

Feeding Dogs: The Science Behind the Dry Versus Raw Debate

A Special Interview With Dr. Conor Brady

By Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

Dr. Karen Becker:

Hi. I'm Dr. Karen Becker and I am interviewing Dr. Conor Brady about his fantastic book and I have him here with me. Thank you, Dr. Brady for joining me for a live and in-person interview. I'm very excited and honored that you're taking some time to talk.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Great to be here. I'm delighted to be here, Karen. It's a privilege and an honor, so I can't wait to get into it.

Dr. Karen Becker:

So excited. I have read your book cover-to-cover and love it. And I know lots of other people have too and we'll discuss that in a minute but most people are aware that you're a passionate raw feeder and that this is what you do within every fiber of your being. But back up and tell me the backstory. Walk me through your life as a kid and then going to school and then how you got turned on to your passion of food because it's not something, it's kind of a smaller community and for you to have put this much, for you to put 3 inches and a decade of your life into this, there has to be a really good backstory. Back up and tell me how those got started.

Dr. Conor Brady:

I think my passion for dogs would have begun with my first dog. Well, I've come from a family of five boys and my parents and we got the dog on the day I was born and so Prince grew up with me and I was really attached to this dog. I knew straight away once he died, that I kind of, I wanted another dog and my mom and dad said, "Slow down, let's get you into an animal shelter." Now I'm only 12, 13 years old, I'm working in animal shelters. Kind of the same progression that a lot of people have had. And so I'm passionate about the kind of welfare, kind of animal health kind of stuff because you see a lot sick, sad dogs in the shelters. Anyway, as I was in school I always knew I wanted to work with animals but didn't know what I wanted to do, but it was when my one dog really, the most adored dog I ever had was this dog Prince when I was a kid.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And then I had this kind of dog, a shepherd cross collie, Meg, who I spent six or seven years with. She was such a lovely dog and she was really hobbled with chronic hip dysplasia by the time she was about 7 years old. We neutered her too young, she was fed really poor quality food. By the time she's 7 years old, she had every bit of the German shepherd genes and the hips start to go and she's hobbled. And she's walking around like an old woman at 7 years old. And I said, "Okay, this needs to change." And we're down at the vets and she was getting shots of Cartrophen and all the other stuff that you put in. And this amazingly complicated food. And it's

like, none of this is working. And I said, "What's the prognosis here? How long is this going to go on for?"

Dr. Conor Brady:

And I'm in college at this time so I knew a little bit and I wasn't given any kind of good news. I said, "You know what? I'm going to kind of remove everything from this dog's life and start again." Put her onto real food, go with this raw dog food thing that was kicking off, certainly in Australia and I just bought whatever book I could get my hands on, probably "Give Your Dog a Bone" or one of those. And I said, "I'm just going to do this." And then I put it onto a couple of natural supplements that we all recommend and omega-3 and whatever else was cool at the time. Said, "Let's see how we go." And this dog went from walking, really sore back legs and her tight little kind of haunches, the poor thing.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And within about a week she was back running up the cliffs that are beside the beach that we walk on. And I was like, "Bloody hell, look at the difference in this dog. This is incredible." I run back, 19 years old full of like, "This is incredible. I've hit it. This is amazing." I run up to my vet and I say his name and I say, "Check it out. Look, Meg is a different dog. She's incredible. Look at the walk, her gait is fixed." And he was kind of like, "Yeah. And so what happened?" And I told him that I dropped all these things and I just had, and he says, "Yeah," he wasn't that impressed anymore.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And I was like, "How could you not be impressed anymore about the dog?" You know how it is, you get this reaction it's like, "Oh, it was raw foods." I was a bit disappointed. And so that was the start for me. I just thought, "Wow, that's really different." That's what swung me. But it was that change in Meg and the lack of response from the vet, it was just kind of like, I'm not wrong. I'm not lying to you. This is just very simple experiment.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And if I could go on, just as one more minute, another kind of thing to change was when we were over in Australia, the guide dog schools are sponsored by dry food companies, so you feed this dry food, whatever's cool that year. And I remember a lot of the dogs that were in my care but certainly a lot of dogs I've seen on the side because you're trying to make a bit of extra cash. You're doing some dog training, helping people out. I think I had about 18 dogs or something on the books. And I remember of the 18, about maybe six or seven were on full-time meds, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories and chronically itchy, just these mad allergy dogs. And I was told that part of the allergy capital of the world but actually every city probably said if you looked at their dogs.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And I was just trying to say, it's not normal that of the 18 kids I'm looking after, seven of them were on steroids. Could you imagine that in school? Would that be acceptable? I was saying, there has to be a reason for this and with the raw thing, I was doing a lot of nutritional work on the dogs. And so I said, "Okay, well the very first thing is, we're going to take three of the worst

