



# The Horrors of Commercial Pet Food

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(NaturalNews) The global commercial pet food industry is astonishingly profitable and continues to grow (sadly) by leaps and bounds. Let's define commercial pet food, for our purposes, as anything that is packaged in cans or bags, even if labeled holistic or natural. Hundreds of generations of pet guardians have fed their animals successfully without the use of bagged, canned and processed pet foods, but that fact has been virtually covered up by "Big Pet Food," and consequently forgotten by consumers.

Conventional thinking causes us to pose the question, "How can we trust the feeding of our beloved companions to an [industry](#) driven by profit?" Keeping prices competitive requires the use of cheap [ingredients](#) and fillers. To make these inferior ingredients and fillers appeal to pets, artificial [colors](#), flavors and flavor enhancers are added. The consumer saves some money on bagged and canned [pet food](#), instead of an optimal, species specific homemade, carnivore [diet](#), in the short run but, ultimately, will incur enormous veterinary bills to treat problems that could have been prevented with proper [nutrition](#).

Many commercial pet [food companies](#) label their products misleadingly. Processed wood chips are called "powdered cellulose," and a ground-up array of disease-ridden tissue and unwanted animal parts -- often containing high levels of [hormones](#), antibiotics, and pesticides -- are labeled as "[meat](#) and bone meal."

The percentages of protein, fat, and carbohydrates listed on the [labels](#) provide little or no useful [information](#) on whether or not the ingredients are bioavailable -- that is, can our [pets](#) digest and use them in their bodies?

If our cats keeled over and died after they ate a bowl of kibble or a single can of commercial [food](#)-- as unfortunately many did in the massive worldwide 2007 pet food [recall](#), and there have been dozens of recalls before and since then -- there would be no doubt about its danger. However, since it takes years to develop [cancer](#) and other degenerative diseases, most allopathic veterinarians never make the connection between diet and chronic [disease](#). Put bluntly, commercial pet [foods](#) may marginally sustain [life](#), but they don't promote [health](#).

Here are some basic facts about commercial [pet food ingredients](#) and labeling.

## BY-PRODUCTS

Even on "premium" and "super-premium" brand labels, one of the major ingredients listed is by-products of some sort. By-products are used primarily in canned pet foods. By-products are basically "parts other than meat." The term "Pink Slime" has come into vogue lately, as garbage such as what

is discussed here, was most often sent to pet [food manufacturers](#), however it has now crossed the line into ground meat for human [consumption](#), specifically, our schools, and low end, [fast food](#) restaurants. These horrific by-products, may include internal organs not commonly eaten by humans: such as lungs, spleens, and intestines; other parts such as cow udders, and uteri; and in the case of [poultry](#) by-products, undeveloped eggs, beaks, and feet, etc. While it's true that a cat would eat by-products in its [natural](#) diet when it consumes an entire bird or mouse, these entrails should not be relied on to the exclusion of meat.

## RENDERED PRODUCTS

Rendering (basically a slow-cooking process) produces two significant ingredients: animal fat or tallow and a processed "meal" product. The latter may be called meat meal, meat-and-bone meal, or by-product meal depending on its composition. Due to historical quirks in naming, the term "by-product meal" refers to poultry, while the equivalent mammalian product is called "meat and bone meal." Rendered [products](#) are found primarily in dry pet foods.

Animals that are dead, dying, diseased, or disabled prior to reaching the [slaughterhouse](#) are known as "downers" or "4D"[animals](#). These are usually condemned, in whole or in part, for human consumption, and they are generally sent for rendering along with other by-products, parts and items that are unwanted or unsuitable for human use: such as, out-of-date supermarket meats (including their plastic wrappers), cut-away cancerous tissue, and fetal tissue (which is very high in hormones).

Rendered ingredients vary greatly in quality. A few rendering facilities are closely associated with slaughterhouses, which are in turn connected with feedlots or poultry farms. These "captive" rendering [plants](#), which do not accept outside materials, are more likely to produce single-species meat meal. Such [meals](#) are typically designated with the name of the source animal, such as "chicken meal."

Many [consumers](#) are now aware of what "meat and [bone](#) meal" indicates on a pet food label. As a result, some manufacturers are now calling this ingredient "[beef](#) and bone meal" and similarly euphemistic terms, which are deliberately coined to mislead you.

## "COMPLETE AND BALANCED" CLAIMS

A food may be labeled as "complete and balanced" if it meets the standards set by the Association of American Feed Control Officials. These standards were formulated in the early 1990s by panels of canine and feline nutrition [experts](#). State Feed Control Officials (or equivalent authorities) are then responsible for enforcement; though, in many cases, enforcement is negligible. The standards set only minimums and maximums, not optimums. The danger of conventional thinking is that minimums are good enough for our pets' health, instead of optimal levels, which would, in turn cost them more and affect "their" bottom line.

