

Raw pet food is not without risk

BY CHRIS COLLIS B.SC.(AGR.), TIMES COLONIST DECEMBER 14, 2011

Re: "This raw deal is a good one," Dec. 10.

I have been a veterinarian for 22 years. The article on the pet food venture has me profoundly concerned. I'm a big advocate of small business, but the raw pet food business is fraught with substantial risk.

The article neglected the dangers associated with feeding raw meat to our pets. A nutritionally balanced, consistent quality and biologically safe food requires an understanding of biology, nutrition, biochemistry, disease and quality control. There is no routine standard testing of pet food by government agencies.

All pet foods are made from the discarded waste of the human food industry, including those contaminated with salmonella, e.coli and campylobacter. Commercial diet "cooking" destroys the infectious diseases and additional testing ensures the freedom of foreign material, mould and chemical toxins.

An ill pet fed a raw diet entering our hospitals would be handled as a potentially infectious communicable disease risk and a quarantine protocol would likely be instituted for the protection of our staff.

The use of commercial diets are the safest, most complete and balanced way to feed 99 per cent of our pets. I wait in anticipation to see the end of this fad and can only hope that the catalyst for its inevitable demise is not the death of a toddler from a raw food feeding pet owner who thought they were doing the right thing.

Who would want this type of risk on their conscience?

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