dogs here as a small trial." And we were with the best, really top group of vets we're looking after these dogs. I took three of the worst dogs that had seen the vets maybe 18 times in the three or four months beforehand. They were racking up vet visits, heavy manges.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And I said, "Okay, give me those dogs, take them off the dry food, bang them onto raw, couple of the supplements," whatever I thought it was cool at the time and as you'd expect, recurring skin, [inaudible 00:05:13] that kind of thing, just evaporates and maybe one dog went back for a skin check and that was it. It went from 18 checks to the three months beforehand to no checks or one check three months later. After three months, I'm completely convinced and I got these three dogs so I go back into these vets and I say, "Guys, look at this, you need to talk to my superiors. Look at the difference in these dogs. I've got them off all the meds. They're back to focus." Because you can't train a dog that's on steroids or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories, it just takes a little bit off them. It's not fair and they're itchy. And it's like, who wants to be doing our homework when they're a little bit, "I'm itchy."

Dr. Karen Becker:

Miserable.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Yeah, miserable. I said, "Look at the difference in these dogs." And we're a charity organization, every penny is really important. We need these dogs healthy. We don't want them off their work and we want them happy and content. And the vet just says, they just weren't impressed at all. And that kind of lit a fire a bit. And then my superiors didn't really go with me. And I kind of said, in guide dogs, I kind of said, "Look guys, this is the fact." I gave him a three-hour seminar. I gave them the science at that stage. I'd present a seminar to them. And afterwards they said, "It was very interesting but we're going to stay with the dry food." And I just couldn't believe it. That was it.

Dr. Karen Becker:

And I have to assume, Conor, that you started gathering information then, because your reference section is one-fifth of your book. It's incredibly well-referenced. And so you probably started collecting information all along. When did you decide you were going to put everything together, culminate all of the information that you had gathered into a remarkable resource? When did that start?

Dr. Conor Brady:

It started the day I quit Guide Dogs in Australia. Once you don't believe me, I'll kind of show you. And also I love research. Anytime somebody talks to me about science and says, "There's the science, there's the science." It's like, well I need to see the science. Because there's people say these, certainly with all the goings on these days and say, "Well, trust the scientists. Trust the science." And it's like, well, that's ridiculous. Those two words never go together. There's no trust in science. There is only data. I trust data. If you show me the data and then I'll trust you.

Dr. Karen Becker:

It's interesting, when I interviewed Marion Nestle, Ph.D, who's probably the most credentialed human food-

Dr. Conor Brady:

She's amazing.

Dr. Karen Becker:

-researcher. She's amazing. And right before COVID shut down the world, last January, I was in New York and we interviewed her for "The Forever Dog." And her statement is, "Any type of documented research that dry food companies have that's of any benefit, it's behind closed doors and it's not published." They may have unpublished data that they're using, but because it's not released, there really isn't any viable studies demonstrating that dry food is healthier than other types of food categories because that basic science has never been done. There's not even necessarily an argument there, no one has ever gone toe for toe. Certainly not in a lifetime study, comparing gently cooked or raw against processed and then ultra-processed food. Those tests have never been done. It's kind of impossible to even talk about the science because we don't have any.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Yeah. Very telling for its absence. If you brought in some amazing drug, you would compare it and you would say, "My sports powder is better than your sports powder." You'd pitch the two of them, you'd put 200-meter sprinters on a track and you'd run them on, whatever. And they're the sort of studies people want to see that they really sell products. But these days, all you need to say is, "There's science behind this. This is scientifically proven." When people see "clinically proven," they just fall for it. They go, "Well, thank God." And that's fall first because that's not reading these studies. I've got 1,300 studies there in that book. And I didn't do any of these studies. I'm a researcher. These studies are done for me, I just collate them in a way and present them in a way that should hopefully solve an argument of some fashion.

Dr. Conor Brady:

We know they aren't reading these studies. They're there but they're just not reading them or understanding them. The science thing is just, I really got very sad about the fact that science is being destroyed. Science is now, it's kind of gotten a bit dark. There's some staggering, I use a lot of quotes in that book. I like a little quote. And one of the quotes from Horton who is one of the top scientists in the world, he's the editor of the Lancet for the last 20 years, since he was 30 years old or something, Lancet is a top journal. And he says that, "Less than 50% of the studies we print are true. And I'm not saying they were wrong," he says, "they're false." Less than 50% in the top journals. Now think how hard it would be to get to the top journal and 50% of those papers are nonsense.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And Marcia Angell found the New England Journal of Health. Can't remember, Cambridge study. Anyway, she said the exact same thing. She goes, "Maybe one in two of the studies we print are probably false." and a lot of people saying so. These are our top scientists of our top journals. Now, can you imagine the lesser journals that are owned by companies? I hate that.