## ADDITIVES AND PRESERVATIVES

Virtually every commercial pet food contains additives and preservatives. Dry foods and soft-moist

foods contain additives to produce the colors, shapes, and textures of the food. Canned foods typically contain coloring and flavoring agents. These coloring agents when applied, trick you, the animal's companion into thinking you are feeding real meat instead of connective tissue!

Some of the worst preservatives, found primarily in dry foods, include Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), propyl gallate, and ethoxyquin. Ethoxyquin is banned from nearly all human [food products](#) (except certain spices) due to its cancer-causing properties. Warning: Be sure to read labels on everything that goes into your companion animal's mouth. For instance, the preservative [sodium benzoate](#), which is added to some food products, as well as many brands of aloe vera [juice](#), is known to be exceptionally poisonous to cats. Look for brands of products in all categories free of this dangerous preservative. It is advisable to eliminate it from everyone and everything's diet, and check for it in your supplements, especially if in liquid form, this includes the super fruit juices, as well.

### FACT OR FICTION: PETS IN PET FOOD?

Over the years, there have been numerous reports of euthanized cats and [dogs](#) being processed into pet food. The Center for Veterinary Medicine, a branch of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration ([FDA](#)), admits that dead dogs and cats are commonly rendered, and although there is no legal prohibition against using dogs and cats in pet food, they do not condone the practice. They managed for years to let this horrendous practice slip through the cracks just as it has been done in large animal feed! We all know the horrors of mammalian tissue when it is found in cattle feed.

The allegation of euthanized cats and dogs in pet food was undoubtedly true, but today all "reputable" pet food manufacturers in the U.S. certify that they do not allow such materials in their products. Whether or not the renderers who supply the pet food [companies](#) are complying is unknown. Renderers would be extremely foolish to jeopardize profitable pet food contracts when these materials can be put to many other uses.

Animal remains can be turned into [fertilizer](#), industrial lubricants, cosmetics, soaps, tires, asphalt, glue, film, or any of hundreds of other products. However, as fertilizer, this material can be introduced into the human food supply, the by-products of which become pet food. Something very troublesome, indeed to vegetarians and vegans is the practice of our carrots being fertilized with the euthanized remains of our pets and road-kill.

The FDA received so much concern from animal companions over this issue that they were pushed to conduct a study to determine whether or not the "pets in pet food" story was true. They searched for the [euthanasia](#) drug sodium pentobarbital in dry [dog](#) foods -- the most likely foods to contain it. They found plenty of it, primarily in foods containing meat and bone meal, animal fat, beef and bone meal, and animal digest. However, [the FDA](#) attributed the presence of the [drug](#) to euthanized livestock. The FDA claims that the amounts are too low to cause a problem; however, the long-term health implications of consuming this drug are completely unknown. One might pose the question, that if there is no [safe](#) dosage for radiation it would follow that there is then no safe dosage for euthanasia [drugs](#) in our pet's food. Just how much [poison](#) can we living things tolerate?

The FDA further used a test it developed to check for dog and cat DNA in the foods, and found none. One might also wonder about the reports of diseased circus animals, elephants in particular and even human body parts ending up in pet food, could have ever been proven by the FDA. But we can be reasonably certain they were not. Is there smoke behind these "urban myths?" So, although it is certain that many pet foods did contain these cannibalistic materials, the industry does appear to have cleaned up its act a bit, in this regard, at least at the time these tests were conducted. Does that mean that we can trust that never happens again or is even happening now? No, and the pet food makers cannot guarantee it, since they are relying on the trustworthiness of the notoriously, untrustworthy, and secretive rendering industry.

Ultimately, we all should ask ourselves, "Why trust "Big Pet Food" to make our pets' food, when it is so easy to do it ourselves and insure the ingredients used meet our own holistic standards?" We now can avail ourselves of recipes for properly prepared raw meat and raw bone, species-specific [diets](#) that can be properly supplemented and made at [home](#) in the safety of our own kitchens. (Remember many different pet food companies products go through the extruding equipment where kibble is made. This was how many brands were involved in the recall horror as there are only a few of these plants around the country. When the machinery is not properly cleaned between runs you may be getting traces of ingredients from other companies kibble!

Today, thankfully, we all have access to pasture-raised, organic, free range meats and poultry and can do a fine job ourselves of preparing homemade meals for our pets, without relying on this profit driven, unscrupulous industry to do it for us. Even if the meat you select at the super market is less than optimal it is far better than what went in to the can or bag! The "Big Pet Food" companies track record has been unacceptable through the years and has caused many animals to die needlessly because they either forgot about the need for taurine or some other nutrient or amino acid that was destroyed in the cooking process; that is why their formulations change with the weather, and we find "buzz words" on their labels everywhere we look, extolling the virtues of having added some popular nutrient they found on the front pages of industry publications. Whatever the ingredient is, it is simply added to the same basic "pink slime" they have always used.

