02 THE RAW MEATY BONES CAMPAIGN

Its purpose, scope and wider significance

STATUS AND SCOPE

This paper explains the intended architecture of *Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health* and the campaign that grew around it. It separates documentary record, clinical observation, hypothesis, interpretation and open research questions. It does not offer human medical advice, claim that every part of the Cybernetic Hypothesis has been proved, or treat periodontal pain and suffering as desirable for an individual animal.

Executive summary

- The campaign began with preventable oral and systemic suffering in domestic carnivores and a practical means of foundational prevention: biologically appropriate food requiring tearing, ripping, shearing and chewing.
- Its governing proposition is that the oral interface may regulate the carnivore and, where the carnivore is a higher-order ecological regulator, may influence the wider ecosystem.
- The Cybernetic Hypothesis reframes life, health, disease and death through communication, feedback, adaptation, restraint, amplification and regulation across levels of biological organisation.
- Cybernetic method does not abolish reductionism, germ theory, diagnosis or treatment. It places each within a wider dynamic system and asks how the parts generate whole-system behaviour over time.
- Raw meaty bones are both an immediate practical proposal and the missing natural comparator for assessing industrial and commercial feeding systems.
- Dogs provide an unusually revealing research model because of their accessible oral interface, rapid developmental transitions, varied body size, shared human environment and compressed lifespan.
- The scientific task is to map the system, identify feedback loops, build dynamic models, derive predictions, test them, revise the models and return every result to the whole ecological setting.
- The public-interest task is to recover the documentary record and apply disciplined evidence standards and the Five-Part Public Interest Test to institutions, products, formulas and claims.

1. The practical starting point

The Raw Meaty Bones Campaign arose from ordinary veterinary practice. Dogs and cats presented with bad breath, inflamed and bleeding gums, tartar-encrusted teeth, pain and a wide range of systemic disorders. These conditions were so common that they were often accepted as normal features of domestic carnivore life.

The central clinical observation was that carnivore teeth and gums are designed to be used. Natural food is not merely a source of chemical nutrients. Its size, toughness and structure create saliva flow, mechanical cleansing, muscular work, behavioural satisfaction, microbial disturbance and repeated feedback between the mouth and the whole animal. Soft, pulverised or ultra-processed foods remove much of that function.

When dental treatment was joined to a change towards carcasses and raw meaty bones, improvements were observed not only in the mouth but also in vigour, behaviour and general health. Those practice findings generated case material, published work, professional correspondence and a widening inquiry into diet, periodontal disease, immunity, systemic illness and prevention.

IMMEDIATE PRACTICAL PROPOSITION

Foundational prevention should precede recurring treatment wherever the conditions that generate disease can be corrected. The physical and behavioural functions of food must be considered alongside its chemical composition.

2. The governing proposition: the mouth may regulate the regulator

The towering proposition is not simply that a healthy mouth benefits an animal. It is that the mouth may help regulate the condition, performance and survival of a carnivore that itself participates in regulating other populations and the wider ecology.

At the oral interface, food structure, teeth, gums, saliva, microorganisms, blood flow, immune responses, pain and behaviour continually interact. Disturbance at that interface can change feeding efficiency, hunting, fighting, carrying, social signalling, reproduction and survival. Where the carnivore is an apex or higher-order regulator, those changes may propagate through prey, competitors, scavengers, microorganisms and resources.

The sequence can be stated simply:

> *oral regulation -> whole-animal regulation -> regulation of a higher-order ecological regulator -> population and ecosystem effects*

This is not a claim that ecosystems are controlled from the top by one species. A cybernetic ecosystem is a multi-interdependent web in which every component constrains and informs others. The apex carnivore is a particularly powerful, higher-order participant; it remains regulated by prey, food availability, competitors, microbes, disease, climate and the condition of its own body. The hypothesis places the mouth within that reciprocal network.

FORMAL RESEARCH PROPOSITION

If periodontal and oral processes modulate the fitness, feeding capacity, reproductive success and survival of a higher-order ecological regulator, then those processes may contribute indirectly to population and ecosystem regulation.

3. Life, health, disease and death

Medicine, veterinary medicine and biology do not operate under one perfectly coherent consensus paradigm. They contain homeostatic, evolutionary, ecological, systems and network concepts. Nevertheless, their daily structures commonly divide knowledge into named diseases, separated specialties, isolated mechanisms and interventions directed at identified abnormalities.