Trust the science. Science, I worry about that. And that's what the book was about is kind of trying to show people, yeah, the first section saying, "This is what dogs eat and these are the diets that makes them strong." And section two, talking about kibble but section three was so important to me and just showing how corrupt, how easily we can be misled, because if we can be misled, if we're this wrong on dry food, can imagine what else? And those silly things have gotten through.

Dr. Karen Becker:

And think about, you think about veterinarians who are just being manipulated, I guess is the word I would use. We graduate from veterinary school having been manipulated by companies. And there's a massive conflict of interest, I think, to have your nutrition programs taught by companies promoting products. It's a big, hot mess when it comes to conflict of interest and yet the veterinary profession apparently either doesn't recognize it or it's just so accepted at this point that it's a natural flow of this incestual relationship between pet food companies and veterinary schools. It's not discussed and yet it's really dysfunctional.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Yeah. I'm kind of hoping that you're spot on about that. There's another quote from the ethics officer of Sydney University when someone realizes that, "Okay your veterinary department is sponsored by Hill's pet food and they went to the lady in the ethics committee," and they said, "What do you think about that?" And she goes, "Well," she said something like, "there's no such thing as a free dinner. They wouldn't be doing that for nothing." There was a bit of an issue there. It's interesting when other people look at that relationship they say, "That's just not right." Every review of science and health sectors say anywhere, "You can't have corporate money involved in health decisions. It just does not work." Okay private hospitals and stuff there can be pros and cons and stuff but you need to keep that money separate.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And unfortunately, we've gone down the road, if you can see freedom of information requests showing the contracts that these companies have with the veterinary departments, they're astounding, they're so complete. And they only cost a bit, maybe \$30,000, \$40,000 a year and they've just tied up the nutritional program. We're going to do the lectures. We're going to do the clinics. You're only going to sell our pet food in the reception. If you want to find out what company sponsors your local veterinary department, just ring up the veterinary department and ask them what dry food they sell. Because they'll only sell one food. And they only sell one type because that's the ones they've been sponsored by, otherwise you'd sell four or five types wouldn't you?

Dr. Karen Becker:

The worst. How can there be one perfect food right?

Dr. Conor Brady:

Totally.

Dr. Karen Becker:

But, but the reason I love your book, veterinarians are scientists and they need an all in one resource to be able to read it from beginning to end and say, "Oh, this is the chunk I didn't get in vet school. These are the resources. These are the studies I needed to see. This is laid out in a logical scientific fashion that allows me to get the information I need to see a different perspective." Not only does it make sense, Dr. Brady, the way you put your book together, but it's convincingly accurate about where the issues came from, how there was corporate involvement in the staging of ultra-processed foods. But then going back, dogs and cats are still not, despite the fact that they're domesticated, their metabolic machinery is not wildly evolved enough to assume that they could eat an entirely ultra-processed diet.

Dr. Karen Becker:

You just said it beautifully that every species in the world is not living and thriving on ultra-processed food. How odd that we've singled out two categories of domesticated animals and say, "This is all we're going to feed them." It's asinine. And yet veterinarians have never been presented the other side of the story.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Yeah. Yeah. You've nailed it. I want to reach out to younger vets. You need to get them onside and they do need to see an argument presented in a certain way. But also I didn't want to alienate kind of canine professionals and stuff. It's definitely, it's kind of a higher up, more higher up level book. It's not going to be a recipe manual as I keep telling people, but just like yourself, I got a lot of my licks from watching your stuff. But I have never dumbed down my approach to anybody. This is the science and I think we've got this kind of new religion that science can't be understood by you because you didn't study science and if you are a scientist, you're not the right scientist. And if you're a doctor, you're not the right doctor. And if the doctor doesn't agree with you, well, he's a quack. I thought you said you take a doctor's opinion. On and on and on.

