

Twenty Five Years Unanswered

*How a veterinary warning was filtered out and what science, government
and the professions must now do*

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*If the Cybernetic Hypothesis can explain how and why marginalised
carnivores die, and if chewing on natural food proves to be the miracle
prevention, then perhaps something similar applies to humans too*

A public interest paper accompanying Raw Meaty Bones Promote Health and the Cybernetic Hypothesis of Periodontal
Disease in Mammalian Carnivores

The conclusion

For more than a quarter of a century, a practical veterinary observation and the research programme built upon it have remained without an adequate institutional response. Dogs and cats eating industrial diets commonly develop dirty teeth, inflamed gums and periodontal disease. Animals given suitable raw meaty bones perform the ripping, tearing and chewing for which their mouths evolved, and their oral health can improve dramatically. The wider hypothesis asks how food structure, oral microorganisms, immunity, systemic disease, behaviour and ecological regulation interact through feedback.

The proposal was published, referenced, demonstrated in practice and repeatedly placed before veterinary associations, universities, journals, regulators, governments, parliamentarians and the media. Important individuals recognised parts of the case. Yet recognition did not become organised scrutiny. No enduring independent research programme was established. The natural comparator was not restored to the centre of veterinary nutrition. No regulator accepted continuing responsibility for examining the combined animal welfare, consumer, scientific and institutional consequences.

This was not total silence. There were favourable reviews, professional supporters, media reports, British parliamentary motions and an Australian Senate inquiry. The failure was more consequential: attention arrived in fragments and then dissipated. No institution assembled the fragments, tested the governing propositions and followed the consequences wherever they led.

The resulting blackout need not have been centrally planned. Distributed gatekeeping was enough. Publishers could decline a difficult manuscript. Publicists could see reputational risk. Journals could treat the work as outside scope. Veterinary bodies could defer to established nutrition authorities. Universities could depend upon commercial partnerships. Regulators could divide the problem among incompatible remits. Media organisations could prefer simpler stories. Raw feeding promoters could extract an attractive consumer message while leaving aside periodontal function, cybernetics and institutional accountability.

The practical task now is not to demand belief and not to issue another general protest. It is to build the reception structure that was missing: a permanent public record, a register of institutional responses, a minimum decisive research programme, an independent multidisciplinary review and a disciplined public campaign capable of carrying the evidence from one sentence to the complete record.

The original warning

The Raw Meaty Bones Campaign did not begin as a theory about brands, recipes or lifestyle. It began in veterinary practice. I saw the mouths of dogs and cats deteriorate under conventional feeding and saw what happened when suitable natural food restored oral health. I also came to recognise my own participation. I had repeated the advice taught by the veterinary profession and promoted by pet food companies. The first obligation was therefore to correct the advice given to my clients and relieve preventable suffering.

In December 1991, the University of Sydney Post Graduate Committee in Veterinary Science published my paper *Oral Disease in Cats and Dogs*. It connected processed food, failure to clean and massage the gums, two vulnerable dentition periods, chronic oral sepsis, systemic consequences, raw bones or meat on the bone, professional conduct and the need for research. This was more than a recommendation to feed uncooked ingredients. It placed physical food structure and oral function inside the explanation of disease.

The Cybernetic Hypothesis followed in 1992 and was published in the *Journal of Veterinary Dentistry* in 1994. It proposed that chewing natural food participates in feedback protecting the carnivore's mouth and body, while periodontal disease affects feeding capacity, fitness and survival. In wild populations those effects may contribute to ecological regulation. A 1995 paper reported an association between periodontal

disease and leucopenia in cats and dogs. The hypothesis remains provisional and testable. It is not made less scientific because the profession declined to organise the tests.

The Silent Spring ambition

When I wrote *Raw Meaty Bones Promote Health*, I consciously modelled the book on Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. The ambition was not literary imitation. *Silent Spring* showed how a visible biological disturbance could expose relationships among commercial products, scientific authority, professional conduct, government failure and the health of living systems. I hoped *Raw Meaty Bones* would do something comparable for companion animals and, through them, open questions of relevance to human health.

The comparison was not mine alone. In her review, Judy McMahon wrote that a quarter of the way into the book she wondered whether it was a *Silent Spring* for companion dogs and cats and, by halfway, had no doubt. The book's later chapters make clear why. The subject expands from the mouth and feeding bowl to veterinary education, industry, research, government, law, the environment and cybernetics. Its last line deliberately asks whether a mechanism revealed with unusual clarity in marginalised carnivores might illuminate the human condition.

