animal with fuel for the production of energy, but some feel that there is far too much of it in most commercial pet foods.

Fat: provides a good source of energy. Fat is necessary for the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins and a source of essential unsaturated fatty acids. Essential fatty acids are often lacking in commercial foods so the nonessential fats take their place in the cell membranes. Disease or inflamed itchy skin conditions can result.

Minerals: have an important regulatory function in the body. The macrominerals (calcium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, magnesium) comprise the bulk of minerals. The microminerals (iron, zinc, copper, manganese, iodine, selenium) are equally vital. Most commercial foods have a bare minimum of minerals.

Vitamins: promote and regulate various physiological processes in the body. There are two groups: fat-soluble (A, D, E, K), and water-soluble (thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, folic acid, vitamin B6, choline, vitamin B12)

These nutrients must be provided together in optimal proportions without over-processing to be most effective in the diet.

Who Regulates Pet Food Ingredients?

AAFCO (Association of American Control Officials), an association made up predominately of pet food manufacturing officials, sets the nutritional standards in the United States. About half of all states have various versions of these standards and do some testing - usually 6 month tests, not several generation tests. When food fails internal quality controls, the manufacturers can send it to one of the states that does not test. In Canada there is even less regulation. By law, pet food labels in Canada must list three things: "dog" or "cat" food, weight, and name of the manufacturer. The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the Pet Food Association of Canada, both voluntary organizations that certify foods, rely on the integrity of food companies to not fall below minimum standards. Under free trade, these organizations have no

control over U.S. pet food ingredients. Pet Food labeling is done on the honour system. We remain at the mercy of the manufacturers to list what they put in their food. There is no regulation requiring them to list the additives or preservatives put in products before they reach the plant.

One veterinary nutrition textbook has made claims that a pet food could be created from crankcase oil, wood shavings and an old pair of leather boots that would meet the technical requirements for fats, protein and carbohydrates. However, this food would be completely indigestible. After reading the ingredients in some pet foods, "Old Boot" may be closer to the truth than we care to admit.

Some of AAFCO's Rules:

95% rule - When labeled "Beef for Dogs" or "Chicken for Dogs", 95% of that product must be made up of beef or chicken.

25% rule - When labeled "dinner", "entree", "nuggets", "formula", or "platter", at least 25% but less than 95% must contain the listed ingredient.

3% rule - When labeled "with", for example "Dog Food With Beef", it must contain at least 3% beef.

Flavour rule - "Lamb Flavour Dog Food" need contain only a "sufficiently detectable amount" of that flavour.

Reading the Pet Food Label

Ingredients should be listed in weight order, but “creative” labeling can be deceptive. Lamb meal listed first would lead you to believe that there was more lamb than any other ingredient. However, if the second third and fourth items are brewers rice, rice flour and rice gluten, there is a possibility that rice derivatives could outweigh the lamb meal. Don’t forget to read the labels on pet treats as well.