Dr. Conor Brady:

But I think people can understand absolutely. Everybody's a scientist, everybody's a nutritionist, everybody understands how things work and they love when you understand how yeast works in dough and you kind of that's kind of interesting. You go onto the next thing in Google. I want pet dog owners to be able to understand good science and kind of say, absolutely everybody can get ahead behind this. There's nothing scary about it. Trying to remove the fear from people is really, really important. And hopefully that book will, if just for vets, young vets read it and just listen to our side of the story and if it works for you, great. And if it doesn't, you have heard our side of the story. I think my side of the story. At least give us that time. Put in that little bit of effort because nutrition just affects every bit of health. You have no idea, just every disease.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Absolutely. So many, including humans. I believe people eating the North American diet, the standard American diet, the SAD diet, many of us humans have nutritional deficiencies. I think about vitamin D deficiency and I think about magnesium deficiency. We run around with a lot of deficiencies as humans that we don't correlate to leg cramps and insomnia and all the things that nutritional deficiencies can cause. We just don't think about it as being a nutritional factor. Small animal vets, I believe, rarely if ever have made a diagnosis of nutritional deficiency as

contributing to lifelong chronic degenerative disease. And yet when you think about what pets are eating, how can it not be?

Dr. Karen Becker:

We weren't taught even how to identify nutritional deficiency because we were taught it doesn't exist as long as the animals are eating a complete and balanced diet. Raw feeding really switches that on its head. And what you realize is "My gosh, it makes total sense that animals can't sustain vibrant health eating ultra-processed, cookie cutter nutrition for every breed of dog, from birth to death, regardless of how we have genetically changed them to be through inappropriate breeding." How can that be? And yet those questions aren't asked to veterinarians.

Dr. Conor Brady:

No. But our vets, we know the answer to this. Vets aren't asking those questions though. Some of these companies say they spend millions on research. It's one of their ads, millions spent on research, make sure your pet gets everything. And I say, "Yeah, what type of research?" It's not scientific research. It's some sort of marketing but an amazing job has been done for vets not to ask these questions. These are very switched on, evidence-based scientists. And yet at no point has evidence ever been asked for. And so you're talking about nutritional deficiencies. When we look at the studies, there's an astounding study of dry and canned food that came out of the U.K. four years ago, 94% of canned dog food didn't meet AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) minimum nutritional guidance, 94%. One hundred seventeen different products were tested.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Wow.

Dr. Conor Brady:

I think, 113 and 64% of dry foods. And this is AAFCO minimum nutrient profile. This isn't the optimal, we don't know what the optimal nutrients are in pets and the minimums are based on all sorts, swine [crosstalk 00:17:44].

Dr. Karen Becker:

Craziness. Chickens. Chicken, sometimes. Birds.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And there are so many things wrong with AAFCO. We don't even need to get into that at the moment. But it's the fact, nobody's ever asked these questions. I find it staggering that these studies exist, that these fields are so incomplete because there's no such thing as complete. Let's face it. NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) can't do it for their astronauts, candy companies bloody well can't do it for our pets. If these studies exist with that staggering amount of incomplete pet food is being fed, how can you expect nutritional adequacy to either be spot-on in your pet? He could be sick one day. He can be stressed. He could be he's done an extra run. It's anything, the wind has changed, the temperature has changed. Bloody hell. You have requirements for things at different times of your life all the time. No one nutritionally incomplete food is going to do that for you.

Dr. Conor Brady:

You have to vary it up. And studies show that, so many studies show that when you add literally anything to dry pet food, your pet benefits. You could do a study or you name your food, bar anything that's not poison. Name me any food, you do a study off and the dog's going to benefit. We know lycopene in tomatoes is good for cancer. You put that in, tomatoes into dog, you're going to get it. We know that leafy greens do this, we know carotenoids in carrots do that. That study that Rodney Wilson quoted, the bladder cancer study and in the tigers. And we know these things. We know what cod liver oil does. We know it cools off inflammation and it helps. It helps with arthritis. We put it into dogs. We know what's going to happen. If the food is complete, you wouldn't need to add anything to it. The dog wouldn't benefit from it because the food is already complete. But yet you put anything into food, glucosamine and chondroitin, this one's staggering to me.

Dr. Karen Becker:

I know, it's the worst.

Dr. Conor Brady:

We need glucosamine and chondroitin, dogs eat meat and cartilage and bone. If you're buying glucosamine and chondroitin, invariably you're buying ground up cartilage. We wait until that Labrador is 7 years old and walking like a coffee table, a big fat Lab and his poor joints are so stiff and he's like that for life, like it's normal for a middle aged kind of dog to be doing that. And then we'll advise, "Oh we'll give him glucosamine and chondroitin." It's like, why didn't you grow the dog on glucosamine and chondroitin? Give it to them as a pup, he needs that stuff to form his joints properly. We wait until the issue comes and then oh maybe we ought some vitamin C because he's stressed. Why wouldn't you put that in all the time?

