

Pet Owners Ditch This Nightmare After Studies Suggest It's Useless

Degenerative diseases are soaring, so you need to know how to protect your pet and help them thrive. And doing this is your best weapon. Yet they hope to make you fall for their gimmicks, at the expense of your pet's health and your wallet. Be wise.

Reviewed by [Dr. Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- The processed pet food industry sees some of their profits slipping away, and they're frustrated that more and more pet parents aren't buying the "science" behind their products
- Big pet food believes they have "science" behind them, but their science is designed around a profit motive, whereas pet owners are looking for the science behind optimal nutrition for dogs and cats
- Bottom line: The goal of the pet food industry is not in alignment with the goal of a growing number of pet parents in search of diets that will improve and maintain their animal companion's health and vitality
- Big pet food has further destroyed consumer trust through the use of deceptive marketing practices and continuous product recalls for contamination issues
- Until the pet food industry aligns its goals with those of pet parents looking for biologically appropriate nutrition for dogs and cats, the current climate of consumer distrust and disgust will not improve

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A growing number of pet parents, concerned about their furry companion's health and quality of life, are looking for alternatives to processed pet food. In response, the pet food industry is looking for ways to convince consumers to keep buying their products.

Big Pet Food Wishes You Would Accept Their 'Science' and Get Off the Internet

Lately, big pet food seems to be spending a lot of time lamenting the fact that pet owners simply don't understand or acknowledge the "science" behind their formulas. A standard industry complaint: "If only we could make consumers ... aware of the science and get them to accept it, rather than believing all those myths and misinformation they read on the internet."¹

"Information needs to be science based, not based on perception, marketing or other things," says Daniel McChesney, Ph.D., director of the office of surveillance and compliance for the Center for Veterinary Medicine, part of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).²

Of course, the science they are referring to is not the science of creating optimally nutritious diets for pets. If that were the case, there'd be no shortage of high-quality, peer-reviewed, lifetime studies comparing the health, vitality and longevity of pets fed a diet mimicking their ancestral diet and pets fed a processed diet.

No, the science the pet food industry loves is the science of learning how to keep dogs and cats alive (surviving, but not thriving) on biologically inappropriate, "feed-grade" foods that must include synthetic vitamins to meet minimum nutrition standards.

The science they are so proud of involves testing the limits of dogs' and cats' tolerance for poor-quality, biologically inappropriate ingredients that have undergone extreme processing methods. The endgame is to keep carnivores alive on a processed diet of grains, starches, and the poorest-quality animal protein they can get away with. It's the science of dollars and cents. The cheaper the ingredients, the bigger the profit margin.

Why Are You Pet Parents so Doggone Distrustful?

Another complaint the pet food industry has is that "... in today's culture and environment, a growing number of people seem to not believe scientific information or to not trust it or the people and organizations releasing it. That seems to definitely be the case with pet food and nutrition."³

The reason pet parents have grown distrustful of the people and pet food organizations producing scientific information is because their goals are clearly very different from the goals of pet owners who want to offer the best nutrition to their dogs and cats, not to mention the pet food companies are "researching" their own products!

Pet parents would be much more open to learning about new pet food science if the research was objective, unbiased and comparative, which isn't what's happening in the industry. But it is happening at some progressive universities.

For example, Dr. Anna Hielm-Björkman and her team at the DOGRISK project are evaluating the effects of feeding kibble versus fresh food at the vet school in Helsinki. These are the types of studies that pet parents want to see funded, and are also the studies that would help pet parents regain their trust in the pet food industry. So why aren't more companies doing them?

Pet parents are also quickly catching on to the fact that big pet food companies employ marketing firms whose job it is to convince consumers that a bag of heavily processed, dry, dead, rendered ingredients is actually fresh, whole food as pictured on the package.

What's Pictured on the Label Isn't in the Bag

The reality is that most inexpensive processed pet food never at any point in its existence resembles the fresh, whole food pictured on a typical pet food label. The truth is that rendering plants create meat and bone meal from a variety of dubious sources, for example, parts of cows that can't be sold for human consumption, including bones, the digestive system, the brain, udders, hide and more.

The vast majority of pet foods are made with ingredients rejected by the human food industry, meaning they're **feed-grade**. There are no plump fresh chicken breasts in the mix, no fresh broccoli, whole sweet potatoes or freshly sliced carrots. However, there may very well be the carcasses of diseased animals, expired grocery store meat (including the plastic and Styrofoam packaging), road kill, zoo animals and dogs and cats that have been euthanized.

The pet food industry always adamantly denies the disgusting realities of the rendered ingredients they use in their products, but they inevitably get caught red-handed, which was the case with Evanger's dog food recall for contamination with euthanasia drugs.

Recalls Also Destroy Pet Owner Trust

When it comes to pet food recalls, the vast majority involve processed diets, and recalls certainly contribute to a lack of trust. Many pet owners remember the huge and frightening **2007 pet food recall** for melamine contamination. The melamine was found, along with cyanuric acid, in wheat gluten that contained ingredients imported from China. Many dogs and cats became very sick, and some died after eating melamine-contaminated food.

More recalls have been for **salmonella or aflatoxin contamination**, mold growth, and in the still-unresolved case of jerky treats imported from China, illegal antibiotic residue contamination. Bottom line, there are many more reasons for pet parents to be distrustful of pet food manufacturers than trusting of them.

Big Pet Food Has Burned Bridges with Their Customers

It appears the pet food industry hopes to "build a bridge to science" to convince pet parents to keep buying their products. But until their goals align with the goals of pet owners to feed dogs and cats optimally nutritious diets and not just inappropriate-but-survivable diets, they won't reverse the current trend.

Too many pet parents are watching their beloved animal companions, at ever younger ages, develop degenerative diseases that dogs and cats in the wild never acquire. And while there are many differences in the lifestyles of domesticated and wild animals, diet is one of the biggest, arguably the most impactful, and the best starting point to improve health.

According to industry experts, "The [pet food] industry's goal shouldn't necessarily be to change people's minds ... rather, the goal should be to provide better information and education to try and open minds to information other than what is available on the internet."⁴ Big pet food either doesn't realize or can't admit they had their chance. They had a chance to build consumer trust, confidence and loyalty, and they squandered it.

They ignored the need to explore connections between an exploding number of pets with degenerative diseases, and the practice of feeding dogs and cats the same biologically inappropriate processed diet day in and day out for months, years or a lifetime.

They chose instead to invest more in the "science" of feeding animals diets they aren't designed to eat, as well as in just the right marketing to gloss over the realities of their products. The processed pet food industry blew it, and they should really stop blaming the internet for their own shortcomings.

What to Do if You've Lost Trust in the Processed Pet Food Industry

There are few situations in which the old adage "let the buyer beware" is more appropriate than when deciding what food to offer your animal companion. Between low-grade ingredients, too-frequent recalls, and an exploding population of pets with chronic digestive issues, allergies and degenerative disease, it's no wonder so many pet parents are exploring homemade diets, fresh food diets made by smaller, transparent pet food producers, raw diets and other alternatives to the dead, rendered, dubious, processed stuff.

If you want to help change the deceptive practices occurring in the pet food industry, be a member of the **Association for Truth in Pet Food**, which is the only organization out there committed to holding the regulatory agencies and AAFCO accountable.

Sources and References

^{1,2,3,4} [PetfoodIndustry.com](#) September 22, 2017