- **Lamb, Beef or Chicken:** this is real meat.
- **By-Products:** A secondary or incidental product. Poultry By-Product is the product resulting from heat treatment of all by-products of slaughter poultry including heads, feet, underdeveloped eggs, intestines, feathers and blood. Meat By-Product could be viscera and blood soaked sawdust from the floors of a meat packing house or could be lamb, beef, horse, road kill or any other meat source. There is little measurable meat in by-products.
- **Mill Run:** A vegetable or produce equivalent of meat’s by-product. A “Corn Mill Run” would be pulverized corn husk and cobs after kernels are removed.
- **Digest:** An animal feed-grade ingredient that must be made soluble by using heat and moisture. “Poultry Digest” could have feet, feathers or beaks as the ingredient.
- **Meal:** The results of rendered materials after grinding or pulverizing.
- **Gluten:** The sticky substance in wheat or corn starch - used to bind the pulverized composite of animal feed-grade ingredient.
- **Beet Pulp:** Dried residue from sugar beet added for fiber and sugar.
- **Soybean Meal:** Product obtained by grinding the flakes of soybeans after most of the oil has been removed.
- **Rice Bran:** is the outer coating of the rice kernel, with little or none of the starch part of the germ.
- **Rice Flour:** the soft, finely ground meal obtained from milling rice together with the fine particles of rice bran and the offal from the ‘tail of the mill’.
- **Powdered Cellulose:** Mechanically disintegrated fibrous plant material - a.k.a. “sawdust”.
- **Ground almond and Peanut Shells:** another source of fiber.
- **Artificial Colouring:** Composed of petroleum and coal tar. Adverse reactions could be toxicity (poison), behavior alteration including hyperactivity, cancers and allergic reactions.
- **Preservatives:** BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole) and BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene), chemical fat stabilizers, can cause allergic reactions and affects liver and kidney function. Some European countries prohibit the use of these preservatives.
- **Tocopherol:** A Vitamin E derivative used as a dietary supplement and as an antioxidant in the preservation of animal fat.
- **Propylene Glycol:** First cousin to Ethylene Glycol (antifreeze). Mainly used in moist dog foods. Proven to cause skin inflammation and hair loss.
- **Ethoxyquin:** A preservative. This chemical was first introduced in the early 1900’s as a rubber stabilizer. It is also an insecticide. A barrel of ethoxyquin straight from Monsanto is labeled “Poison”, accompanied by a skull-and-crossbones. Some critics and veterinarians believe it is a major cause of disease, cancer, skin problems and infertility. Others believe it is the safest and most stable preservative for pet food. In July 1997 at the request of the FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine most manufactures have voluntarily reduced the use of ethoxyquin. However, as stated earlier, there are no regulations that the manufacturer list preservatives such as Ethoxyquin, BHA or BHT that may be added to products before they reach the plant.
- **“Premium”, “Natural”, “Gourmet”, “Superpremium”:** None of these terms have any regulatory standing. They are not held up to any higher nutritional standards than any other complete and balanced product. Products labeled “Natural” do not approximate the natural diet of an animal.

Some Healthy Alternative Diet Choices

Dogs are carnivores. For millions of years animals have lived on the flesh of other animals. Any plant material wild dogs eat they obtain from the stomach and intestines of their prey. Dogs today do not have the opportunity to hunt and choose what they eat. They are totally dependent on us, having to eat what we give them. We are responsible for our dog's growth, body functions and well being. Here are some healthy alternative diets to help do that.

The **BARF** program or "Biologically Appropriate Raw Foods" is the diet Roz Bacon has been feeding her Wheatens and one Jack Russell since June, 2000. For 10 years Roz studied various commercial food products trying to find the best for her dogs. She was attempting to find one food that satisfied and agreed with each of them. Some foods would cause diarrhea in one or two; another would have a skin rash and so on. Finally she turned to the BARF diet. Now all dogs are healthy and all are excited when called for their meal. Give Your Dog a Bone by Dr. Ian Billinghurst, is the book Roz uses as her guide. To get started she ordered frozen prepared packages of this raw food diet. As she becomes more confident by reading and learning more about the correct balance of nutrients, she is using her own ingredients much of the time. A test came last fall when she started her litter of ten puppies on the BARF diet when they were five weeks old. All thrived on the diet and are healthy robust pups.

The basic food groups provided by this diet are:

1. Raw Meat - both muscle and organ meat of beef, fish, poultry, lamb and rabbit, usually in ground or minced form. Raw whole eggs (including shells) are added to the meat portion a few times a week.
2. Raw Bone - bone is always fed raw. Cooked bone is very dangerous as it can splinter and is difficult to digest. Raw poultry bones with a bit of meat on them provide almost all the nutrients your dog needs to be healthy - marrow, amino acids/protein, essential fatty acids, fiber, enzymes, antioxidants, minerals and vitamins. A homemade diet without raw bones will cause nutritional deficiencies in a dog.
3. Raw Vegetables - a wide variety of vegetables, rotated on a regular basis but not in excess. Vegetables are blended or juiced thoroughly before feeding to be put into a digestible form, just as they would be found in a prey animal's stomach.
4. Extras - basic extras include kelp and alfalfa, essential fatty acids (fish oil, flaxseed oil, eggs, raw nuts and seeds), and Vitamin C.

Dr. Jean C. Hofve, DVM, a nutrition expert, says she has heard story after story of animals cured of skin disease, allergies, autoimmune disease, seizures, dental problems, cancer and dozens of other conditions solely or mainly by switching to a raw food diet.