The Cybernetic Hypothesis proposes a different governing vocabulary:

Concept	Cybernetic working definition
Life	Nested systems preserve their organisation by sensing change, communicating, feeding back, adapting and constraining one another.
Health	The capacity to maintain viable organisation through effective communication, feedback, resilience, adaptation and restraint.
Disease	A disturbance of regulation: signals may be lost or distorted, corrective responses may fail, or positive feedback may become pathological amplification.
Death	A severe loss for the individual that can also release resources, alter competition and predation, and contribute to population or ecological change.
Prevention	The establishment of conditions in which healthy regulation is more likely to persist, rather than merely detecting and suppressing consequences after they arise.

The distinction of scale is essential. Periodontal disease is painful, destructive and undesirable for the individual animal. The hypothesis does not say that gum disease is "good". It asks whether a process experienced as pathology at the individual level may simultaneously have regulatory consequences at population and ecosystem levels.

CHILD-COMPREHENSIBLE STATEMENT

Living things stay alive by noticing change and correcting course. Health is when the corrections work. Disease develops when correction fails or makes the problem worse.

4. What Raw Meaty Bones was written to do

Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health is often described as a feeding book. That description is true but radically incomplete. The practical feeding guidance is the visible entrance to a three-part argument.

Part	Chapters	Function in the argument
Part I - Pet Health	1-9	Clinical observations; the diseased mouth; raw versus cooked and pulverised food; systemic consequences; immune disturbance; appropriate feeding; preventive veterinary dentistry.
Part II - Of, By and For the Industry	10-13	Scientific method; reductionism and linearity; professional education; commercial influence; propaganda; institutional conduct and reform.
Part III - Life and Death in the Wild	14	The Cybernetic Hypothesis; evolutionary and ecological regulation; the relationship between individual disease and wider system effects; the comparative human-health question.

The first thirteen chapters assemble the observations, anomalies, conflicts and questions that culminate in Chapter 14. The book therefore operates at once as a practical guide, a veterinary and institutional case study, a public warning, and the book-length foundation for a cybernetic research programme.

Silent Spring supplied a model for the public-warning purpose: preventable harm can be normalised when institutions, professions and commerce share assumptions. *Animal Farm* supplied an allegorical lens through which distorted language, conformity, power and betrayal of professional purpose could be examined. These comparisons concern intention and structure, not equivalence.

5. Cybernetic method: placing the parts within the whole

Cybernetic thinking does not discard reductionism, germ theory, molecular mechanisms, diagnosis or treatment. It asks what each can explain, what each leaves out, and how each belongs within the changing system.

Reductionism

Reductionism is indispensable for identifying organisms, molecules, cells, pathways and lesions. But an inventory of parts does not explain how a living system behaves over time. Feedback, delay, threshold, adaptation, compensation and interaction can generate properties that are not visible in any isolated component.

> *Reductionism supplies necessary detail. Cybernetics asks how the details interact, regulate one another and generate whole-system behaviour.*

Germ theory

Microorganisms remain crucial, but they are considered within an ecological matrix involving food structure, host tissues, saliva, immunity, microbial communities, behaviour, development and environment. A microorganism may be a trigger, participant, marker, intermediary, opportunist or amplifier. Its significance depends upon the relationships and feedback loops in which it is embedded.

Causation

The conventional question often asks whether periodontal disease causes a named systemic disease. The cybernetic question asks how oral disturbance participates in a reciprocal, time-dependent system that changes the probability, timing, intensity or progression of that disease - and how the systemic condition feeds back into the mouth.

Confounding, reverse causation, selection effects and measurement error remain real. Cybernetics does not evade causation. It seeks causation in loops, trajectories and responses to perturbation rather than assuming that every biological relationship can be represented by a single directional arrow.

Evidence and the excluded question

Evidence-based language is meaningless if the relevant question and comparator have been excluded. A feeding trial may demonstrate short-term nutritional adequacy yet say nothing about lifetime periodontal health, food structure, chewing, systemic inflammation, behaviour or environmental burden. Evidence can be technically correct and still answer the wrong question.