Dr. Conor Brady:

How much coenzyme Q10 does a dog need? Haven't a clue. There's so many things to nutrition that we add in as antioxidants, as a little benefit for the dog. You're supposed to be consuming that all the time. That's just a general part of the diet, just because it's not in the set AAFCOs – it's just staggering. We know so little. The veterinary nutritionist thing is interesting. We've only got a 120, 130 vet nutritionists on the planet. We've got maybe a 100 working. Of the 100, a huge amount of them are owned by companies. I say owned, paid by. Of the amount that are free to be used by vets and people, very few are available to people. They say that the average vet is not able to give a therapeutic diet, therapeutic diet advice. That can be obesity. "My dog's overweight. What do I do?"

Dr. Conor Brady:

That is the basic nutritional level stuff. Your GP should be all over that. If we were to leave the obesity crisis in pets, 60%, 70% of our dogs are overweight or obese. If we were to leave that crisis to the 100 veterinary nutritionists to solve, you've got 40 million or 19 million pets or cats or dogs in the U.S. and you're going to let what, 50 U.S. veterinary nutritionists sort that out? How long is that going to take? Thousands of years. We know we need to reform the veterinary stuff. We know there's an issue here. It begins with, I don't blame veterinarians. As I said, it's not the individual vet I'm talking about here. It's barely even the veterinary departments, I think the

over hierarchal kind of system that allows this to happen, needs to change. And it will only change when all vets are stressed enough that they don't have the answers.

Dr. Conor Brady:

There's a great, on a positive note, there's a great veterinary group in the U.K. who are a bit of a shining light for me in assets. I'll give them a bit of a plug. Why these vets? Morkel Pienaar was one of the directors in there, that very incredible vet, South African guy, South African region. He put me on to this idea that what he was doing 20 vets working for him, all raw feeding. If you promote anything else, you don't get a job. But they've got a health care plan, which is essentially pet insurance that they take out. They're a big unit, so they can offer everything. They can cover everything and any specialty they can cover, they'll pimp out to pay for it.

Dr. Conor Brady:

They say, "You give us X amount of money per month, a \$100, \$200, \$300, a \$1,000 if you've got a French bulldog," but "you give us a certain amount of money each month and we will keep your pet healthy." They flipped the whole thing on its head. Now it's, "We are paid, we make more money keeping your pet healthy, because if your pet is sick, it'll cost us to fix it." They flipped it on its head.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Interesting.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Isn't it brilliant? This is what Eastern medicine has always been the case. You used to only pay the medicine man when you were healthy. And when he became sick, it was kind of like, "All right, you didn't fix my car, so why am I going to keep paying you?" You don't pay them when you're unhealthy. They've kind of done that with this system. They say, and most interestingly the quote from them is, they won't take on your dog if he's dry-fed. You're not allowed on this plan. They'll only take him on if he's raw feeding. This is 20 raw feeding vets.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And these guys are, quote, "Sucking in clients from a 100-mile radius." Any conventional vets within that 100 miles is going to lose an argument very quickly because the community are just flocking into these vets because it's like, "This is a brilliant idea." They give them huge money off the raw dog food if they go on the plan and they tie up the customer in a positive way, they say, "You stay with us." They don't promote huge amounts of flea control in dogs, no fleas. They're testing for worms as opposed to kind of given the antiemetic stuff. And they don't give annual boosters. Absolutely not. And they'll do vaccine checks and that kind of stuff. They do all the stuff that we're promoting, that we're shouting about but they do it as a business and say, "If you do these things, this will cost us the least so we can make more money." I just thought that's a brilliant idea. I think that might be the future-

Dr. Karen Becker:

It is. And so they're putting proactive medicine literally to work. They're role-modeling, they have a flagship practice for proactive medicine. You can either wait, so what we're taught in

veterinary school is wait until your animals get sick and then we'll treat their symptoms with drugs to suppress them. I didn't have a single proactive veterinary class. I didn't have a single discussion in my four years of vet school about how to prevent kidney disease or cancer or liver disease. We learned how to treat it once it occurred but there was no discussion of proactive medicine. What you're telling me is that there's this whole category of people, veterinarians, now promoting it as a business model. How beautiful is that?