A **HOME COOKED DIET** using cooked foods is second best. All raw foods contain natural enzymes necessary for the body to digest foods. These are lost in the cooking process, but at least you have control over the quality of the ingredients. With any cooked or commercial food it is suggested that "prebiotics" (digestive enzymes) and "probiotics" (beneficial bacteria) be added as a supplement to make up for the ones lost in the cooking process. One example of a cooked diet is Dr. Jean Hofve's Easy Dog diet found on the Internet at Vet On Call: www.critterhaven.org/critterchat/vetocal.htm

Before feeding your pet a raw or home prepared diet it is highly recommended you purchase one or more of the following books so you have a *complete* understanding of canine nutritional needs. If you fail to follow any diet's recommendation for supplements or ingredients serious health consequence can occur.

Recommended books:

Dr. Pitcairn's Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats.

Richard Pitcairn, DMV And Susan Pitcairn. Rodale Press
ISBN 075962432

Natural Dog Care. Celeste Yarnell Charles E. Tuttle Co.Inc.
ISBN 1885203470

The Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog Wendy Vollard and Kerry Brown, DVM. Howell Book House
ISBN 0876055609

Home-Prepared Dog and Cat Diets: the Healthful Alternative Donald R. Strombeck, DVM Iowa State University Press
ISBN 0813821495

Give Your Dog A Bone Dr. Ian Billinghurst Bridge Printery
ISBN 064610281

Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats Kymmythy R. Schultze, C.C.N., A.H.I. Hay House, Inc. ISBN 1561706361

Grow Your Pups With Bones Dr. Ian Billinghurst
Published by Dr. Billinghurst ISBN 0958592500

Roz finds the last three books very useful.

If Raw or Cooked diets are not possible you should find the best **COMMERCIAL FOOD** available. Read the ingredient label. Don't necessarily believe the claims on the bag. Dr. Hofve suggests staying away from foods based on grains or that contain meat by-products, meat meal, or meat and bone meal. Avoid the chemical preservatives ethoxyquin, BHA, BHT, propyl gallate, propylene glycol or sugar preservatives. Also avoid generic or store brands as they may be repackaged rejects from the big manufacturers. Unless specifically recommended by your vet, avoid "light", "senior", or "special formula".

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Some web sites give a list of preferable commercial foods. One of the few “preferable” foods available in Canada, and in the top ten of many lists, is “Wysong”. This is the food Roz recommends and used for two or three years before switching to BARF. Human grade meat is the main ingredient and no pre-rendered by-products are used. There are several formulas of Wysong available. It is not available in grocery or pet stores in Saskatchewan but information and distributors across Canada can be located through their Web Site at www.wysong.net

Commercial foods, even good ones, may have an imbalance of omega fatty acids likely to result in dry or itchy skin. Omega 3 fatty acids can be added to your pet’s meal in the form of fish oils, flax oil or ground flax seed. As well, supplements containing vitamins, minerals, prebiotics and probiotics, found at pet stores, health food stores or perhaps through your vet, could be added to your pet’s diet (much like humans taking a daily multiple vitamin pill). Be cautioned however, that an overdose of certain vitamins could prove harmful. All commercial foods can be supplemented with other foods such as organic meats and a small amount of steamed, pureed or finely grated vegetables which could include asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, sprouts, squash, and okra, potatoes, yams, and carrots.

Even with a premium brand food, both Dr. Hofve and Dr. Randy Wysong, veterinarian, nutritionist and pet food manufacturer, suggest switching brands and flavours from time to time (every 3 or 4 months) to ensure your animal isn’t getting too much of one ingredient or too little of another. Always check the expiration date to ensure freshness. No matter what preservative has been used, there will be some deterioration in the nutritional value of the food over time. If you smell a rancid odor as you open the bag, return it immediately for an exchange or refund. Store dry pet food in a large non-porous container in a cool, dry place.

How To Switch Foods

To prevent upset stomach or diarrhea the switch from one food to another should be done over the course of a week or ten days. Mix a small amount of the new food with the old food on the first day. Each successive day add a little more “new” with a little less “old” until by the tenth day the food consists entirely of new food. Some finicky eaters may need longer. If negative changes occur - itchiness, loss of appetite, energy level, mood, discharges or odors, body weight, or the size and consistency of stool - slow down the change or try a different food.