6. Prevention before recurring intervention

The campaign distinguishes three levels that should not be confused:

Level	Purpose	Examples
1. Foundational or ecological prevention	Establish the biological and environmental conditions in which disease is less likely to arise or amplify.	Appropriate food structure and quantity; normal oral function; education; microbial and environmental conditions; removal of continuing insults.
2. Targeted prophylaxis	Protect against a specified hazard.	Vaccination, parasite control and other measures directed against identifiable risks.
3. Secondary prevention and treatment	Detect, control, repair or palliate pathology after abnormal change has begun.	Screening, dental procedures, medication, surgery and management of established disease.

Targeted prophylaxis can be genuine prevention and should not be dismissed merely because it is technical or commercial. The campaign's criticism is narrower and stronger: repeated intervention is often labelled prevention while the upstream feeding and oral-function system continues to reproduce disease.

ORDERING PRINCIPLE

Foundational prevention should come first wherever the underlying conditions can be corrected. Treatment remains necessary for established suffering, but treatment without system correction may restore the conditions for recurrence.

7. Wild regulation, domestication and pathological amplification

In the proposed wild sequence, successful carnivores obtain food and clean and exercise their mouths through use. A failing carnivore may hunt less effectively, obtain less food, chew less, lose oral control and enter a downward spiral of periodontal and systemic disease. The loss or reduced performance of the individual changes competition, predation and resource flows.

Domestication interrupts that sequence. Domestic animals receive calories, shelter, social protection and medical support irrespective of hunting success. If the mouth remains functionally neglected, a process that might contribute to comparatively rapid attrition in the wild can become chronic pain, persistent inflammation, repeated treatment and prolonged systemic amplification.

The campaign therefore distinguishes modulated, reliable internal regulation from dramatic, unpredictable external correction. Healthy systems contain many quiet constraints. When those constraints are bypassed, disturbance accumulates until correction becomes severe or catastrophic.

8. Dogs and cats as unusually revealing research subjects

Domestic dogs are especially useful for a comparative and longitudinal research programme. They share human households and environmental exposures, receive sophisticated medical care, display wide genetic and body-size variation, develop several age-related conditions, and live roughly five to ten times shorter lives than humans depending on breed. Biological trajectories can therefore be observed over compressed periods.

Their teeth and gingiva are accessible for repeated clinical measurement. Experimental studies have separately examined gingival responses in deciduous and permanent dentitions, and methods now exist for estimating canine periodontal pocket surface area from body weight and probing measurements. These methods make it possible to connect oral burden with systemic measurements while recognising the need for larger prospective studies.

Research should distinguish four phases:

1. **Initial establishment.** Microbial seeding and early host-microbiome organisation at or soon after birth.
2. **First developmental pinch point.** Deciduous teething during rapid growth and high feedback gain.
3. **Second developmental pinch point.** Eruption of the permanent dentition, again during rapid structural and immunological change.
4. **Adult and late-life phase.** Maintenance, compensation and possible periodontal attrition with consequences for whole-animal fitness and survival.

Cats remain central to the practical campaign and comparative inquiry, but the present translational and developmental literature is more extensive for dogs. Dogs should therefore lead the initial research programme, with cats and other carnivores providing essential comparative tests.

A MORPHOMETRIC QUESTION, NOT YET AN ESTABLISHED FACT

Dogs possess a large and measurable dental-periodontal interface relative to body size. The exact comparison between a small dog and a human requires direct morphometric verification and careful definition of whether crown area, root area, pocket epithelium, inflamed surface or total gingival interface is being measured.

9. The research sequence

Map the system -> identify feedback loops -> construct a dynamic model -> derive predictions -> test them -> revise the model -> return the findings to the whole ecological framework

The mapping must cross levels: food and feeding behaviour; oral mechanics; microbial ecology; gingival tissues; immunity and inflammation; organ function; pain and appetite; development and ageing; reproduction and survival; population dynamics; and institutional influences on the evidence base.

Suitable methods may include causal-loop diagrams, network analysis, system-dynamics models, agent-based simulations, longitudinal mixed models, comparative morphology and physiology, and AI-assisted integration of oral, systemic, behavioural and ecological data. No technique should become a fashionable substitute for a coherent question.

