



In support of bones and raw food diets

Dear Sir,

Drs. Daniel Joffe and Bernard Rollin both replied negatively to the ethical question regarding feeding dogs raw meat diets (Can Vet J 2003;44:449–450). In our practice, we support owners who feed bones and raw food (BARF) and other raw meat diets. Sometimes we recommend home-prepared diets, which some owners elect to feed raw. We are comfortable and confident in doing this, because we have educated ourselves in canine and feline nutrition. We formulate the diet specifically for each pet's health status, so that the diet is complete, balanced, medically appropriate, and of high quality. In addition, we educate owners as to food preparation, food handling safety, and feeding practices during a 30- to 40-minute consultation with our nutritional consultant. They are given typed instructions for the diet, food handling safety and preparation, and a shopping list. We charge \$45 for this service.

Becoming competent in nutrition requires a great deal of reading and research — most of which is boring, contradictory, and confusing. We understand why the majority of veterinarians do not elect to spend their continuing education time on studying this field; it's so much easier and more efficient to recommend a bag of commercial pet food.

With regard to the safety issues of feeding raw meat to pets, safe food handling is essential, whether the meat is to be cooked for human or pet consumption or fed raw

to dogs or cats. We advise our clients not to feed raw pork, fish, or wild game offal. We advise them in the safe and hygienic clean-up of all pet feces, irrespective of what they are feeding.

To our knowledge, feeding home-prepared cooked or raw diets has not been proven to control medical problems, based upon prospective, double-blind, statistically significant clinical trials. However, we find that we can control a number of chronic digestive, allergic, and metabolic problems by using home prepared diets. We find that we can prevent a large number of problems from occurring in our feline and canine patients, including bladder stones and feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD), intermittent vomiting or diarrhea, seborrhea sicca, and recurrent ear infections. These diets are individualized to the particular pet and its medical diagnoses, formulated with informed nutritional knowledge, and presented to the owner with nutritional and food safety education. We disagree with the opinions of Drs. Daniel Joffe and Bernard Rollin.

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In support of bones and raw food diets — A reply

Dear Sir:

I applaud Drs. Stogdale and Diehl for their commitment to nutritional continuing education. As to their comment “the majority of veterinarians do not elect to spend their continuing education time on studying this field; it's so much easier and more efficient to recommend a bag of commercial pet food,” I take offence. The reason why I will recommend a “bag of commercial pet food” from one of the science-based food companies is because those companies have proven to me (most often with the peer

reviewed results of scientific study) that their products are safe, nutritionally complete, and efficacious for both maintenance and therapeutic purposes. Proponents of raw food diets have yet to provide any proof as to the safety, efficacy, or completeness of the diets they recommend.

I also applaud the efforts put forward by Drs. Stogdale and Diehl in educating their clients on how to feed home cooked diets. Unfortunately, all of the possible training

Letters to the Editor on topics of general veterinary interest are solicited, and ongoing debate on controversial topics is encouraged through this feature. Also welcomed are letters which challenge, support, or add to articles appearing in the CVJ in the previous two months. Authors will be allowed one month for reply, so that their reply may appear with the relevant letter in the same issue, usually within two months of receipt. Letters must be signed by all authors, should not exceed 500 words (two double-spaced typewritten pages), and may be abridged and edited as necessary. Financial associations or other possible conflicts of interest should always be disclosed.

Les **Lettres à la rédaction** sont en principe des textes portant sur des intérêts généraux pour les vétérinaires ou qui ajoutent au débat sur des sujets controversés. Ce sont des textes rédigés à notre demande, mais nous acceptons aussi les lettres qui remettent en question ou appuient les articles qui ont paru dans la Revue dans les deux mois précédents ou y ajoutent quelque chose. Les auteurs auront un mois pour répondre, de façon que leur réponse puisse figurer avec la lettre pertinente dans le même numéro, habituellement dans les deux mois suivant leur réception. Les lettres doivent être signées par tous les auteurs, ne pas dépasser 500 mots (deux pages de texte à double interligne) et peuvent être abrégées et révisées au besoin. Toute implication financière ou autres conflits d'intérêts potentiels devraient être indiqués.