

Now Let's Talk Nutrition!



A Study of the Pet Food Fallacy

~Ann N. Martin

Proteins are the building blocks of life and must be of good quality in order to sustain it. To survive, your cherished animal companion must be provided with proteins. The pet food industry would have us believe that their foods provide a “complete and balanced diet” for our pets. In reality what we are feeding are the dregs of the human food chain, garbage unfit for human or animal consumption.

What do these proteins consist of and how good are they? If you really want to know the truth read on ... if you're not ready for it, you had better stop now.

Animal proteins consist of diseased meat, road kills, contaminated material from slaughterhouses, fecal matter, euthanized cats and dogs, poultry feathers, all prepared together as rendered material. Yes, these are the sources of animal protein presently used in many commercial pet foods. Vegetable proteins, often the mainstay of dry foods include ground yellow corn, wheat shorts and middlings, soybean meal, rice hulls and peanut meal. All provide very little nutritional value and are nothing more than sweepings from milling room floors left over after processing. The removal of the oil, germ, bran, starch and gluten from these grains eliminate the essential fatty acids and a number of fat soluble vitamins and antioxidants.

The animal proteins used in these foods come from a number of different sources. Dead stock removal operations provide the ‘4-D’ animals: **dead, diseased, dying or disabled**. Most have died or are dying from causes unknown and have been treated with a wide array of drugs before their demise or have been given a lethal injection of a potent drug to euthanize them. The animals are then delivered to a “receiving plant” where the hide (*sold to a tannery*), skin, fats and meat are removed. The meat from these animals can be sold for pet food after it is completely covered in charcoal (*to prevent ingestion by humans*), and marked “*unfit for human consumption*”.

If the animal arrives at the “receiving plant” in a state of decomposition it is transported to a rendering plant along with road kill which is too large to be buried

along the road side. Next we have the condemned material from slaughterhouses. Animals that have died on their way to slaughter, diseased animals or parts, diseased blood, extraneous matter, hair, feet, head, mammary glands, carpal and tarsal joints or any part of the animal condemned for human consumption can be rendered for pet food. Before this material leaves the slaughterhouse, it is “denatured” (*doused with chemicals*) to prevent it from getting back into the human food chain when being transported to the rendering facilities.

In Canada, the chemical used to “denature” is Birkolene b. According to the Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant and Health, the composition of this chemical cannot be disclosed. In the U.S., a number of agents can be used including carbolic acid, fuel oil, kerosene and citronella.

We now have animal protein classified as “4-D’s”, road kill and condemned material from the slaughterhouses. Another source of animal protein, which the industry vehemently deny they use, are rendered companion animals.

Dogs and cats euthanized at clinics, pounds and shelters are sold to rendering plants, rendered with other material and sold to the pet food industry. One small rendering plant in Quebec was rendering 11 tons of dogs and cats per week from Ontario. The Ministry of Agriculture in Quebec, where a number of these plants are located, advised me that “*The fur is not removed from dogs and cats*” and that “*Dead animals are cooked together with viscera, bones and fats in 236° for twenty minutes.*” One large pet food company in the U.S., with extensive research facilities, used rendered dogs and cats in their food for years and when the information came to light “*claimed no knowledge of it.*” The Food and Drug Administration, Center for Veterinary Medicine, in the U.S., is aware of the use of rendered companion animals in pet food and has stated, “*CVM has not acted to specifically prohibit the rendering of pets. However, that is not to say that the practice of using this material in pet food is condoned by CVM.*” In a research paper from the University of

Minnesota, entitled **“Facts of Sodium Pentobarbital in Rendered Products”**, it stated that the barbiturate, sodium pentobarbital, which is used to euthanize small animals, *“survived rendering without undergoing degradation.”*

In the U.S., as in Canada, the pet food industry is virtually self-regulated. In the U.S., the AAFCO (*Association of American Feed Control Officials*) sets guidelines and definitions for animal feed ingredients including pet foods. It is up to each State to adopt and enforce these guidelines. The AAFCO states that there are no restrictions on the type of animals which can be used in meals, tankage, digests, etc... Any kind of animal can be used including cats and dogs.

The AAFCO Official Publication, **“Feed Ingredient Definitions”** is extensive and lists what can be used in animal feeds. This list includes *“Spray Dried Animal Blood”, “Hydrolysed Hair”, “Dehydrated Garbage”, “Unborn Calf Carcasses”, “Dried Poultry Litter (means processed animal waste product composed of a processed combination of feces from commercial poultry together with litter that was present in the floor production of poultry)”, “Dried Ruminant Waste”, “Dried Swine Waste”, “Undried Processed Animal Waste Products (means a processed animal waste product composed of excreta, with or without litter, from poultry, ruminants or any other animal except humans)”*, and the list goes on. I asked if these definitions applied to only livestock feed and was advised that these guidelines and definitions also apply to pet foods.

