

Dog Food Dilemma – Part 1

by Karen Murray

My first question to you is...what do you think they do with the three to four million euthanized pets that are retrieved from the shelters and veterinarian offices per year???

Cremation? Think again...about how much it would cost to fire up the crematory.

Burial? How much land would it take to bury three to four million pets per year?

Unbelief and shock is usually the reaction I get when I reveal to people the results of my search for a better way to feed our German Shepherds 13 years ago.

My first concern came when I asked my trainer which "BIG" named dry dog food we should feed our dogs. She rolled her eyes and said, "Do your dogs a favor. Mix a little raw hamburger into the dry food. They did come from wolves, you know". RAW????? Eeeeekk! I then thought about how my Mom would buy raw kidneys to feed to her cats and they would eat it raw. Hmmmmm.

About this time is when our first GSD, at one year old, was diagnosed with severe Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency, or EPI. EPI is a condition caused by the failure of the pancreas to produce digestive enzymes. The body cannot assimilate the food eaten without enzymes. Results are bloody diarrhea, a ravenous appetite (no matter how much you feed them they are still hungry afterwards), severe weight loss and malnutrition. This is not uncommon with the breed, but she was so severe that the vet at that time told us she wouldn't see two years old. The regimen my previous vets put her on was not working and she was getting worse, so we turned to a more natural approach and used supplements. This was the event that started my own investigation into the food we were feeding her. With the use of this new information, our GSD Shamrock titled in agility, tracking and obedience and lived until just shy of her 12th birthday!

The first book I read, by Anne Martin, "Food Our Pets Die For," was jaw dropping, and thus started my quest for a better way.

The term "rendering plants and processing" was unfamiliar to me. Ms. Martin shed horrifying light on the subject. "Renderers" receive dead stock from removal companies, which bring dead, diseased farm animals, zoo animals, decaying road-kill, maggots and all, restaurant and grocery store garbage, including styrofoam trays, plastic wrap, rancid grease AND hundreds of thousands of EUTHANIZED dogs and cats, YES, our companion animals, some with flea collars still attached! THIS IS NO JOKE.

The "5 D's"—dead, dying, diseased, disabled or drugged—animals with cancerous tissues or tumors, livers infested

with worms (flukes), cirrhosis, animals that have died with pneumonia in their lungs, animal bowels, feces, and even fetal tissue which is dangerously high in hormones—are rendered. Any animal carcasses with high levels of drugs, steroids or pesticides in excess of limits described by the FDA and NOT FIT to be processed for human consumption are also rendered into our pets' food! Meat rejected by slaughter houses and sent to the rendering plant must first be saturated with chemicals or charcoal called "denatured," a procedure designed to make it unpalatable to humans, ensuring it cannot be re-sold as human-grade meat. I personally know a health inspector who told us when they discover meat that has reached a warm temperature because of a bad refrigeration unit, in a grocery store or restaurant, they are required to throw the meat out into the dumpster and pour household bleach on it! This is also picked up by the renderers!

And the "wholesome grains" we read about on the package or hear about in their commercials are really just the hulls or remnants swept up off of the factory floor! In the case of corn, for instance, the starch is removed for corn starch powder and the oil is extracted for corn oil. IF... a "whole grain" is really used, it has been deemed "unfit for human consumption" because of mold, contaminants, or poor quality. It is no wonder most pet food recalls are due to toxic grains such as wheat and corn! Grains are used to increase the percentage of protein in the analysis, and are also highly indigestible, causing stress on kidneys, and grains are a major allergen to animals.

Did you know that three of the five major pet food companies are owned by huge corporations?

Colgate-Palmolive owns Hills Science Diet

Proctor & Gamble owns Eukanuba and Iams

Nestle owns Alpo, Fancy Feast, Friskies, Mighty Dog, and Purina One

Heinz owns 9 Lives, Amore, Gravy Train, Kibble-n-Bits, Nature's Recipe

Mars owns Kal Kan, Mealttime, Sheba, and Waltman's

My sister was so horrified years ago when I told her about this that she called the dog food company (one of the big ones that is listed above) and actually (I don't know how) spoke to the President of the company! His response....."We would never consider allowing companion animals in our food." But ignorance is bliss (and money), isn't it? They purchase meat from the cheapest source and add all of the ingredients required for it to be labeled a "balanced diet."

The addition of chemicals to our pets' food is despicable! Reporter John Eckhouse uncovered that veterinarians began

reporting to the FDA that the sodium pentobarbital used to euthanize dogs and cats was losing its effectiveness. Why???? Because these animals had been eating food with trace amounts of sodium pentobarbital in it for years, FROM...euthanized pets in their food!

A research paper from University of Minnesota stated that the barbiturate, sodium pentobarbital, survives the rendering process WITHOUT undergoing degradation. When ingested, sodium pentobarbital has shown to cause liver and kidney damage and renal failure.

Other unwanted ingredients such as pesticides and insecticides get into the mix by way of poisoned livestock and fish oil laced with DDT and other poisonous herbicides that are found in West Coast mackerel and tuna.

With the cumulative effects of years of ingesting all of these different chemicals, not even mentioning preservatives such

as ethoxyquin, a carcinogen used as a rubber preservative (more info on ethoxyquin later), is it a wonder that our animals are suffering with skin and eye allergies, hip dysplasia, cancer, kidney and liver problems and other ailments????

With all of the above in mind, BEWARE...

In the next issue I'd like to explain what is in the dog food you may be feeding by showing how to read dog food labels and understand the terms used for the ingredients involved. I would also like to discuss comparative diets, which will allow you to choose the best for your pet and your life style.

See you in the next issue!!

My best to you and your furry family members,
Karen Murray