Silent Spring entered a society that possessed channels capable of converting a book into scientific review, public controversy, congressional attention and new regulatory capacity. *Raw Meaty Bones* encountered no comparable chain of reception. Its failure to achieve the hoped-for impact does not prove the book incorrect. It does, however, require an explanation extending beyond sales, style or the supposed eccentricity of its author.

A chronology of recognition without adoption

Date	Public record	Significance
1991	Oral Disease in Cats and Dogs and Breck Muir's parallel veterinary warning	Food form, periodontal disease, systemic harm and professional responsibility placed on the public record
1992 to 1995	Raw Meaty Bones Promote Health paper, Cybernetic Hypothesis and leucopenia paper	A testable oral systemic and ecological research programme emerged
1994 onward	AVA contests, regulatory approaches and professional disputes	The profession received repeated notice but did not create an independent programme
1997 onward	Repeated candidacy for the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Council	A continuing public record of questions about education, conflicts and prevention
2001	Self publication of Raw Meaty Bones Promote Health	The complete practical scientific and institutional case entered the public domain
2001	Media launch disputes, abandoned stories and limited reporting	Some journalists engaged but the full institutional story did not secure continuing investigation
2004 to 2005	Professional nominations, UK campaigning and Early Day Motions	Serious recognition and parliamentary notice occurred without durable institutional ownership
2005 to 2007	Work Wonders, moderation conflicts and loss of control over important RMB channels	Public attention moved toward raw feeding doctrines while continuity of the originating programme weakened
2018	Australian Senate inquiry into safety of pet food	Government heard evidence but did not establish the necessary independent regulatory and research capacity
2023 to 2026	Further books, renewed public archive, Journal of Periodontal Research letter and Why It Matters	The record is now more accessible and the human and cybernetic question more explicit

What happened to the message

Publication and publicity

At the outset I had to publish *Raw Meaty Bones* myself. No mainstream publisher could be found. Later books in what became the RMB Tetralogy were likewise produced without the institutional machinery normally available to an author addressing a major public health and regulatory problem. After publication, book publicists were reluctant or refused to help. This account is my testimony; the surviving correspondence should be used to construct a dated source register before named firms or individuals are criticised publicly.

The consequence was structural. Refusal by established publishers denied the work editing, distribution, review placement, rights representation and reputational sponsorship. Self-publication was then liable to be treated as evidence that the work lacked authority, although self-publication had been forced by the refusal of the recognised channels. The gate closed and the fact of being outside the gate was used to justify keeping it closed.

The media

The media record is not one of complete absence. Australian Associated Press reported the book's release, reviews appeared and some programmes carried parts of the feeding message. But contemporaneous records also describe scheduled stories in *The Australian* and *The Sun Herald* that did not appear, a television item that used the practical message without identifying the book or the originating clinic, and copies sent to many journalists with almost no sustained follow-up.

The full story was difficult for ordinary news routines. It involved chronic rather than spectacular harm, diffuse responsibility, contested science, powerful advertisers and an author asking reporters to examine their own industry's commercial relationships. A simple raw feeding item could be broadcast. An investigation of pet food, veterinary authority, animal welfare, education, advertising and government required time, legal confidence and institutional courage.

The veterinary profession and universities

The veterinary failure cannot be reduced to every veterinarian acting dishonestly. The deeper problem is epistemic dependency. Nutrition teaching, continuing education, research sponsorship, clinical sales and professional congresses developed in close association with pet food companies. Questions challenging the basic product category therefore arrived inside institutions already organised around that category's legitimacy.

Mars now describes a pet care system extending from food brands to veterinary hospitals, diagnostics, genetic testing and other services. WSAVA states that its work depends upon industry partners, and its Nutrition Committee has acknowledged support from Royal Canin, Hill's and the Purina Institute. These are public relationships, not proof that Mars or another company ordered suppression of *Raw Meaty Bones*. They demonstrate the scale of the asymmetry and the need for independent scrutiny of agenda setting, comparators, teaching and conflicts of interest.

Professional fragmentation completed the defence. Dentistry could regard feeding as nutrition. Nutrition could reduce food to chemical composition. Medicine could treat systemic disease as beyond the mouth. Welfare bodies could defer to veterinary authority. Regulators could defer to all of them. No individual decision needed to extinguish the research programme. The boundaries did the work.

Government and regulation

Governments were not wholly uninformed. British Early Day Motions in 2004 and 2005 called attention to processed pet food and the *Raw Meaty Bones* evidence. The Australian Senate conducted its 2018 inquiry into pet food safety. Ministers, departments, regulators and parliamentarians have received submissions over many years.

