

RMB drum here to stay until vets ‘wise up’

Dear editor,

I write in reply to Martin Atkinson’s letter (January 28 issue). As one of the two nominators for Tom Lonsdale in RCVS elections for the past few years, I welcome the letter from Martin Atkinson. It seems that Tom’s banging of the raw meaty bones (RMB) drum is, at last, making some progress. Firstly, I am pleased to see the recognition of our cats and dogs as “domesticated carnivores”, but there are still a significant proportion of members of the profession who continue to toe the PFMA script that dogs are omnivores in an effort to justify a species–inappropriate commercial diet based largely on plant material in the form of grains and pulses.

Mr Atkinson claims never to have seen a pet suffering from having been fed “good–quality, commercially prepared food”. If your practice sees cats fed solely on kibble with kidney disease and dogs with skin allergies, to name but two common conditions, you certainly have, in my view, seen the suffering caused by these diets, not to mention the rotten teeth and gingivitis and diseases that lead on from those conditions. The fact that it takes a number of years, in some cases, for the suffering to clinically manifest does not alter the causative role of the diet in the disease process. If there is a diet that naturally cleans the teeth, as the RMB diet does, why recommend anything else that would then require additional work by owners to try to clean teeth manually? If owner compliance is a concern, you are creating an increased risk situation, which you would presumably wish to avoid, by adding extra steps into the daily routine. In an increasingly litigious society, I would be worried if I were in a veterinary practice actively promoting and selling the very food that leads to disease. I don’t see the pet food manufacturers taking the fall for our profession, given that they will claim they are acting on our recommendations.

Mr Atkinson recognises, quite correctly, that the ideal diet is a whole carcass. It can be approximated to a RMB diet – as thousands

of RMB feeders bear testimony to on a daily basis. Very few RMB feeders actually feed a whole carcass. Tom has written two books – *Raw Meaty Bones* and *Work Wonders* to educate vets and owners on how to feed an RMB diet in an imperfect world. From the AVS debate in October, it was patently clear that the students felt under-equipped to support and advise owners in their choice to feed a natural diet. I have heard stories of vets in practice being totally abusive to clients who admitted to feeding a natural diet. Putting these two pieces of evidence together, it is not surprising that owners do not feel able to approach the profession to get advice on lifestyle choices for pets.

I question the intelligence of a profession that recognises the ideal carnivore diet as whole carcasses, but then recommends and sells a diet based on plant material. Surely, it is better to educate owners how to feed RMB as a modified version of the ideal diet than to start them off on something that, by its ingredients, is, logically, quite fundamentally flawed and, I believe, inevitably leads to disease? An RMB diet is not impractical and it quite plainly cannot be misleading to recommend an ideal diet. Until the profession “wises up” to how it is being manipulated by the conglomerates that ultimately own the pet food manufacturers, and starts to recommend a proper species-appropriate diet that increases the health of animals instead of damaging it, I think it is safe to say that the RMB drum is here to stay.

Yours faithfully
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