METHODOLOGICAL SAFEGUARD

AI may detect patterns and help construct models. It cannot compensate for a missing natural comparator, poor measurements, short follow-up or questions that were never asked. Every isolated finding must be returned to the microbial, oral, whole-animal, population and ecological levels.

10. The research programme that remains

Research strand	Core question or task
Natural comparator	Long-term comparison of whole carcass and raw meaty bones feeding with kibble, canned food, commercial raw products, BARF-style formulas, prey-model prescriptions and mixed regimes. Outcomes should include oral, systemic, behavioural, economic and environmental measures.
Developmental sequence	Prospective study of microbiome establishment, deciduous teething, permanent-tooth eruption and adult maintenance/attrition, with repeated oral, immune, inflammatory and systemic measurements.
Periodontal-systemic feedback	Test bidirectional, nonlinear relationships among oral inflammation, immune status, organ function, pain, appetite, behaviour, food structure and treatment over time.
Oral-interface measurement	Develop and validate morphometric measures of tooth, root, gingival, pocket and inflamed surface areas across breeds, body sizes, species and life stages.
Perturbation and recovery	Observe amplification and recovery after controlled changes to food structure, oral function, dental treatment and other system inputs rather than relying on static associations.
Ecological and evolutionary testing	Gather field and comparative evidence concerning nutrition, dentition, periodontal status, hunting, reproductive success, age, mortality and population regulation in wild and captive carnivores.
Human comparative research	Test whether cybernetic models improve explanation or prediction in human periodontal-systemic medicine without assuming species equivalence or offering veterinary feeding as human treatment.
Institutional learning	Investigate how funding, sponsorship, professional education, publication, regulation and disciplinary boundaries determine which questions and comparators enter the evidence base.
Dynamic integration	Build multi-level models linking oral, systemic, behavioural, developmental, ecological and institutional data; publish assumptions; derive predictions; and revise the models after testing.

11. The human-health boundary

A COMPARATIVE QUESTION, NOT A HUMAN TREATMENT CLAIM

Raw Meaty Bones does not prescribe for humans. It asks whether a veterinary model linking food, oral function, microorganisms, immunity, systemic disease and time can help medicine, dentistry and periodontology ask better questions.

Comparative inquiry is legitimate because mammals share tissues, immune processes, microbial relationships and systemic circulation while differing in dentition, diet, lifespan, social support and ecological position. The correct public position is neither automatic equivalence nor automatic irrelevance. It is disciplined comparison.

The conventional research question asks whether periodontitis causes a particular systemic disease. The cybernetic question asks how periodontal disturbance participates in a reciprocal system that changes the probability, timing, intensity or progression of systemic disease, and how systemic disturbance feeds back into the mouth. That formulation invites repeated measurement, temporal analysis, perturbation and recovery rather than one-off correlation alone.

12. The three inseparable strands of the campaign

Strand	Purpose
Practical	Dogs and cats need biologically appropriate food that performs physical and behavioural as well as chemical functions. Owners need simple guidance capable of preventing avoidable oral and systemic suffering.
Scientific	The carnivore mouth provides a route into feedback, developmental vulnerability, systemic amplification, survival and ecological regulation.
Accountability	Pet-food companies, veterinary institutions, commercial raw-food manufacturers, formula promoters and influencers must be tested against the documentary record, the missing natural comparator and public-interest standards.

None of these strands should eclipse the others. A purely practical feeding campaign can be absorbed into a product market. A purely theoretical hypothesis can lose contact with suffering animals. A purely accusatory campaign can obscure the scientific proposition. The Raw Meaty Bones Campaign joins all three.

13. Recognition, non-adoption and the commercial divergence

The campaign did not proceed without recognition. Veterinarians including Tom Hungerford, Douglas Bryden and Richard Malik recognised substantial parts of the preventive contribution and called for inspection, comparison and further research. Those endorsements remain valued because they show that informed contemporaries could recognise the clinical and scientific opening.

Recognition did not become adoption. No durable multidisciplinary programme compared the natural raw meaty bones standard with the principal industrial alternatives. The Cybernetic Hypothesis acquired no stable home in veterinary medicine, ecology, periodontology or systems science. Evidence could be acknowledged without the profession changing its teaching, research priorities, commercial relationships or disease concepts.