Yet regulatory attention was repeatedly narrowed to contamination, labelling, voluntary standards or administrative remit. The foundational question - whether the dominant physical and biological form of pet food predictably triggers or amplifies oral and systemic disease - remained outside ownership. A system designed to respond to isolated product defects is poorly equipped to investigate harm arising from the normal operation of an entire product category reinforced by professional advice.

The raw feeding detour

A further failure arose within the supposed alternative. Raw feeding became an expanding consumer category associated with BARF formulas, mince, ratios, supplements, prepared products, courses, certifications and personalities. Ian Billinghurst's early work made genuine independent contributions and he publicly acknowledged my influence in 1993. The later history nevertheless requires examination of how

a functional proposition centred on oral work and periodontal prevention became displaced by scalable formulas and personal authority.

The recovered Eudora record shows that members of the BARF community themselves objected to commercialisation in 2002. It documents later conflict over prey model doctrine, the rejection of a substantive RawVet post in 2006, removal of my moderator status in 2007 and the loss of practical control over a discussion group and website carrying the Raw Meaty Bones name. These records support a history of control over terminology, moderation and information channels. They do not, without more, prove theft, fraud or conspiracy.

The later prominence of Billingham, Karen Becker, Rodney Habib and other raw feeding figures presented a second form of displacement. Large audiences encountered raw feeding chiefly through marketable personalities, recipes and products. Whether particular people used, transformed or failed to acknowledge prior work must be decided through evidence and fair right of reply. The public interest is not a quarrel over fame. It is the loss of provenance that allowed the periodontal, cybernetic and institutional challenge to disappear from view.

What can responsibly be said

The public record supports the following conclusions.

- The December 1991 veterinary publications and the 1992 to 1995 scientific record preceded *Raw Meaty Bones Promote Health* and established the essential functional and cybernetic propositions.
- *Raw Meaty Bones* was conceived as a broad public interest intervention, not merely a feeding manual, and was consciously modelled on *Silent Spring*.
- The work received serious recognition from some veterinarians, reviewers, campaigners and parliamentarians, but recognition did not become a sustained independent research or regulatory programme.
- The author was forced into self-publication and reports repeated difficulty obtaining mainstream publicity support.
- Commercial, professional, media and regulatory structures created powerful filters against a challenge to the assumptions supporting industrial pet food.
- The recovered correspondence documents real disputes over commercialisation, moderation, terminology, platform control and provenance within raw feeding networks.
- The public raw feeding category expanded while the distinctive oral function, periodontal, systemic, cybernetic and institutional components of RMB remained marginal.

The present record does not establish the following.

- That Mars directed a coordinated campaign to suppress *Raw Meaty Bones*.
- That every editor, veterinarian, academic, publicist, official or raw feeding promoter acted from improper motives.
- That chronology or similarity alone proves plagiarism, deception, fraud, conspiracy or another offence.
- That every proposition in *Raw Meaty Bones* has been experimentally proved, or that observations in carnivores establish a human treatment recommendation.
- That the full scale of animal, owner, professional, environmental or human opportunity costs has yet been measured.

A criticism of Raw Meaty Bones

I continue to believe that *Raw Meaty Bones* made the case as well as I knew how. It assembled the observations, literature, professional record, commercial analysis and cybernetic hypothesis in one place. I cannot identify a fundamentally better way in which the complete evidence could then have been presented. Nevertheless, the experience reveals weaknesses in the book as an instrument of institutional change.

First, its breadth is both strength and obstacle. The book asks the reader to move from diet to dentistry, systemic medicine, microbiology, veterinary economics, corporate power, regulation, ecology and cybernetics. A reader convinced by one part may postpone or reject the rest. Each discipline can regard the decisive issue as belonging somewhere else.

Second, the hierarchy of evidence is not always obvious to a hurried or hostile reader. Clinical observation, published association, mechanistic inference, cybernetic hypothesis, institutional allegation and moral judgment sometimes appear in close succession. The distinctions exist, but later public documents should label them more visibly.

Third, the title enabled reclassification. *Raw Meaty Bones* could be shelved and discussed as a pet feeding book. That description is true but radically incomplete. The name that made the practical remedy memorable also allowed the scientific and political challenge to be domesticated.