In Canada, there are virtually no regulations in this industry. Other than the *Labelling Act* which states that the label must contain the name and address of the company, weight of the product and if it is made for a dog or cat, there are no set standards. The CVMA (*Canadian Veterinary Medical Association*) and PFAC (*Pet Food Association of Canada*) are voluntary organizations and for the most part rely on the integrity of the company which they certify, stating that the ingredients are not below the minimum standards set. Of all the pet food sold in Canada, 85-90% is manufactured by the multi-nationals in the U.S., and neither the CVMA or PFAC have any control over the ingredients used in these foods.

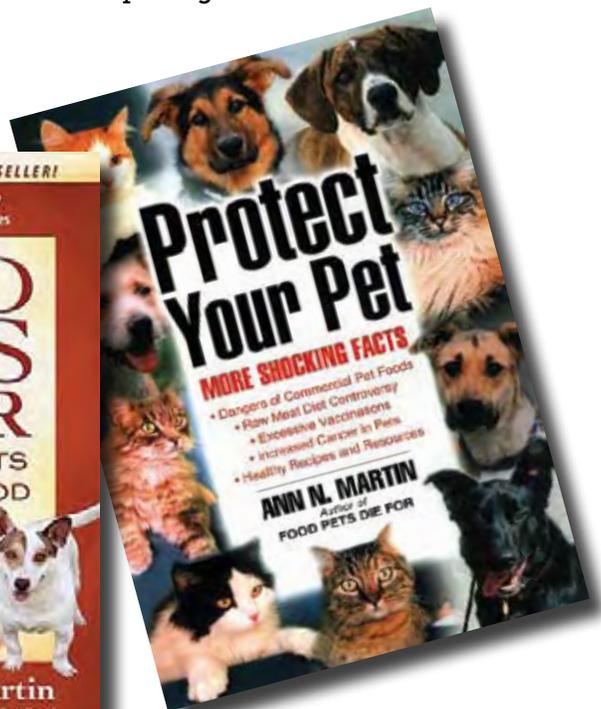
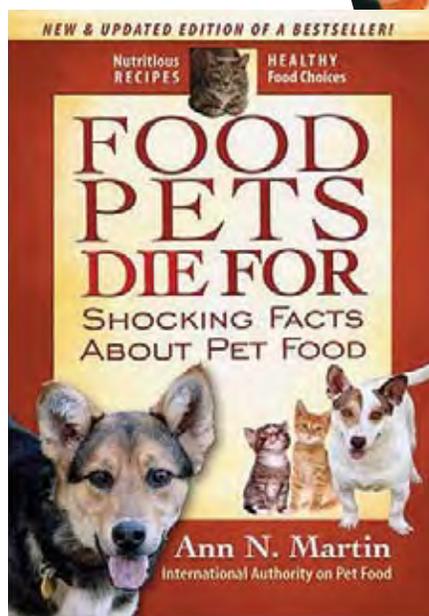
The sad scenario is that it is our pets who are suffering the ills of these inferior ingredients, the lack of a nutritious diet. We have been brain washed by the industry and some veterinarians, that in order to keep our pets healthy we must feed them a diet formulated for dogs and cats.

NO TABLE SCRAPS, they tell us. We have pets suffering from cancer, skin problems, allergies, hypertension, kidney and liver failure, heart disease, numerous dental problems, to name but a few. These same individuals can find a myriad of reasons why our pets are inflicted with these problems, the environment, lack of exercise and stress, but never is it attributed to the inferior commercial foods we are feeding. Before the pet food industry began to prosper, our pets ate what we did and lived long, happy lives. Most died of old age.

So, if you love and care about your pet, take a few extra minutes when preparing their meal, add a little more meat, toss in a few more vegetables, cook a little more brown rice or oatmeal, even a piece of toast. At least you’ll know what your pet is eating and I am sure you will see an end to the escalating veterinary bills and have a happier, healthier pet.

The Pet Food Industry, a billion dollar unregulated industry, has evolved from the garbage which should otherwise be disposed of at a land fill site, buried or processed into fertilizer. Our pets are ingesting this stuff on a daily basis. Garbage, laced with additives, preservatives (*of a questionable nature*), chemicals, excess amounts of sugar and sodium (*nearly three teaspoons of salt per kg. of food*), and according to the AAFCO Ingredient definitions, *“Urea Formaldehyde”*.

I suggest that one addition be made to the labelling of pet foods, a skull and crossbones insignia on the package.



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