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Dry Food. Breakfast of Champions?

Mon, 2008-02-18 17:10 — Robin Olson [1]

If cats are carnivores, does it make sense to give them food that contains, wheat, corn, soy or rice? If you knew that cats digestive tracts were too short to properly digest those grains, why would you bother feeding them this stuff? 'Cause it smells good, it's cheap and it doesn't spoil. Is it better for their teeth than canned? Surely not! More to stick to their teeth! And what about water intake? Cats crave water on dry food, supposedly to help them flush build up out of their body that dry food adds! Just doesn't make sense to me.

[2] Reading the Ingredient Panel 101 ›

Wed, 2009-06-24 15:53 — debrue

I thought I was being a great owner!

I thought I was being a great owner by springing for the premium dry food (Science Diet). My problem is that my kitties turn their nose up at every can food I have tried... is it just cause they're addicted to the kitty crack I have been feeding them?
I just got a kitten and at his first vet visit they gave me a nice sample bag of Science Diet Kitten food... hmmm?! WTF? If you can't trust a vet on food what are you supposed to do?
I am currently pet-sitting for a friend that has a diabetic kitty (he's about 6 years old) and I don't want my kitties to go through all the needle poking and illness! She has put them on canned food (I guess I should check out what she's feeding her kitties - duh!)
I will try weaning the little buggers off the dry, I PROMISE!

Sun, 2008-04-13 16:33 — Fletchersmom

I hate that dry food myth...

about how it cleans teeth! Eat a pretzel--how clean do your teeth feel?

My Itty Bitty doesn't even have any teeth left because of chronic gingivitis (present when I adopted her) at only 8 years old. I can't help but wonder if it would've gotten so bad if she'd had a cat appropriate diet from the start....

Wed, 2008-04-02 14:43 — Carolyn

Dry Food Rant :)

I suspect I'll be preaching to the choir, but here's my story. :)

I grew up on a farm where we had many cats in the barn. As barn cats do, they ate mice and birds and drank fresh milk. Overall, we had a very healthy bunch of cats. They all got their distemper and rabies shots on Shot Day, but as farmers, we did not have the money to spend on feline illness. Fortunately we never really had to. The worst thing most of them had was fleas. These animals had luxurious coats, bright eyes and were constantly on the move. As an adult, when my own cats started developing illnesses, it was always on my mind.. why didn't this happen to our barn cats when I was growing up?

A couple reasons.. while the barn cats were not feral, they were not house cats, which meant when they were dying, they disappeared and never came back. We didn't see them ill for long. The second reason is, they did not eat much dry food. We left it out so they wouldn't starve, but the chickens ate more of it than the cats did. Even in the winter, the cat food pans would stay almost full. They preferred hunting their own food to the readily available food, and as a result, I think they suffered less illness.

I read a book by Dr. Elizabeth Hodgkins called Your Cat. While Dr. Hodgkins writes extensively about Diabetes in her book, she also neatly addresses illnesses thought to be caused by consumption of dry food. There are the obvious - diabetes, pancreatitis, irritable bowel, liver, kidney, obesity and urinary problems. Then there are the lesser obvious but still suspected, such as asthma, respiratory allergies, chronic ear infections, and eye issues.

It is suspected that dry food can adversely affect every organ system in a cats body.

Dr. Lisa Pierson, a veterinarian specializing in feline nutrition, addresses the real culprit: the completely unregulated pet food industry. You can read more about her studies and research at http://www.catinfo.org [3] where she explains in common language how cats are truly hindered by the dry food they are fed.

Once my Spot was diagnosed with diabetes, and I learned what I had been doing to my cats by feeding them "premium" dry food their whole lives, I felt duped. Upon switching Spot and Niko to wet food, I was stunned to see their transformations. Gone were the sedentary and slightly chubby cats - they had been replaced by bright-eyed, playful and sleek cats.

I still feel deceived, and I am horrified at what I did to my cats for so many years. By extension, I am angry at those companies for what they did to my cats. If I do nothing else in this life, I will teach as many people as I can what "species appropriate food" means for their cats.

Hi, my name is Carolyn, and I am a crazy cat lady. :)

Wed, 2008-04-02 22:16 — Robin Olson

The Choir Sings Your Praises

I'm with you, girlfriend and I can also heartily agree that Dr. Pierson is one of the pioneers in turning folks off of feeding dry food to their cats. She helped me when my Mother's old cat, Bob DOLE! (that's his name, don't wear it out), became diabetic. I changed my cat's diet and it was a huge change. They all lost weight and look great. Bob is off insulin. He was only on it for a month!

I never grow tired of telling people about the benefits of feeding, at least, canned, if not RAW. Tomorrow I'm bringing some raw to work with me to share with a co-worker who has a cat that blocks up. The cat is on the dreaded Prescription C/D. It's canned, but it is still full of crap if you ask me. She wants to start the switch over to grain-free canned and raw. I know it will be great for her kitty.

Now, I ask you, have you stopped someone in a grocery store who you see buying crappy dry food? I almost did that last week!

We aren't crazy. We are passionate!

:-)

Thu, 2008-04-03 15:54 — Carolyn

Not only have I stopped people..

I got into a most lengthy discussion with a FIREMAN in the middle of Kroger one day while we were both perusing the Fancy Feast selections. At one point, the two of us looked at each other in horror as we realized what we sounded like! Looking back on it now, I still smile, because I'm just so happy the word's getting around!

I went to play poker at a friend's house a few weeks ago. She has the fattest cat I have ever seen with my own eyes. I couldn't help myself.. It just came out.. "UHH WOW UHHH.. You need a diet lil one!" And I hear mom behind me saying "Oh I know, I just got her on wet food because the vet in the paper said they are obligate carnivores." I wanted to cry or hug her or both. It's the little things! :)

Sat, 2008-04-05 10:41 — Robin Olson

LOL!!!!!

That's great! How is your friend's cat doing? I hope she's slimming down. I just noticed that one of my cat's looked really NICE. His coat is just gorgeous. Gotta be the food change! I'm still working up my nerve to stop people at the grocery store!

Thu, 2008-04-10 11:10 — Carolyn

Still fat.. but..

Looking better! Bright eyes, too! :)

Sat, 2008-03-29 10:41 — Robin Olson

Excellent Point!

I'm going to go out and get me some chicken necks! Yecch! That said, it sure makes sense to me. I didn't know about the cooked bones vs. raw bones. Is it because raw bones are softer and not brittle?

That was a great point about the dry food post-barf, too! I love it!
-Covered in Cat Hair

Fri, 2008-03-28 15:58 — tuckers mom

Dry does nothing for teeth

Have you ever seen your cat throw up after eating dry? When I used to feed dry it would come up in the same shape as it came out of the bag.

Cats use their teeth to shear meat from the bone. I've learned that raw chicken necks provide the best dental scaling for my cats. The knawing cleans the teeth. Raw only, cooked chicken bones are dangerous.

Cats are obligate carnivores as you said. The only grains or fruit they digested in the wild was from the bellies of their prey. Already pre-digested.

The pet food industry is specific to dog research. That's where the money is. While dogs can eat what humans do, cats are not the same. This is why we see a higher rate of Feline Diabetes, CRF and endocrine diseases as cats age.

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