Sources and Resources

Books:

Foods Pets Die For - Shocking Facts about Pet Food by a Canadian author, Ann N. Martin New Sage Press (1997) Seven years of research led to this behind the scenes look at the pet food industry.

An overview of this book can be found at www.critterhaven.org/critterchat/foodpets.htm

An excerpt from this book can be found at www.homevet.com/petcare/foodbook.html

Also refer to books listed under “Healthy Alternative Choices”

Magazines:

Animal, the animal wellness magazine - volume 2, issue 3 “Dishing up the facts on pet food”.

Not available on all magazine stands, but I did find it at Chapters in Regina and McNally-Robinson in Saskatoon.

More information and a free online newsletter is available at www.animalanimal.com

Web Sites:

www.api4animals.org Animal Protection Institute - click on “Companion Animal” and you’ll find several articles on pet foods and diets.

www.critterhaven.org/critterchat/vetoncal.htm “Vet On Call” nutrition and pet food articles by Dr. Jean C. Hofve, HVM

www.belfield.com/article3.html “Food Not Fit for a Pet” by Dr. Wendell O. Belfield

www.belfield.com/article11.html “Raw Meat Diets for Companion Animals?” By Dr. Wendell O. Belfield

www.homevet.com Click on “Information Center” to find articles on pet foods and nutrition

www.netpets.com/dogs/reference/nutrition.html More than a dozen food articles

www.ens.lycos.com/ens/mar99/1999L-03-28g.html “Food Even a Dog Shouldn’t Eat - Killing Our Pets with Every Meal” *caution - graphic photos, BUT some good web sites listed for further research.

www.doctorswhoswho.com/healthy_pets/#Dogs Under “General Information” you will find the articles “Understanding Pet Food Labels” and “Pet Cuisine” and other interesting articles

www.bluegrace.com/barf.html BARF FAQ by Jane Johnson from Australia

www.geocities.com/~lyncamp/diets.html BARF DIET and Bill Camp’s Famous Flying dogs with many useful links

www.drianbillinghurst.com BARF site by Dr. Billinghurst, author of Give Your Dog A Bone

Recipes For Dog Treats

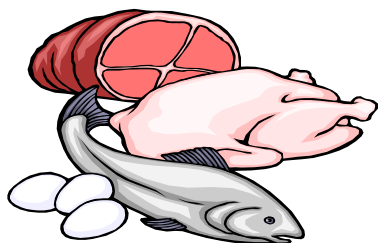
To avoid treats with additives, preservatives and colours, make nutritious ones right in your own kitchen. All of these recipes have been baked in Carolyn's kitchen and taste tested by real live Wheatens. No Laboratory Animals were used or harmed during experimentation. ☺ A big thanks to the tail-wagging, lip-smacking, exuberant taste testers - Max, Tess, Willow, Lacey, Duff, the five puppies, and Jack, the Jack Russell Terrier!

Use your imagination when making these treats. Several flours can be used or substituted to make up the amount of flour called for in the recipes. Such ingredients as ground flax seed, cracked wheat, dried kelp, alfalfa powder and fish oils can be added in small amounts. These ingredients as well as organic grains can be found at health food stores. The recipes with liquefied raw organ meats, although somewhat revolting to make, were the definite favourites.

Marvelous Meatballs

1 lb. ground beef
4 tbsp. grated cheese
2 carrots, finely grated
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 cup whole wheat bread crumbs
2 eggs, beaten

Combine all ingredients together; mix thoroughly. Roll into bite sized meatballs. Place on greased baking sheets. Bake at 350° for 15 - 20 minutes or until brown and firm. Cool and store in the fridge or freezer.



Barley Squares

1¼ lbs. beef or chicken livers (or kidneys)
2 cups wheat germ
2 tbsp. whole wheat flour
1 cup cooked barley
2 whole eggs
3 tbsp. peanut butter
1 clove garlic
1 tbsp. olive oil

Liquefy liver and garlic clove in a blender. Add eggs and peanut butter. Blend until smooth. In a mixing bowl combine wheat germ, whole wheat flour and cooked barley. Add liquefied liver mixture and olive oil. Mix well. Spread mixture in a greased 9x9 baking pan. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until done. (should be brown in colour, no longer red) When cool cut into bite sized squares and store in fridge or freezer.

