

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ONE PET STORE OWNER

I have decided to give my thoughts on the subject of Dog Food Diets and DCM Illness given the fact that many of my customers have asked for my thoughts; I will warn you, my thoughts always seem to run a little long, so this prospectus is a little long, but I promise you that it will be worth reading; so, here we go!

OK...the dust is settling...we are getting a clearer picture of what is really going on about the recent FDA report released on DCM Illness.

First, no one wants to see any dog be diagnosed with DCM illness or any other illness, whether the illness is common like allergies or extremely rare like DCM...they are our babies and we want them to live a long and healthy life!

Let's agree to the fact that there are two factions at play here; The Grain-Free Premium Dog Food supporters and the Traditional Dog Food supporters. These two factions have been around for the last 30 years and will continue well into the future.

What we all need to agree on is that there will be different opinions, different viewpoints and that both factions will disagree; but we need for the betterment of our pets is to respect each other's thoughts and opinions; hopefully we can back them up with facts.

Let me preface this prospectus; I am in full support of Premium Dog Foods with a lean-to towards Raw Natural Diets, but I will try, to the best of my ability to keep an open mind and remain emotionally free.

After you read this and the thousands of posts and listen to the tens of people giving you advice, you have a tough decision. Which direction do you go in? Only you and no one else should make that decision, no veterinarian (OK maybe Holistic Vets), no pet store, no blog and no next store neighbor, only you. Decide on what makes you feel comfortable and what your pet does well on. But let me emphasize, no decision is set in concrete. If you go in one direction, that does not mean it is a forever direction, you may change directions at any time that creates a more beneficial avenue for your dog.

When I read the FDA reports, read the blogs, listen to the Veterinarians I have come to the realization that there is no perfect food out there (OK I might be bias towards Raw Natural Diets); I am convinced that the Premium Dog Foods along with Hill's Science Diet, Purina and Royal Canin all will prove to have pros and cons to them, while having benefits and non-benefits to our pets. One thing I can guarantee is your dog is a dynamic individual; so, no one formula can cure all (or harm all). And this is where being open minded will benefit your individual dog.

Let's talk about dog foods in general; for the sake of this prospectus the term 'Dog Food' represents Dry Kibble based dog food unless otherwise noted.

Before reading any further, if you do not have the time, please jump to the conclusion. Otherwise have fun and learn.

Dr. Ian Billinghurst, a world-famous Veterinarian and Researcher in nutrition for dogs (and cats) did a world-wide study (US, Europe, Australia) and was able to link common house-hold chronic diseases in pets (dogs and cats) to the introduction of dry kibble foods. The chronic diseases in all three country's reared their ugly head 15-20 years after dry kibble food was introduced into those countries. Dr. Billinghurst found that by reducing the amount or even eliminating processed foods, but in return

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increasing the amount of Raw Natural Diet fed to a dog or cat allowed many dogs and cats to reduce or even reverse common ailments; like allergies, diabetes, IBD (Irritable Bowel Disease) and so forth.

The point of the above paragraph is not to promote Raw Natural Diets but to point out that through Dr. Billinghurst's research, there was a link established to Processed Dog Food; Dry Kibble. Thus, the introduction of Premium Dog Foods, Grain-Free Diets, and the improvement in the quality of all existing dog foods on the market, including Hill's Science Diet, Purina and Royal Canin, began.

This introduction and quality improvements were not a result of a fad; it was a result of research, trial and error; yes it did turn into a trend but that happens in every industry; cars for example, they all have backup cameras now, phones now talk back to you and are smarter than you and I (not sure if that is good or bad) and so forth.

But the Premium Dog Foods, Grain-Free Diets, and the improvement in the quality trend has produced two major benefits: 1) It has improved the quality of the pet foods we find on the market today and 2) It has encouraged pet owners to look differently at what and how they feed their pets.

Let's get back to the FDA report; Points that we will cover in this prospectus.

- Fear and Panic.
- Linkage of Dog Food to DCM Illness.
- Statistics associated with the FDA Report.
- Were there dogs included in the FDA Report that were pre-disposed to DCM Illness?
- Were there multiple foods fed to the dogs included in the FDA Report?
- List of Dog Foods.
- AAFCO Testing and Recalls associated with the FDA Report
- Why would food companies release food that is so "bad"?
- Are Grain-Free Dog Foods bad for my Dog?
- Is there an alternative to Dry Kibble based foods?

Fear and Panic

Fear is the world's greatest weapon; it allows one faction to instill wrongful notions onto another faction who is emotionally involved. Fear causes panic, knee jerk reactions and decision making without the facts.