Dr. Karen Becker:

That could be the template. That's the template to show our conventional colleagues. First of all, our conventional colleagues are burned out. Many of them are depressed/suicidal. Many of them are struggling because they don't have enough tools in their toolbox. Imagine giving them the tools to prevent degeneration from occurring and not only what that will do to their psyche, but how that will refresh their soul as doctors and give them the opportunity to actually put proactive medicine in place, to not have the heartbreak of watching their patients fall apart piece by piece and not knowing what to do about it. Here's what's cool is food, food is the foundation. What you said about this group is that the foundation of their premise of getting into this program is you've got to feed healthy food.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Yeah, that's right. You've got to be a certain amount of age, not going to taking your dog at 12 years old and guarantee this kind of health. Raw dog food is absolutely central to us. Rich is the other director in there and Rich has a great word. He uses the word "wellness." He's obsessed with wellness. They call themselves a wellness center and he says, "Why isn't there a degree? Because there's a business in it." He says, "People will come and pay you money to keep them healthy. We don't pay anyone to keep us healthy." In Ireland, we just brought in tax on health products. There's no tax on medicines. God no, we won't produce them. But we brought in heavy VAT (value added tax) on them, 23% VAT on vitamins and minerals and supplements that we are not told to take during these times of trying to prevent coronaviruses.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Wow.

Dr. Conor Brady:

It's staggering.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Being punished, you're being punished for taking care of yourself.

Dr. Conor Brady:

You know what? It's health care. I should be going to somebody [inaudible 00:25:55] and sitting down with my dog and saying, "What do I have to do to make sure I only have to see you once every two to three years for my health check?" Because then I'm happy to come in for a health check, as opposed to being forced to, I get the text on my phone, "You got to get your booster." It's kind of like, it's this being dragged in "Okay, here we go." As opposed to, "I need to go in here because I need to keep my pet healthy." That's the way we should be thinking. And we

don't, we wait until the pet is sick and we go into the vet or we go in for the annual check kind of thing. I'm totally sold with this idea, Karen. It's a really good idea.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Well, and I love the fact that, of course, I think everyone that is truly involved in wellness understands that it starts foundationally with diet. Let's get back to one of the aspects that I really love about your book. You clarify, you distill with succinct and perfect transparency why dogs are not carbovores. Why it's not a fantastic idea to – I love a good potato chip. I won't deny it. Who doesn't love a good crunchy carbohydrate, including dogs? All of life loves a good crunchy carb. Some animals can handle more carbs. Some species can handle more carbs than others, but dogs are not one of them that does. We can feed them. They'll eat it. Dogs are scavengers, they'll eat anything, but a lifetime of a high-glycemic carb, starch basically, not a grand idea. And yet that's the foundation of the vast majority of diets that we're feeding to dogs.

Dr. Karen Becker:

You do a really good job talking about the damage that a high-glycemic starch, sugar-based diet does to dogs. That argument, your presentation of the information alone would go a really long way. If every veterinarian in the country just read that section. I think it would be vital.

Dr. Conor Brady:

That was my most important one, I think.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah, really eye-opening.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Yeah, carbohydrates is mad. And there's so much to it. Dogs can digest carbohydrates, yeah. I think it was Doug [inaudible 00:27:53] said it to Gene [inaudible 00:27:56]. He goes, "Yeah. I can digest ethanol and sucrose. It doesn't mean that half my diet should be rum and cookies." It's a brilliant answer. It's kind of like, yes, we know they can digest carbohydrates and they have taken some very tiny evolutionary steps towards that digestion. Some breeds have fired up a few more genes for amylase production, which is the enzyme for digesting carbohydrates. Really interesting. Darwin would have killed to have seen this sort of stuff that we can look at under the hood now. Really interesting. But people leap on that and go, "oh, if they've taken this tiny step, we can feed them 60% corn."

Dr. Conor Brady:

It's like, no, that doesn't make sense in any circles. And carbs may be an interesting source of energy. They may be a source of energy. I go, well, chocolate bars are a good source of energy. What's the point? Fizzy drinks are. I do try to tease that apart. But even the obesity stuff, how that all works and when we look at the food we're feeding pets, this is the food we're told not to eat as humans. Don't eat this foods, don't eat this. And yet this is the only stuff we give to cats and dogs. It's quite obvious where the issues are most of the time. But the carbohydrate one was interesting, particularly the ramifications for it. Okay, obesity get all up with, going into

pancreatitis, which was a huge one because it's shocking. Pancreatitis, it must be shockingly painful.

Dr. Conor Brady:

And even now we know that when you eat huge amounts of carbohydrates, that's when your blood fat spikes. It's on its head because in the '70s we were told, "Oh, people are getting fat. It must be because they're eating fat." We dropped the fat content in food and not the sugar and then the obesity crisis exploded because it was always sugar's fault. It was the same with pancreatitis. We were taught, "It was that little bit of fat that we gave him. That's what gave him the pancreatitis." And it's the straw that broke the camel's back. What was wrong with your dog that he couldn't eat a little bit of fat? This is a carnivore. Why couldn't we eat a little bit? It wasn't the fat, there was something else going on. The pancreas was knackered for want of a better word beforehand. Anyway.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Then we started getting into the bloat side of things and bloat with torsion is shockingly prevalent in the canine community, 3% of pedigree dogs are killed with it. Ten percent are affected by it and now I really strongly believe soluble fiber is at the heart of that. I strongly believe that in deep-chested dogs. Yeah, that chapter took maybe three or four years of my life, but some people wouldn't have done that.