Public demand for alternatives nevertheless expanded. BARF systems, formula diets, prey-model prescriptions, commercial raw products, supplements, certifications and influencer-led communities occupied much of the available space. Many benefited from the public discovery that abandoning industrial cooked food could be followed by changes interpreted as improvement. Yet pulverisation, recipes, proprietary ratios, commercial dependency and neglect of oral function often re-entered under the label "raw".

This divergence does not by itself prove a coordinated plan or improper motive. It does establish the need for accurate provenance, suitable comparators and claim-by-claim examination. Detailed attribution belongs in The Raw Feeding Claims Audit and The Raw Meaty Bones Record.

14. The Five-Part Public Interest Test

The scientific and accountability questions cannot be separated. Research, teaching and commercial claims have developed for decades without the essential natural comparator. The Five-Part Test provides a disciplined way to examine the resulting claims and consequences without substituting personality, popularity or allegation for evidence.

Part	Core question
1. Biological suitability	Are ingredients, amounts, proportions, feeding frequency and life-stage recommendations appropriate for the animal?
2. Functional form and oral feedback	Does the food require ripping, tearing, shearing and gnawing, clean and exercise the mouth, and engage normal feeding behaviour?
3. Causal and evidential integrity	Has the promoter separated withdrawal of industrial food, restoration of natural food structure and the claimed effect of a proprietary formula or addition?
4. Public-interest orientation and knowledge effects	Does the system help owners understand root causes and exercise independent judgement, or create dependency and divert attention from institutional failure and cybernetic inquiry?
5. Whole-system consequences	What happens when biological, commercial, institutional, informational and environmental effects interact and reinforce one another over time?

The test is an audit tool, not a declaration of criminality or legal liability. It permits separate findings: a product may contain broadly suitable ingredients yet fail the functional-form test; a sincere promoter may oppose kibble yet overstate evidence for a branded system; and a commercial enterprise may create important dependency or knowledge effects without a demonstrably false health claim.

15. Evidentiary discipline

The campaign should preserve clear categories so that forceful public communication does not outrun the record:

Status	Examples	Required wording
Documented record	Dated publications, correspondence, recordings, endorsements, complaints, refusals and disclosed relationships.	State what the record shows and attribute the date, source and speaker.
Clinical observation / preliminary evidence	Practice findings and measured changes after dental treatment and feeding change.	Use "observed", "reported" and "preliminary"; do not generalise beyond the evidence.
Cybernetic hypothesis	Oral regulation, reciprocal feedback, developmental pinch points, systemic and ecological amplification.	Use "proposes", "predicts" and "may explain"; invite corroboration and attempted refutation.
Interpretation / inference	Recognition without adoption, commercial occupation of a vacuum, dependency that may chill inquiry without direct orders.	Label the inference, cite the pattern and acknowledge reasonable alternatives.
Unproved allegation	A centrally directed programme instructing every institution or individual to threaten, refuse or remain silent.	Do not state as fact without direct evidence.
Open comparative question	Possible relevance to human periodontal-systemic medicine and other mammalian systems.	Say "deserves investigation" or "may illuminate"; never present as clinical advice.

16. The present public task

The immediate need is not another slogan or a larger pile of disconnected documents. It is a coherent orientation that reconnects the practical feeding message, the clinical record, the book's intellectual architecture, the Cybernetic Hypothesis, the research programme and the institutional history.

- Give pet owners a simple, biologically grounded starting point while making clear that "raw" is not a sufficient description of function or quality.
- Give veterinarians and researchers a defined comparator, developmental sequence, measurement programme and set of testable cybernetic predictions.
- Give medical, dental and periodontal researchers a comparative model that reframes reciprocal oral-systemic relationships without overclaiming equivalence.
- Give cyberneticians, ecologists and evolutionary biologists a concrete biological system in which regulation can be studied from microbes to ecosystems.
- Give journalists, regulators, lawyers and professional bodies a documentary record, bounded evidence vocabulary and public-interest test.
- Make continued institutional inattention a conscious choice rather than an accident of disciplinary classification.

The Raw Meaty Bones Campaign began with the mouths of dogs and cats. Its proper centre is the proposition that the oral interface may regulate the carnivore and, through the carnivore, participate in regulation of the wider living system. The practical message is urgent. The scientific proposition is open. The responsibility to investigate is now visible.

Selected sources and links

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