

I'm a Registered (hobby) breeder in Victoria. I'm dedicated to breeding & raising healthy animals, for sale as pets, as breeding stock for other Registered breeders, and to keep as my own pets/breeding stock. I bred dogs from 1986 to 2006, and have been breeding cats since 2006.

Over the last few years, I have been told several times by both Vets and staff at the RSPCA (Vic), that meat (or cheap pet foods), aren't a balanced diet, and that I should only feed a premium pet food like Hills or Royal Canin. I used to feed my pets a BARF diet (Bones & Raw Meaty Foods). Some years ago, I changed to Royal Canin on advice from vets etc. I've noticed a significant decline in the health of my pets since then, from increased immunity-related illnesses, to decreased fitness & higher fat-to-muscle ratio, to problems with teeth. My animals are most definitely NOT as healthy as they were when on a BARF diet, so I'll be changing back to that.

On the technical side, we're told that meat isn't a sufficient diet, because in the wild carnivores also consume plant material. While this is true, a wild diet is around 85-95% meat to 5-15% plant material. Further, it's primarily green plant material & berries, not wheat grain. Whereas even the highest meat-content commercial pet foods contain a maximum of 40% meat (many are significantly lower), and the vegetable matter is largely wheat grain.

Furthermore, it is actually cheaper to feed pets HUMAN-GRADE meat (let alone pet grade meat), than it is to feed most commercial pet foods!

(Likewise, human-grade lactose-free cows milk is approximately \$1.00 per litre cheaper than "Pet Milk", which is exactly the same thing – lactose-free cows milk.)

When fed meat & bones with a small amount of vegetable matter, pets consume much less food, don't have weight problems, have a better immune system, and rarely get teeth problems/gum disease.

In Australia, pet food companies are self-regulating, whereas in USA they're subject to FDA oversight & approval. Furthermore, companies that sell pet-grade meat (both supermarkets & butchers) often stock meat that is "off" – when you open it, the smell is revolting.

I urge the government to:

1. ban promotion of commercial pet foods in veterinary schools etc whether by sponsorship from the pet food industry or advertising;
2. ban pet-health-industry professionals (eg vets, vet clinics, RSPCA) from advising people that a high-grade commercial pet-food is the only diet that is healthy for their pet. They may sell the product/s, **but not promote them**. The only promotion of commercial food should be direct advertising by pet food companies, supermarkets, and pet stores, direct to public.
3. extend Food Standards Australia New Zealand's remit, enabling them to have oversight & approval of pet foods, in line with USA's FDA oversight & approval.
4. introduce some level of price protection for pet foods - for example "pets milk" should be sold at the same price as human-grade lactose milk, not \$1.00/litre MORE than human-grade milk.

I thank the Committee for considering my submission.