Various Veterinarians from the American Holistic Veterinarian Medical Association have concluded that fear in-of-itself will harm more dogs than DCM illness put together. Their stance is let's not panic, don't let people put fear into you, as again there is **NO SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL INFORMATION LINKING ANY TYPE OF DOG FOOD DIET, BRAND OR EVEN GRAIN FREE DIETS TO DCM ILLNESS**; remember DCM illness is extremely rare.

I will be the first one to admit, I have been surprised at the amount of panic, fear and finger pointing associated with the FDA report given that there has been no scientific link of any kind between dog food diets and DCM Illness. The FDA report released this past week is the exact

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same report that was released a year ago with no new information other than the FDA decided to release the brands of dog food, dogs were last eating. Yet, after a year there is still no scientific link between the foods fed and DCM illness; so, why the finger pointing, fear and panic?

I agree with the American Holistic Veterinarian Medical Association, don't panic; if you want to switch dog foods then switch your dog's food but do it in a proper way, do not switch your dog off a grain-free diet "cold turkey", you need to do the switch gradually. The worst thing this country can do is turn every dog's digestive system upside down; now you will have a sick dog on your hands; no one wants diarrhea.

I would also recommend: take a step back. If you talk to someone or read an email or letter that displays a threatening tone or makes statements that you are doing harm to your dog or makes you feel guilty of what you are feeding your dog; stop reading or talking, take a step back and ask yourself questions: 'Is my dog having any issues on this current food?', 'What benefit other than being scared into switching my dog's food would my dog realize?', 'What are the real facts to the FDA report?'

It doesn't matter what questions you ask yourself, what does matter is that you took a step back, took a deep breath and then analyzed the situation; you stopped yourself from making a knee jerk reaction based on fear and panic that might have been inappropriately communicated to you.

Linkage of Dog Food to DCM Illness

Per the FDA's Report, statements from the American Veterinarian Medical Association (AVMA) and the American Holistic Veterinarian Medical Association (AHVMA);

THERE IS NO SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL INFORMATION LINKING ANY TYPE OF DOG FOOD DIETS, DOG FOOD BRANDS OR EVEN GRAIN-FREE DIETS TO DCM ILLNESS

The FDA clearly states this within their report. The FDA even states that the dogs fed a diet with legumes and peas are getting the correct Taurine in their diet; but in fairness the FDA did state they want to do more research on legumes and peas in regards to whether or not legumes and/or peas hinders a dog's ability to absorb all the nutrients from its meal; they just don't know and more research is needed.

But let me repeat, per the FDA's Report:

THERE IS NO SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL INFORMATION LINKING ANY TYPE OF DOG FOOD DIETS, DOG FOOD BRANDS OR EVEN GRAIN-FREE DIETS TO DCM ILLNESS

Statistics associated with the FDA Report.

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The research data exhibited in the FDA's report was collected between 2014 and 2019; 560 dogs were reported to have DCM complications out of 77 million dogs; 0.0007% of the population; which 30 million of those dogs are eating Grain-Free and Premium Diets.

The report was generated by dog owners filing complaints and Veterinarians filing reports associated with DCM Illness with the FDA. The report included dogs age, breed, what they were feeding, and actual illness.

The report is classified as 'raw data' within the research world; why? The report only exhibits the raw data collected, it does not exclude the 'Outliers' that are associated with every research project that will skew the true results. For instance, the report included every dog reported but it did not exclude the dogs that were 3-5 years passed their average life expectancy. Yes, all dogs are important, but I would not feel comfortable including my 17-year-old lab in any type of DCM Illness study; she did great at that age but was 4-5 years past her life expectancy. And Yes, she passed away due to heart failure...heart worn out from all the love she gave!

Were there dogs included in the FDA Report that were pre-disposed to DCM Illness?

Yes. Out of the 560 dogs reported, 197 dogs were pre-disposed to DCM Illness regardless of what they were fed. These dogs would be classified as "Outliers" in a normal research project, but yet they were included in the statistical numbers.

What concerns me the most is, everyone is focused on the dog food for a sampling population of only 0.0007%; where is the FDA report and focus on finding a cure for the 35% of dogs with DCM Illness because of being pre-disposed. In my opinion I am beginning to wonder if the real focus is truly on DCM Illness and not just a 'witch hunt' against Premium Dog Foods; one will never know.

Were there multiple foods fed to the dogs included in the FDA Report?