Salmon Treats

Two 6 oz. cans (one 418 g. tin) of salmon, or tuna
2 eggs
1 cup rice flour
1 tbsp. garlic powder

In blender or food processor add cans of salmon, bones and all. Do not drain. If necessary, add just enough water to liquefy. Blend in 2 eggs. Empty into bowl and add 1 cup rice flour and perhaps a little more until it resembles cake-batter consistency. Add garlic powder. Mix well. Grease a round pizza pan or square cake pan. Spread batter on pan. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes or until edges pull away from sides of pan. Use a pizza cutter or knife to slice into bite sized pieces. Keep in fridge or freezer.



Liver Lover's Cookies

1 lb. raw liver (or kidney)
3 cloves garlic
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
½ cup grated cheddar cheese
½ cup grated carrots (or other vegetables you have)
1 cup flour (any flour or flours combined to make one cup)
½ cup cornmeal

Put liver through grinder (or liquefy in blender) along with garlic. Place mixture in bowl. Add cheeses, carrots, flour and cornmeal. Mix well. Spread on greased piece of aluminum foil on baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until no longer pink. Cool. Peel off aluminum foil and break or cut into bite sized pieces. Keep in fridge or freezer.

Chicken Crackers

1½ cups whole wheat flour
1½ cups rye flour
1½ cups brown (or white) rice flour
1 cup wheat germ
1 tsp. dried kelp or alfalfa powder
1 tsp. garlic powder
4 tbsp. vegetable oil
1½ cups chicken stock*
1 lb. ground chicken

In a large bowl combine the first six ingredients. Add oil, broth and chicken. Mix well. Knead slightly then divide in half. With lightly greased hands, pat dough out on 2 baking sheets to 1/8 inch thickness. Bake at 350° until golden brown, approx. 12 to 15 minutes. Cool. Break into bite sized pieces. Store in fridge or freezer.

The Prairie Wheaten

Dog Biscuits

1 cup oatmeal
2 cups flour (or ½ cups variety of flours to equal 2 cups)
1 tbsp. brown sugar
½ cup chicken or beef stock*
1 tbsp. olive or vegetable oil
1 egg

Mix together flour, oatmeal, and brown sugar. Mix in the oil, egg and stock to make a dough. Knead dough a few times. Roll out dough to desired thickness. Use cookie cutters in fun shapes or bone shapes, or cut in strips or squares to form biscuits. Place on ungreased baking sheets and bake at 325° for 25 minutes to one hour depending on thickness, until hard to the touch. If thoroughly cooked, these should keep in an air tight container for up to 2 months.

Dawg Treats

Blend until revoltingly liquid:
1 lb. Chicken livers
1 cup cornmeal
½ cup flour
1 garlic bud

Spread this very sticky mixture on well greased baking sheet to ½ inch thickness. Bake at 350° for about 12 minutes. Flop onto cutting board while still warm. Cut into bite sized pieces. Cool then freeze in freezer bags up to 3 months, if they could EVER last that long!!

* How To Make A Meat Stock

It is easy to make a nutritious stock, and MUCH better for your dog than using a bouillon cube with boiling water. Bouillon cubes are full of salts, additives and colour. Use shin and marrow bones for a meaty stock, turkey or chicken carcass (with neck, skin and various meaty bits) for a turkey stock, or washed fish bones, heads, tails, skins and trimmings for a fish stock. Cover the bones with cool water in a large pot with a lid. Bring the contents to a boil and simmer for at least 2 hours and as many as 12 hours to extract all the flavours. Diced vegetables such as carrots, turnips, celery, yams, beans, cauliflower and beets but NOT onions can be added for more flavour and nutrition. No seasonings or bouquet garni need be added to stock for dog treat recipes. When all the goodness has been extracted from the bones, meat and vegetables, strain the stock through a sieve or cheese cloth until clear. When cool, refrigerate the bowl of stock until all the fat rises to become a solid mass on top. Remove this fat mass from the surface. This nutritious stock can be frozen in 1 or 2 cup portions for future use.



Dog Haiku

I lie belly-up
In the sunshine, happier than
You will ever be.

·

Today I sniffed
Many dog behinds. I celebrate
By kissing your face.

·

I sound the alarm!
Paper boy, come to kill us all
Look! Look! Look! Look! Look!