Dr. Conor Brady:

There's a great vet, Dr. Mark Roberts, who's a great vet, who did a lot of work and you can tell, he's there. He opened my eyes about that. Then you talk to somebody and they just say one little thing. Another vet in the U.K. might say one little thing about obesity and I go, "I didn't know it blocking leptin and that kind of stuff. What's that about?" And then down I go and it's two weeks there and my wife's given air to me because I'm working till 4:00 o'clock in the morning and I'm trying to understand this new – and then you're trying to condense it in a page that's digestible, it's hard work, but it's fun. I have to say I do like it.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Really good. And it's a real blessing. It's a gift to not just the veterinary committee. It's a gift to pet parents who are looking, if they've lost a dog to bloat or if they've lost a dog to pancreatitis, it's not an easy topic to discern but you've distilled this massive amount of information that is very technical and difficult to understand into a section that is understandable and digestible and makes complete logic and sense, which is so important. I just really appreciate your commitment to sticking with the book-writing process. Me going through it now, it's horrific. I really appreciate the fact that you've stuck with it to the point of covering the most important topics that are literally killing the most dogs. You kind of checked off one by one the epidemic of diseases going on in dogs and how food correlates to that. And I think it's really important because that body of work has not been knitted together in this way before. Thank you for doing that.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Yes. It was a privilege. It was a privilege. I don't think I'll ever do it again, that's not till – I need to take some time off. You know how it is. It's nice to get the project finished. It's nice to get it

out there. It's going well. And I appreciate those kind words. Because it does start to help you. Start to believe them after a while. Initially you're very worried. It's very scary. You know yourself, it's very scary putting these things out there. You're letting your baby go and it's going to be picked up by some people and other people might bash off but that's science. You can't be afraid to kind of put your stuff out there.

Dr. Karen Becker:

I think it would be a very difficult book to criticize because it's not your opinion. What you're showing people is the research that you have amassed over many, many years and you're showing the correlations of "Look at what all the science says," that you may not have been able to identify or had time to look at in the depth and breadth that you have. You're putting the science together in a logical order to allow people to come to their own conclusions. But the blessing is, it's not your opinion. I really appreciate the fact, it's hard to attack this book because it's just the science laid out in an easy-to-understand, digestible format. And that I'm really thankful for. I am going to secure enough copy for critics, if people say, "There's no science behind raw food." I'm like, "Just a minute, please."

Dr. Karen Becker:

I do like the fact that it really is our best defense right now for people who say, "I just don't see any research out there." It really does a great job. For anyone who has been told there's no research, you've done a good job of putting it together in one resource. It's a fantastic book. Congratulations on your hard work. And I really, I enjoy it. This is what my recommendation is for you. Yes, take a year break. But the research we're just starting, thankfully. You hit the nail on the head. The entire fresh feeding movement is taking place from the ground up. Nothing is happening from the top down, other than I think they're having to work hard now to either big pet food companies are going to have to produce a fresh food diet or they have to figure out a way to continually bash it. But it's becoming harder and harder because the logic isn't lining up.

Dr. Karen Becker:

No animal is meant to consume ultra-processed food for a lifetime and it's hard to defend that statement regardless of how scientifically formulated it is, it's hard. That being said, there only is two options, either put a product into the marketplace that laterally competes with the other fresh options or change or improve the diets that you're making. Those are the only – there's a fork in the road. As millions of pet parents are becoming more educated about the topic of food, common sense is kicking in and they're like, "Listen, I may feed some ultra-processed foods." All of us eat some ultra-processed foods, of course, but we try and balance that for our families with a blend of less-processed food. The common sense is kicking in around the world. And this is spurring on a discussion that veterinarians are going to be forced to have to take part of because they can't just say, "Don't do it," anymore. It isn't holding its own.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Your book is a fantastic resource for veterinarians who need to get up to speed in understanding the other half of the story. Read this book. For fresh feeders who are tired of arguing and just want to say, "Here, read this and we'll have a discussion." This is a really great way for those of you who don't like to argue, just present the book because it does a really good job of laying out

the argument for you. I like the book for both of those reasons. You've done the battle work for everyone who's done arguing.