Yes. A large percentage, over 60% of the dogs reported were fed a multiple food diet over time. But the report only listed the brand of foods that were fed last to the dog. This should have been a 'Red Flag' to anyone reviewing the report before it was released. For example:

A human eats fast food (sorry burger places) for 3 years and then switches over to eating quality dinners with meats and veggies for two months...the human is feeling good and then all of sudden the human has a heart attack...yep you guessed it the FDA's study would list the "veggies" as the cause of the heart attack since it was the last food eaten...that is exactly what the FDA did in the DCM study report!

So if a dog was eating (yes I am going to pick on the Veterinarian recommended foods) Hill's Science Diet, Purina or Royal Canin for several years, the dog may have or may not have been doing good on the food, but the dog owner switches their dog food to a Premium Dog Food listed in the FDA report (oh, let's pick on Fromm) feeds the dog for the next year, the dog does great on the food and then all of a sudden the dog is diagnosed for DCM Illness.

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Can you link the dog's DCM Illness to Fromm or was it really the Hill's Science Diet, Purina or Royal Canin dog foods that were feed for many years when the dog's heart was growing during his puppy stage; I can't, nor can any Veterinarian, FDA researcher or food manufacturer; so, don't let fear drive your decision, there is just no answer in lining DCM Illness to a particular diet; we just don't know.

Remember it was the veggies fault!

List of Dog Foods.

Yes. The FDA report revealed a list of Premium Dog Food Brands; these were the most common dog foods last fed to the 560 reported dogs with DCM Illness. But remember from the previous section, these were the dog foods last fed to the dogs, not necessarily the dog food that were the cause of any type of illness.

Remember the FDA Report clearly stated:

THERE IS NO SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL INFORMATION LINKING ANY TYPE OF DOG FOOD DIETS, DOG FOOD BRANDS OR EVEN GRAIN-FREE DIETS TO DCM ILLNESS

As a retired Engineer involved in many research projects, the release of the list of dog food brands would have been classified as a blatant disregard for research protocol, why; the list was incomplete, it was taken out of context and displayed no causal relationship to DCM Illness.

Every Researcher, every Veterinarian and every Food Manufacturer knows the list is not credible. But the list was released, no matter what anyone says, "the list is the list" and people will use the list to create fear that is unjustifiable.

Food for thought.

Everyone is pointing to the list, reading into the list that it is the fault of the Premium and Grain-Free Dog Foods and (sorry Veterinarians) the Veterinarians are stating that these diets are bad, and you should feed Hill's Science Diet, Purina or Royal Canin.

But wait! Hill's Science Diet, Purina or Royal Canin all have jumped on the same band wagon. They all have Grain-Free Diets or Premium Dog Food Brands, but why are they not on the list? Remember Hill's Science Diet, Purina and Royal Canin make up over 65% of today's market in dogs foods sold; hard to believe that no DCM dogs were fed any of these foods.

In my opinion, given the FDA has clearly stated that there is no scientific evidence linking any type of dog food or dog food brands to DCM Illness, the list was published out of context and is now unethically being used as a "Tool of Fear" by various factions.

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AAFCO Testing and Recalls Associated with the FDA Report

Recalls:

The FDA has not recalled any foods associated with the DCM Illness. Reason: their research has verified to date **THERE IS NO SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL INFORMATION LINKING ANY TYPE OF DOG FOOD DIETS, DOG FOOD BRANDS OR EVEN GRAIN-FREE DIETS TO DCM ILLNESS**, thus there is nothing to recall; there is no causal link between Diet and DCM Illness.

AAFCO:

On many internet sites and in Veterinarian offices, signs, literature and posters have pointed out that Hill's Science Diet, Purina and Royal Canin are all AAFCO tested and approved. This is true. And Yes, there are dog food brands out in the market place that do not follow the AAFCO standards. (A plug for my store: we do not carry any of those non-regulated food brands.)

AAFCO does not regulate or inspect anything. In fact, AAFCO is not even a government agency; it is a body made up of representatives from each state and various Government Agencies. AAFCO does no testing. It helps set the standards and regulations for each state as it is related to Animal Feed ingredients and test standards.

When a bag of dog food is listed as "AAFCO Tested" it refers to the manufacturer following the AAFCO guidelines in nutrition and testing standards. It does not mean AAFCO tested or inspected the food. When a bag of dog food is listed as "Formulated to meet the nutritional levels established by AAFCO" it refers to the manufacturer adhering to the AAFCO guidelines and standards in nutrition.

Remember AAFCO only sets the nutritional and testing standards for dog food, it does not do any testing or inspection to prevent "Bad" food from being released. Keep in mind Hill's Science Diet, Purina and Royal Canin all comply with the AAFCO standards, yet over the past several years they have had recalls. Not trying to beat up on Hill's Science Diet, Purina or Royal Canin, even Premium Dog Foods have had some recalls, and they also follow the AAFCO standards.