·

I sound the alarm!
Garbage man, come to kill us all
Look! Look! Look! Look! Look!

·

How do I love thee?
The ways are as numberless as
My hairs on the rug.

·

My human is home!
I am so ecstatic I have
Made a puddle.

·

I Hate my choke chain.
Look, world, they strangle me! Ack!
Ack! Ack! Ack! Ack! Ack!

·

Sleeping here, my chin
On your foot, no greater bliss, well,
Maybe catching cats

·

Look in my eyes and
Deny it. No human could
Love you as much as I do.

·

The cat is not all
Bad, she fills the litter box
With tootsie rolls.

·

Dig under the fence, why?
Because it is there. Because it's
There. Because it's there.

·

I am your best friend,
Now, always, and especially
When you are eating.

·

Author unknown

These Irish type Wheaten puppies enjoying their home baked treats have thrived on a BARF diet since they were five weeks old.

The Prairie Wheaten



Specialty 2000 Committee gathers for year-end wind-up

Letter to the Editor

Patti Kindred's comments on Dog's That Know When Their Owners are Coming Home and a suggestion for further reading.



Most excellent account of BJ's special gift. We have always believed that animals, especially dogs, are capable of more love and intelligence than some people give them credit for. We know this to be true from our recently departed 16 year old Sheltie, Amir. He was a close friend for years, and continuously amazed us with his capacity to love the family. I certainly will be reading the book you reviewed and suggest another along the same topic. "The Parrot's Lament" by Eugene Linden (Dutton Books, Penguin Group 1999) relates true tales of animal intrigue, intelligence and ingenuity. "Talking to zoo keepers, researchers, therapists and trainers, Linden has unearthed nearly two hundred amazing and heart warming stories, anecdotes of animal humor, games, deception, scheming, and subterfuge, as well as tales of compassion, heroism and love. " I especially recommend it to those who doubt the capacity of animals, both wild and domestic, to relate to humans on a grander scale than prey or pack member.

World Wide Wheatens

<http://www.jb-ccs.com/scwtac/> - SCWTAC's web site
<http://www.motorcitywheatens.org/> - Detroit's Wheaten Club Site and Boutique
<http://www.compumart.ab.ca/dperry/scwt.htm> - general information and pictures
<http://www.geocities.com/irishwheatens/index.html> - see Wheatens of the "Irish type"
<http://www.helsinki.fi/~jspaalan/> - "The Dog Tales" from Finland
http://www.buga.hr/uspjesi/uspjesi_dudo.htm - Wheaten site from Croatia
<http://www.geocities.com/Petsburgh/Farm/8554/index.html> - A website in Australia
<http://www.geocities.com/myshawns/> - Margaret Stewardson's Home Page
<http://www.geocities.com/wheatenguy> - Max and MacDuff's Home Page

President's Message

Happy St. Patrick's Day to all of you and your Irish four-legged family members. I think we are now well into Spring and what seems to me a very long, cold winter is just a faint memory.

I'm hoping we will see all of you at this year's events and hear about your interesting Wheaten times. It would be wonderful to think that all is going well in the Wheaten World around Regina. Unfortunately, this is not so. We have become over populated with Wheaten puppies from a number of puppy mills. I think the task of educating the public about buying from reputable breeders should be a priority for us this year. It is disturbing to know that one of our breeders had great difficulty selling her pups this Fall/ Winter. There are several reasons for this but we can not over look the influence of the puppy mills and the selling of these puppies at half the price that a reputable breeder sells their puppies.

Just recently there was a CBC production on puppy mills in Quebec - it was extremely disturbing. Quite a sad eye opener for many who viewed this production. I think it is very important to realize what a reputable breeder does to try to ensure all people buying puppies receive healthy, happy and well adjusted pups.

Well, I will keep this short - so, from all of us at Myshawns we want to wish you all the best for the rest of the year and see you real soon.

Take care - Cheers
Margaret, Beatrice, Kicker, and Cuddles
(my baby brat!)

The Prairie Wheaten

Obituary

Winnie – Veno Waggish Premier Cru
Anjou Feb 6 1989 – Feb 6 2001

After several years of skin cancer and finally a ruptured spinal disc our dear Winnie Hamilton passed away at 12 years of age.