Fourth, the accusatory force was warranted by the suffering observed and the resistance encountered, but it offered institutions an escape. They could debate tone, personality or raw feeding risk instead of answering the comparator and research questions. This does not mean that truth should have been made polite enough to become harmless. It means that the evidence now needs a second architecture in which institutional duties and unanswered questions are impossible to miss.

Fifth, a book cannot by itself supply the countervailing institution needed to carry a multidisciplinary challenge. *Silent Spring* benefited from scientific, political, publishing and campaigning networks able to receive and amplify it. *Raw Meaty Bones* was required to be simultaneously book, archive, scientific proposal, political campaign and distribution system. That was too much to demand of any single work or author.

These criticisms concern transmission and institutional design. They are not a retrospective concession that the natural comparator was scientifically irrelevant or that non-engagement amounted to refutation.

The harms of institutional non reception

Animal harm

If the core observations are substantially correct, animals have endured avoidable oral pain, infection, tooth loss, anaesthesia, surgery, systemic disturbance, behavioural effects, reduced quality of life and premature death. The exact number is unknown. That uncertainty is a reason to investigate, not a licence to ignore a ubiquitous exposure.

Owner harm

Owners may have been deprived of material information, encouraged to purchase products presented as healthy, and required to finance recurring treatment for conditions that foundational prevention might reduce. Financial loss is accompanied by anxiety, guilt, confusion and bereavement.

Scientific and professional harm

Failure to preserve the natural comparator may have distorted veterinary nutrition, dentistry and chronic disease research. Students and practitioners inherit conclusions from an evidence base that may omit the most biologically relevant comparison. The profession's moral authority is damaged when commercial dependency appears to determine which questions may be asked.

Public and ecological harm

The industrial pet food economy consumes materials, energy, packaging, transport and advertising while transferring treatment costs to households and communities. At the same time, locally available animal materials and some invasive or overabundant species may remain underused. The wider economic and environmental balance requires investigation rather than promotional assurance.

Cumulative harm and the human opportunity cost

The harms interact. Commercial feeding influences oral disease; disease supports treatment markets; professional teaching legitimises the feeding system; media repeat authorised advice; government defers to professional consensus; and the absence of research is cited as absence of evidence. **Most serious of all may be the lost opportunity to examine whether physical food form, oral function and periodontal feedback help explain aspects of human health and disease.** *Raw Meaty Bones* offers no human treatment prescription. It establishes a comparative mammalian question that medicine and dentistry should not have left unattended.

The counter system now required

The response should conserve limited time and energy. It should not depend upon finding one benevolent publisher, publicist, celebrity or official. Each component should be useful alone and should lead directly to the next level of evidence.

1. Publish the permanent record. Place this paper on Why It Matters and link it to the complete book, the Cybernetic Hypothesis, the Raw Meaty Bones Record, the Mars investigation and the campaign archive. Preserve stable copies of essential documents and videos.
2. Create the institutional response ledger. For each material approach, record the recipient, date, evidence supplied, precise question, acknowledgement, substantive response, referral, action and present status. Use neutral findings such as answered, declined, referred and no substantive response.
3. Issue the minimum decisive research programme. Specify three to five comparative studies with natural food as a genuine comparator, defined oral and systemic outcomes, developmental follow-up and publication regardless of result. Invite universities to improve, preregister, undertake or fund the work.
4. Convene an independent review group. Seek bounded assessments from a periodontist, evolutionary biologist, comparative anatomist, microbiologist or immunologist, systems scientist and consumer or animal welfare lawyer. Ask each to review a proposition within their competence, not to endorse an author or feeding movement.
5. Use *The Mad Vet* as the narrative carrier. The film can join clinical observation, the documentary archive, professional conflict and the present challenge. Prepare a short trailer, two page evidence brief, dated timeline and five primary documents for journalists and screening partners.
6. Continue the Raw Feeding Claims Audit. Examine provenance, transformation, commercial claims and responsibility case by case. Supply relevant passages and questions before publication, allow a fair

period for response and publish corrections. The subjects should have a right to answer, not a right of veto.

7. Replace omnibus appeals with bounded challenges. Ask each institution questions within its remit, provide the evidence needed to answer them, set a reasonable date and publish the response or absence of one. The immediate demand is scrutiny, not allegiance.
8. Build a ladder of entry. Every audience should be able to move from one sentence, to one page, to this paper, to the research specification, to the documentary archive and finally to the Tetralogy. Brevity should open the door; it should not replace the evidence.