Given the fact that many of the Dog Foods that are AAFCO tested and incur recalls on a yearly basis, I would not make AAFCO your leading decision maker unless the bag of food does not display any type of reference to AAFCO or Canadian Standards or EU (European Union) standards.

The dog food brands listed in the FDA report are manufacturer by relatively very large corporations; yes some of these large corporations might have all their stock held by one or more family members but they are not produced in someone's back yard; they all adhere to the same standards as Hill's Science Diet, Purina and Royal Canin thus having a reference to AAFCO on their bag of food.

Personally, I wish all dog foods produced in the United States would follow the Canadian Dog Food Standards or the EU (European Union) Food Standards; they are more restrictive than the US standards.

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Why would food companies release food that is so “bad”?

The fear right now is that All Premium, and All Grain-Free Dog Foods, especially the ones listed are bad for our pets...**THIS COULD NOT BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH!**

Remember the FDA Report clearly stated:

THERE IS NO SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL INFORMATION LINKING ANY TYPE OF DOG FOOD DIETS, DOG FOOD BRANDS OR EVEN GRAIN-FREE DIETS TO DCM ILLNESS

Let's take an example:

(Sorry Hill's Science Diet I'm going to use you as an example) Back last November, 2018 thru this past February, 2019 Hill's Science Diet had a recall; various dog foods were linked to dogs becoming ill and dying. Hill's Science Diet, just like all the Premium Dogs Foods listed would do, they did a recall, they did the right thing. People's dogs that were affect asked the very same question “**Why would a food company release food that is so “bad”?**” Hill's Science Diet didn't purposely release a bad food, no reputable company would, and the Premium Dog Food Brands listed on the list are reputable companies.

In the Hill's Science Diet example, they would have stopped production immediately if they knew their foods would be linked to an illness or death. The Premium Dog Food Brands listed in the list would do the same thing. But here is the difference:

- In the Hill's Science Diet example there was a causal link between the dogs becoming ill and a particular food, in this case Hill's Science Diet and once that causal link was established Hill's Science Diet and The FDA did the right thing, they did a recall.
- In the DCM Illness situation the missing puzzle piece is the causal link between Premium Dog Foods or any dog food to the DCM Illness. This is why there has been no recalls over the past year when the focus of DCM Illness came to the foreground.
- The current DCM Illness via the FDA has precluded that there is **NO SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL INFORMATION LINKING ANY TYPE OF DOG FOOD DIETS, DOG FOOD BRANDS OR EVEN GRAIN-FREE DIETS TO DCM ILLNESS.**

So, with no link and no knowledge of what to change, what would the Premium Dog Food companies change?

Remember, changing a formula takes many years of testing from feeding trials, to independent lab testing. If they randomly made a change, they would not know if it decreases DCM Illness or makes it worse because there is no causal relationship established; a random change with no cause could make the 30 million dogs that are eating Grain-Free and Premium Dog Foods go from Healthy Viable dogs to Sickly dogs. It is a science, ask any Hill's Science Diet or Purina representative.

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- If any of the Premium Dog food Brands listed in the list knew their formulas were the cause of DCM Illness, again there is no causal relationship, I can guarantee you they would change their formulation immediately and beginning test trials.

For these Premium Dog foods companies to have their food involved or linked to an illness or death or even a massive recall is the kiss of death for those companies; So, why did Hill's Science Diet survive their recall linked to illnesses...they are so massive they are able to absorb Oopsies financially, but trust me, their customer care centers were working overtime trying to care for all who were involved.

Are Grain-Free Dog Foods bad for my Dog?

That's a good question; no one has a crystal ball that can read into the future. All we can do is take what is in front of us:

- There are 30+ million dogs eating Grain-Free Premium Dog Foods and are Healthy.
- There is no scientific or medical information linking any type of dog food diets, dog food brands or even grain-free diets to DCM Illness.
- The sample size within the FDA report is too small to make a scientific decision especially if you remove all the "Outliers" (dogs pre-disposed to DCM, multiple food eaters, over age dogs) from the sample.
- There has not been enough research concluded; I am in 100% agreement that more research needs to be performed but I do believe there should be additional research to the already existing research done on the dogs that are pre-disposed to DCM; I feel this would be a bigger benefit in the long run.

In my opinion I think we cannot close any doors because there just is not enough evidence either way even though the current research has concluded that there is no link to DCM Illness because of feeding Grain-Free Dog Foods.