What on earth is holistic and natural about "kibble?" There are no "Kibble" bushes in the wild for our carnivores to graze on! Even if "Big Pet Food" begins with New Zealand Spring Lamb and vegetables-- once is it canned, preserved, kibbled, bagged and packaged-- you have nothing but dead, lifeless "packing material" designed only to sustain your animal companion's life at best, not enhance it and offer he/she the possibility for [anti-aging](#). This "burger joint," "Pink Slime," fast food approach to feeding out pets offers our animal companions a fast track to the grave, exactly the same as it offers us!

## CONTAMINANTS

To add further insult to injury, we find that [pesticide](#) residues, antibiotics, and molds are often found in pet [food ingredients](#). Meat from downer animals may be loaded with drugs, some of which are known to pass unchanged through all the processing done to create a finished pet food.

Grain products, such as, [wheat](#), corn, and soy, have no place in the diets of carnivores (such as

dogs) and/or obligate carnivores (such as cats)-- and are usually condemned for human consumption due to excessive pesticide residue-- can be used without limit in food intended for animals.

There are also deliberate contaminants, such as [melamine](#) in wheat gluten and [rice](#) protein from China that was implicated in the deaths of tens of thousands of pets in 2007. The use of melamine to falsely elevate the protein levels in many food products is a widespread practice in China despite its illegality. Since 2007, melamine has been found in dozens of Chinese-made human food products around the world, such as infant formula and milk chocolate. Have you ever heard of any living thing that has ever been diagnosed as having a [gluten](#) deficiency? So why was it ever added in the first place? It always relates back to "Big Pet Foods" bottom line.

As decent quality ingredients become scarcer and far more expensive, look for more problems from imported foods -- including "Big Pet Food" brands manufactured far from the company's home office. The simple truth is, dry pet foods are the likeliest to contain unwanted ingredients and contaminants that have no place in our companion animals diet. If you take only one piece of advice in this article, please let it be to stop feeding any and all dry food. Better yet, avail yourself of the research done by people who have been feeding raw meat and raw [bones](#) over multiple generations, instead of listening to the claims of profit driven commercial pet food companies whose idea of a feeding trial is to take 6 beagles over 6 weeks and examine their excrement. The animals used in these feeding trials are most often euthanized at the end of the trial period-- even though we, the consumers, are led to believe they have been sent off to loving homes.

## TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR PET'S REMAINS

In this spirit, to insure that your humanely euthanized pet may rest in peace where you deem appropriate after a long illness or catastrophic [event](#) and does not become processed at a rendering plant, you must make arrangements with your veterinarian to take control of your pet's remains.

Your vet may recommend a reliable cremation or pet burial facility, if local laws prohibit pet burial on your own property.

It is also important to know that if your vet sends your animals' remains to a facility, such as a veterinary college or university, to be necropsied, you can pay a little extra to have your pet's remains cremated after necropsy, and the ashes sent back to you. Otherwise, the remains will more than likely be picked up by disposal trucks and taken to rendering plants.

In summary, your animal companion is a member of your family and you are responsible for its health, happiness, and welfare! They are as much what they eat as we are! Your own veterinarian probably knows very little about cat and dog nutrition as their information comes from "Big Pet Food" companies. Their business thrives on selling you those prescription bags and cans out of their clinic.

Consult with holistic nutritionists and experts well versed in species specific diets to guide you through the process of meal preparation for you dogs and or cats, as there is nothing better than a properly prepared homemade, raw meat and raw bone diet, but also nothing worse than an improperly prepared homemade diet. Take a few extra minutes and learn the rules and the tools to

properly prepare and [supplement](#) homemade raw meat and or poultry with raw bones and organ meats and then after you prepare it, in bulk, simply freeze it up, in appropriate serving proportions.

A little extra time in food preparation and a little study on the myriad of [holistic health](#) care options, available today, can save you the heartbreak of losing your pet to a devastating disease that can be easily prevented by feeding a species specific raw carnivore diet!

**About the author:**

Celeste Yarnall, PhD is a holistic practitioner and nutritionist, specializing in supplementation and the species specific, raw carnivore diet. She is an EFT consultant and member of the prestigious Tapping Solution's, Insider's Club. She also consults on Non-Verbal communication, visualization techniques, grief counseling and anti-aging for both people and pets. She is a Reiki Master, medical intuitive and author of 4 books on holistic health care for dogs and cats. Her latest book, The Complete Guide to Holistic Cat Care, chronicles her 11 generations of Tonkinese Cats reared on the principles in her books and is the recipient of the 2010 CWA Muse Medallion Award. The co-author of The Complete Guide to Holistic Cat Care, is Jean Hofve, DVM. It is the first [anti-aging](#) book ever written for [pets](#). Celeste and her husband, Nazim Artist have formed the Art of Wellness Collection and live and work in Westlake Village, CA.

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