Questions the institutions must now answer

1. Which central *Raw Meaty Bones* propositions does your institution accept, reject or regard as unresolved, and what evidence supports that position?
2. Why has the physical form of natural food not been maintained as an indispensable comparator in long term veterinary nutrition, periodontal and whole animal research?
3. Will your institution support an independent comparative research programme measuring oral, immune, systemic, behavioural and welfare outcomes, with preregistration and publication regardless of result?
4. What commercial relationships, funding arrangements and professional dependencies may influence teaching, research priorities, clinical recommendations, public communication or regulation in this field?
5. Who within your institution possesses responsibility for acting upon credible evidence of preventable animal suffering, consumer detriment and possible wider public health significance?

Mars should additionally be asked whether it will provide unrestricted funding for genuinely independent comparison of its principal product forms with suitable raw meaty bones and whole carcass feeding, without control over design, analysis or publication. Veterinary schools and professional bodies should be asked whether they will review their curricula and declare relevant dependencies. Governments should be asked to identify a lead authority rather than divide the matter until it disappears. Media organisations should be asked whether they will examine the documentary history, including their own part in it.

An invitation to correction and action

This paper is not offered as the last word. Institutions and individuals named or implicated in the documentary history should be invited to supply factual corrections, missing records, contrary evidence and their explanation of events. Material corrections should be incorporated visibly. Disagreement should be preserved, not edited out.

But correction is different from indefinite delay. The core warning has been public since 1991, the book since 2001 and the parliamentary and professional record for decades. The institutions have had notice. They should now identify what they dispute, commission the missing comparisons and accept responsibility for the answer.

The predicament is larger than pet food. It concerns whether a civilisation can detect and correct harm when commercial power, professional authority, scientific specialisation, media economics and government procedure reinforce one another. In biological contexts, cybernetics concerns co-evolved communication, control and feedback within and between living systems and their environments. Our

institutions also depend upon feedback. When unwelcome information is filtered out, correction fails and harm compounds.

Raw Meaty Bones was intended to trigger that correction. It has not yet done so. Twenty five years of non reception do not close the case. They place a new question firmly on the record.

What will science, government the professions and the media do now

Documentary method

The public project should keep four categories separate. Documentary fact consists of dated publications, correspondence, technical records, official reports and preserved webpages. Personal testimony consists of my recollection and account, identified as such. Inference explains what the documented sequence may mean. Allegation identifies possible misconduct requiring further proof, response or legal assessment. Chronology proves public antecedence; it does not by itself prove copying, intention, conspiracy or liability.

The recovered Eudora mailboxes should remain an evidentiary archive rather than a source of spectacle. Private correspondence should be quoted only when necessary to establish chronology, correct a public account or demonstrate an institutional decision. Before publication, the cited original should be checked, context retained, sensitive third party information removed where appropriate, and affected people offered a fair opportunity to respond.

Selected sources

1. Tom Lonsdale Oral Disease in Cats and Dogs December 1991 [View source](#)
2. Tom Lonsdale Raw Meaty Bones Promote Health December 1992 [View source](#)
3. Tom Lonsdale Cybernetic Hypothesis of Periodontal Disease in Mammalian Carnivores [View source](#)
4. Tom Lonsdale Periodontal disease and leucopenia [View source](#)
5. Raw Meaty Bones Promote Health book page and chapter links [View source](#)
6. Why It Matters [View source](#)
7. The Raw Meaty Bones Record [View source](#)
8. Campaign and elections archive [View source](#)
9. Campaigning for better pet health [View source](#)
10. Crikey Media Poison your pets with multinational offerings 2001 [View source](#)
11. Press coverage archive [View source](#)
12. Mars and the Industrial Pet Food Experiment [View source](#)
13. Mars Petcare official portfolio [View source](#)
14. Mars statement on its veterinary businesses and AniCura [View source](#)
15. WSAVA Nutrition Committee [View source](#)
16. WSAVA acknowledgement of Nutrition Committee supporters [View source](#)
17. UK Early Day Motion on processed pet foods and vets 2004 [View source](#)
18. Australian Senate inquiry announcement and parliamentary record 2018 [View source](#)
19. Tom Lonsdale YouTube archive [View source](#)

Archive sources

Recovered Eudora mailbox archive approximately 491 MB comprising 465 mailbox files with 24 967 indexed Eudora messages and 4 568 separately parsed messages from BARF SmartGroups digests. Principal working records include Control of the Raw Meaty Bones Information Stream Preliminary chronology and evidentiary assessment 2001 to 2009 dated 19 July

2026 and The Raw Meaty Bones Record Lost Channels Recovered History Revised. Private archive citations should be checked against the original mailbox files before public quotation.