I would also conclude that we should not do a knee jerk reaction; it is up to us as dog owner to always monitor our dog's health; if we own a dog breed pre-disposed to DCM Illness we should make it a regular item on our dog's yearly exam, to make sure there are no changes.

I do not believe if your dog has been doing well on a Premium Dog Food or Grain-Free Dog Food that you should switch and upset his digestive system; remember you most likely went on the Premium Dog Food because you were trying to resolve some other issue.

In my opinion, given the FDA has clearly stated that there is no scientific evidence linking any type of dog food or dog food brands to DCM Illness, the list of Grain-Free and Premium Dog Food Brands was published out of context and is now unethically being used as a "Tool of Fear" by various factions.

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Is there an alternative to the foods listed within the FDA report and foods like Hill's Science Diet, Purina and Grocery Store Brands given their mixed reputation?

Yes. (a plug) At The Feed Bag Pet Supply we have always strived to have the best foods on hand. We work closely with various Holistic Veterinarians in the area to critically select the foods we carry. We have several foods that are not on the FDA list and would be happy to show them to you.

However, we stand behind all our Premium and Grain-Free based dog foods, even the ones on the FDA list; we have seen too many dogs go from Poor-Health to living very Healthy Lives on these foods and with no causal link to DCM illness.

However! I will be the first one to pull any food off our shelves should the FDA create a causal link between a certain food and DCM illness or any other illness.

Is there an alternative to Dry Kibble based foods?

Yes. (a plug) At The Feed Bag Pet Supply we carry over ten brands of Raw Natural Dog Foods that have helped thousands of dogs reverse common and complex illnesses.

In fact, we have several clients that have Cavalier King Charles which are pre-disposed to Heart Murmurs who have switched over to Raw Natural Diets and improved the life expectancy of their dogs. This could possibly be contributed to the natural occurring Taurine in Raw Natural Diets. A necessity for healthy hearts.

If interested in learning more about Raw Natural Diets, stop in and talk with Mark about the truths and myths about feeding a raw diet.

P.S. I know I am going to get some push back, or maybe you will, regarding the Raw Natural Diet; All I ask is don't let anyone bully you into thinking Raw Natural Diets are bad; contact a **Holistic Veterinarian** they have studied the pros and cons (like all foods) of the Raw Natural Diet and can help you determine if it is the right food for your pet.

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Conclusion.

I hope that I gave you good information and explained where the FDA report was coming from and some of the statistics behind the scenes. I apologize for some of my own opinions but as I stated at the beginning of the document its hard not to enter emotions into this subject.

The Main Response: Grain-Free and Premium Dog Foods including the Dog Food Brands Listed in the FDA Report are appropriate and a good source of nutrition for your dog's daily nutritional needs; his every day meal!

This statement is based on all the information that has been collected to-date, and that the FDA states **NO SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL INFORMATION LINKING ANY TYPE OF DOG FOOD DIETS, DOG FOOD BRANDS OR EVEN GRAIN-FREE DIETS TO DCM ILLNESS.**

The sample size for the research is far to small (0.0007% of the population) to derive any scientific conclusion. Too many "Outliers" were included in the research report that under normal research protocol would have been excluded. Too many of the dogs, include in the research were fed multiple dog foods that sheds doubt on the real causational link to DCM Illness.

Given that the FDA clearly states that there is no scientific evidence linking any type of Dog Food or Dog Food Brands to DCM Illness, the list of Premium Dog Foods published was out of context and is now unethically being used as a "Tool of Fear" by various factions.

I have already heard, that some factions have even used the words "You are Killing your Dog".

Statements like this is what creates Fear; Fear generates wrong solutions; Fear is our most dangerous enemy.

I am 100% in support of more research, personally I would focus the research on the 35% of dogs that are pre-disposed to DCM Illness because once you find that link, you will be on the road to finding a cure.

I am always open to more discussion; I feel through discussion and keeping an open mind that we all will learn more.

My goal at The Feed Bag Pet Supply is to keep on top of all subjects related to animal nutrition. We work continuously with Holistic Veterinarians to leverage their knowledge as Veterinarians who specializes in nutrition.

We know that some Traditional Veterinarians will have different views and we respect that. All we ask is that everyone talking about the subject of DCM Illness and Premium Dog Foods, go ahead and express their views (hopefully with facts) but don't shame, or bully anyone into thinking they are harming their dog by feeding a Premium Dog Food; as of date no one has been able to establish that causational link.

Thank you for your time in reading this document.

Mark, Owner of The Feed Bag Pet Supply