Dr. Conor Brady:

I secretly hope that there's so many formidable people online that are just crazy educators in some fields. You meet them and it's intimidating. It's like, "Bloody hell, I don't know anything like that level of knowledge on some facet of allergy." So much to learn from them. But I'm kind of hoping that these people who are really, particularly when you feed your dog real food and they do a flip and it's like, "Oh my God, look how healthy he is." It's like, "I want to tell the world." And it's like, tell the world, get online. Because every single mind you change, you're helping a pet, if not multiple pets, when you do present your argument and in a kind of a calm way online in whatever forum you'd like to use, hopefully in a friendly, positive way. People can take some of the signs and the nuggets and the quotes that have been kind of lifted and they can take that and they can present it in their way to put it out online. And that's the way to spread it.

Dr. Conor Brady:

It's just the more people talking about this stuff, you can feel this moving very quickly now. There's a "hockey stick effect" that they talk about in most kind of trends. And it's anybody talking about is a weirdo, and then they stop kind of slagging you off so much and they attack you a little bit. And then it's like, voomf, there's just too many people going with it. And you kind of feel you're at the curve of the hockey stick at the moment. And you kind of feel that the curve is about to shoot upwards. And so I'm kind of hoping that there's enough ammo in that, that people can keep regurgitating these statements and when somebody says something about science, there isn't any science and they get the tricks.

Dr. Conor Brady:

When people say, "It's dangerous that you feed a pet yourself." I would say, "Well, how much casserole did you have last week? What's your RDA of calcium? Surely you must know that, very important. Do you have kids? How much calcium do you give them? How much do they absorb? Where do you get your calcium from in your food?" And they just don't have any answers to that. Or you show them a study, that show how nutrient bereft most of us are in so many of the crucial things because we're not eating enough of the stuff we're supposed to be eating and yet we're walking around and we're compos mentis and everything's okay. It's about simple kind of responses to people.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Show me the science, you go "Okay. I'll do my study. You do yours." There are very quick ways to disarm the argument that you can – there's just a simple little trick. I try to infuse enough of them that people can use them up online because I really wanted to be, get this done quickly. Let's just get this argument dusted quickly and move on because there's just so much to learn now. We've got a whole new realm of science here that we can explore. So many studies need to be done. Does feeding kibble at the same time, what effect does that have on fresh food digestion? Can you feed raw, meaty bones with a little plant matter? Is it all right? All these questions. Can you mix dry and raw? These studies that we have tentative ideas about and people are up in arms. If there's no solid science, you've got two angry packs of dogs.

Dr. Karen Becker:

You do.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Barking at each other through a fence.

Dr. Karen Becker:

You do.

Dr. Conor Brady:

I'm stepping away. "What's your opinion, Conor?" "I don't know guys. I don't know." There's so much to do because a very simple study, we just do these studies of dogs. We feed them different things and we look at their poo and how much bone shards came out? Those studies are already been done in different animals. We can do it in dogs and without our answers. I'm really stoked about that. I hope more, we need the universities on our side. We need younger vets to start calling for this information. I want science to come back. I want to rely on us. I love the subject and I wanted to remove it away from the big, nasty corporations and take it back with this.

Dr. Karen Becker:

This is a really good discussion, Dr. Brady. Thank you for taking time out of your busy life to tell us a little bit of the backstory about your great book. I am excited, no pressure, but I believe in another 10 years, you'll be able to do a part two with some of the science that really begins the foundational comparisons of different types of diets, which I believe is when it will make your one book, amazingly – I think that your part two, I don't think you're done writing. I think you need to have a little bit of a break, but I think your second version is going to be an unbelievable contribution of new science that specifically compares basic research and the nutrition aspects that we're looking for.

Dr. Conor Brady:

I do hope that's the case, that we can come back and I'm sitting here in 10 years and I'm talking to you about the amazing advances that have gone on. And when you listen, when you talk to Rodney and a few others and you hear what people are up to and you kind of go, this is amazing. There's a lot of switched-on people, making some serious leaps now. You know within the next five years there'll be a very exciting collection of works that need to be kind of extrapolated for people. Of course there will be. Whether I do it or not is nearly irrelevant.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Well I love the fact that you have contributed mightily with your decade of research culminating into one awesome book. It has been a pleasure to be able to spend this time reviewing your hard work. Thank you so much for your effort and putting this forward. And no pressure, but I am looking forward to volume two in 10 years.

Dr. Conor Brady:

I'll get back to you, Karen.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Thank you so much, Dr. Brady, for joining me.

Dr. Conor Brady:

Thanks very much, Karen. It was a pleasure. Thanks for having me.