Winnie lived life to its fullest mothering 4 litters of pups. Summers were spent running, swimming and chasing bunnies. Winter was spent curled up by the fire or running through snow banks.

Winnie showed great patience helping me entertain and raise my 3 human children. At the age of 7 she went to live at Grandma's house in the country. Grandma's was a retirement home like no other. Winnie was served home made stew and chicken rice for dinners. Frequent walks in the hills were greatly appreciated. Winnie had many visits to Regina to see her own daughter Keely and all of us.

We wish to extend a great thanks and our sincere sympathy to Bob and Hope Hamilton (Grandma) who spent the last few months caring for Winnie, driving Winnie to the doctor and hand feeding her.

We love you Winnie.

Winnie will be sadly missed.

The Hamilton Family.

National Director's Report

By Mike Dumelie

Well Winter appears to be heading out with Spring just around the corner. There are a few things to report at the National level.

This is an election year for the SCWTAC. Priscilla Tims our National President, who has done a wonderful job in her time as President, will be stepping down this year. This leaves us without a fearless leader. All positions will be up for election. Look in the latest Wheaten Wags for more information and to find out how to nominate someone for the national board.

The National Specialty is not too far away. This year's Specialty is in Edmonton in June. The last Specialty in Edmonton was outstanding and we expect nothing less. Please consider joining us for a wonderful weekend in Edmonton. Further information is available on-line at www.jb-ccs.com/scwtac or in Wheaten Wags.

The National Board agreed to allow the posting of a national breeder's list on our National Club website. Once again, if you are looking for names of breeder's across Canada please go to our website at www.jb-ccs.com/scwtac.



In Memoriam

It has come to our attention that these Wheatens have passed away since the last newsletter.

Ruth Smilie's Fergie at age 5
The Hamilton's Winnie at age 12
The McFetridge's Willie Wheaten Three at age 13

Our thoughts and our sympathy goes out to the loved ones of these wonderful Wheatens.



WHEATEN WALK

Sunday, May 6
will be the date for our next Wheaten Walk
We will meet at the Wascana Center Authority Building
2900 Wascana Drive

at
12:30 PM

Come just for the walk around the lake or bring your lunch
and stay to visit and picnic in the park afterwards.
For more information phone 543-7004

The Prairie Wheaten

Tail Docking – Harmless Cosmetic Procedure or Animal Cruelty?

by Bob Hamilton

Every Wheaten owner loves their dogs. Oh, perhaps we get a bit perturbed when they eat our favorite pair of shoes but we still love them. We would never intentionally disfigure or maim these dogs in a painful and unnecessary act of torture. Or would we?

Of course I'm talking about the practice of tail docking. It's something I didn't give much thought to until August of last year. We had 6 healthy pups and it was my job to drive back from the beach to have the puppy tails docked. The vet, Dr. Jackson, came to our home and prepared the work surface. She donned her latex gloves and then proceeded to use a pair of very sharp scissors to clip the tails. With a crunch and a yelp the tails were gone and I was left with a basket of helpless whimpering animal.

If you would like to see the entire procedure, I filmed it and have it posted for viewing at: <http://www.net1fx.com/taildock.mpeg>

I was appalled and disgusted. Why was I allowing this to happen to our dogs? Where had this barbaric practice come from? Why was this procedure even legal? I decided to do a bit of research.

The Council of Docked Breeds is a UK organization dedicated to preserving the practice of tail docking. They list several reasons for tail docking. The number one reason to dock a tail is to avoid damage to the tail. I laughed when I read this and was thankful that this group had not dedicated themselves to preventing limb damage. I had a mental picture of dogs strapped to skate boards all having had preventative limb amputation.

As specious as the preventative argument seems on the surface there may actually be some rare cases where it has merit. The Hungarian Vizsla is a hunter, pointer and retriever with one third docked from the tail. Although the remainder of the tail is strong, the third docked is thin and whip-like and is open to damage in the field. The Vizsla reportedly holds it's tail horizontal to the ground and wags it forcefully while charging through rough scrub and undergrowth. The

unprotected tip is docked to keep it from splitting and bleeding.

Of course if you don't own a Vizsla or if your Vizsla is a pet rather than a hunting dog then this argument doesn't hold. In any case, the last third of the Wheaten tail is strong and the Wheaten doesn't drag it's tail when it runs through the brush. Rather the Wheaten tail curls up and over the back of the dog safely out of harms way.

