

WHAT VETERINARIANS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE RAW DIET

DO DOGS OR CATS REQUIRE GRAINS IN THEIR DIET?

Russell Swift, D.V.M

Carnivores cannot make a large quantity of amylase enzyme necessary to properly digest and utilize the carbohydrates. Amylase is the enzyme that is needed to break down grains.

At the recent American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association Conference, I discovered that I am not the only one questioning the use of grains in commercial and home-prepared pet foods. Grains, such as oats, wheat, rice, barley, etc. are composed mostly of complex carbohydrates. They also contain some protein, fiber, B-vitamins and trace minerals. However, they are NOT part of the natural diet of wild dogs and cats. In the true natural setting, grains hardly exist at all. Wild grains are much smaller than our hybridized domestic varieties.

This means that even a mouse or other prey animal is not going to find much of its nutrition from grains. Therefore, the argument that "dogs and cats eat animals that have grains in their digestive tracts" doesn't hold up to scrutiny. Prey animals that live near

farms or other "civilized" areas are likely to have access to grains. This is not a truly wild diet.

T. J. Dunn D.V.M

"There is ample proof that today's pet dogs and cats do not thrive on cheap, packaged, corn-based pet foods. Dogs and cats are primarily meat eaters; to fill them up with grain-based processed dry foods that barely meet minimum daily nutrient requirements has proven to be a mistake."

Joe Demers D.V.M

"Another reason for overweight pets is what we feed our pet friends. Commercial pet food is anywhere between 45 percent to 65 percent carbohydrates (grains). Grains are the least expensive part of pet food and can fill the animal quickly. Dogs and cats are more carnivores than we humans are, and we are feeding them almost as much grain (or more) than we humans eat. I feel that this high-carbohydrate commercial pet food is the worst food we can feed our pet friends. Our pet friends need fresh meats, not dehydrated meat by-products. I also feel vegetables are an excellent source of fiber and moisture as well as sources of natural vitamins and minerals for our pet

WHAT OTHER CLUES DO WE HAVE THAT GRAINS ARE NOT NECESSARY FOR CARNIVORES

- 1.) Dogs and cats do not have dietary requirements for complex carbohydrates.
- 2.) Grains must be cooked or sprouted and thoroughly chewed to be digested. Carnivores do not chew much at all.
- 3.) The other nutrients in grains are readily available from other dietary ingredients. For example, B-vitamins are found in organ meats and trace minerals come from bones and vegetables. (Unfortunately, modern farming has striped many trace minerals from produce and supplementation is usually best.)

Why have grains become so "ingrained" in pet feeding? To the best of my knowledge, grains were mainly introduced by the pet food industry. The high carbohydrate content provides CHEAP calories. In addition, grains assist in binding ingredients. We have become so used to feeding grains to dogs and cats that most of us get nervous when we decide not to use them. I know people who have been "grain-free" feeding and doing very well. My own cat is one example. What are the negative effects? I believe that carnivores cannot maintain long term production of the quantity of amylase enzyme necessary to properly digest and utilize the carbohydrates. In addition, the proteins in grains are less digestive than animal proteins. As a result, the immune system becomes irritated and weakened by the invasion of foreign, non nutritive protein and carbohydrate particles. Allergies and other chronic immune problems may develop.