The second reason is for hygiene. The Council feels that somehow having a longer tail causes feces to become trapped in the dog's hair. Even if there were any truth to this silly claim, a bath would be an easy solution.

The final reason – and the real reason in my opinion – is to maintain the standard of the breed. We are used to seeing our Wheatens look a certain way. An undocked Wheaten "looks funny".

According to an interesting article in our own Prairie Wheaten, English royalty placed a tax on dogs. A dog was thought to be useless if it had no tail so the serfs chopped off the tail and thus avoided the tax. They left a stub of a tail to provide a handle in case the dog became stuck in a badger hole.

While Wheatens are no longer taxed based on tail length there are still strong economic reasons to dock a dog's tail. Show dogs are judged based on the Standard of the Breed. Until recently, most judges will not award prizes to undocked Wheatens. This reduces the value of the dog and affects the price of the puppies.

The European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals prohibits routine tail docking as animal abuse. As more and more European countries sign on to this convention the practice of tail docking has begun to subside in many countries.

While the UK has yet to ratify the ECPA, public pressure has been mounting to do away with the practice of tail docking. The Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in November 1992, ruled docking to be unethical. Vets who continue to dock



risk disciplinary action, including being struck off the professional register.

While tail docking is on a gradual decline in Europe and the UK, it remains a strong practice in the USA. Canada has a strong British heritage but we are closely tied to the American economy. Is it time to join the growing movement in Europe and ban the cruel practice of tail docking or should we continue to follow the American tradition? This is a choice each of us must make every time we have a new litter born.

Most breeders have a waiting list for puppies. Most of these dogs are sold as pets and will never see the inside of a show ring. Why not contact our potential customers in advance and ask them if they would prefer the dog to be docked? My guess is that most people, given a choice, would prefer an undocked dog. As the undocked Wheaten becomes more common gradually acceptance will spread. It is my sincere hope that I will live to see the day when Wheaten owners will much prefer the look of the Wheaten in it's natural state – long funny looking tail and all.

Note: The opinions stated in this article reflect the viewpoint of the husband and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the wife - owner and breeder of our dog. But I'm working on her.

Editors' Comment

At the present time a Canadian breeder has a litter of five month old Wheatens whose tails were not docked. Change may be on the way.

The Prairie Wheaten

Donation Request

The Assiniboine Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Association has decided to forgo membership fees while at the same time sending our newsletter to every Wheaten owner in Saskatchewan. We are attempting to publish at least three newsletters a year. Postage alone comes to about \$100 per issue or \$300 per year. To help cover this expense, we would be grateful to receive voluntary donations. Your donation can be made payable to ASCTWA and sent to our treasurer:

Sue Luchuck
4020 Elphinstone Street
Regina, Sask. S4S 3K9

Thanks in advance!

Cancellation or Change of Address

We would appreciate notification if you do not wish to receive this publication. If you do enjoy receiving it please inform us if you have a change of address. Please write or e-mail Carolyn and Alan Fox - address opposite - or phone us at (306) 543- 7004.

Trivia

How does Fido know in a heartbeat that you're putting on your socks to go for a walk, opening the fridge door to get some cheese, or going into that secret hiding place for dog treats? One reason is that the hearing ability of dogs is twice that of humans. Dogs are able to pick up high frequency sounds that reach 40,000 vibrations per second.

Then there's their incredible sense of smell that can be as much as a million times more sensitive than ours. Bloodhounds and German Shepherds are the sniffing champions with more than 200 million smell-sensing cells on their noses.



Serving food and water at your dog's eye level helps your dog digest better. Putting the bowls on top of low tables or crates prevents strain on your dog's neck and back muscles. Tables like Max's "two holer" can be built at home or found at pet supply stores. We began using this type of table when BJ developed a bad back in 1989. It then became useful for Patty when arthritis made it difficult for her to bend down to her bowl. A healthy Max enjoys eating from his table at the tender age of five.

***** DEADLINES *****

Deadline for submissions for the next issue is June 15

Please make your submissions
(preferably on disk or good clear hardcopy) to:

Carolyn or Alan Fox
74 Cooper Crescent
Regina, SK S4R 4J7
Phone: (306) 543-7004
or email at cfox@sk.sympatico.ca

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