

Feeding Facts and Furphies

Part 1



Furphy: People make rational buying decisions.

Fact: We all make decisions based on emotion.

Have you ever thought about why you buy the food you feed your pet? You may be surprised to learn that the most important factors in your decision may have nothing to do with the food itself nor the needs of your pet. We have identified three main types of factors in buying decisions: food factors, animal factors and human factors. Of these, it is the human factors that play the most important role – after all it is the human who buys the food. What are these factors? They include:

Where is it made? Many people like to buy Australian made products including pet food. Economists argue over whether this is actually good for the economy but the fact remains that it is still a popular sentiment. Some people are also concerned about ‘carbon miles’ and will prefer to buy locally produced goods.



Who made it? Some people distrust multinational companies, particularly those with dubious ethical practices. Unfortunately, as companies grow and take over other smaller companies, most become a mixture of good and not so good divisions, so choosing an ethical company becomes a messy affair. For instance, Cadbury earned public acclaim for its decision to make its Dairy Milk chocolate Fairtrade certified. However, soon after that happened, the company was taken over by Kraft which has been criticised and boycotted for its reluctance to ensure fair trade practices in the coffee market, in which it is a major player. Some people will now see Cadbury as less ethical while others will see Kraft as more ethical.



174
175
176
177
178
179
180
181
182
183
184
185
186
187
188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200
201
202
203
204
205
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215
216
217
218
219
220
221
222
223
224
225
226
227
228
229
230
231
232
233
234
235
236
237
238
239
240
241
242
243
244
245
246
247
248
249
250
251
252
253
254
255
256
257
258
259
260
261
262
263
264
265
266
267
268
269
270
271
272
273
274
275
276
277
278
279
280
281
282
283
284
285
286
287
288
289
290
291
292
293
294
295
296
297
298
299
300
301
302
303
304
305
306
307
308
309
310
311
312
313
314
315
316
317
318
319
320
321
322
323
324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342
343
344
345
346
347
348
349
350
351
352
353
354
355
356
357
358
359
360
361
362
363
364
365
366
367
368
369
370
371
372
373
374
375
376
377
378
379
380
381
382
383
384
385
386
387
388
389
390
391
392
393
394
395
396
397
398
399
400
401
402
403
404
405
406
407
408
409
410
411
412
413
414
415
416
417
418
419
420
421
422
423
424
425
426
427
428
429
430
431
432
433
434
435
436
437
438
439
440
441
442
443
444
445
446
447
448
449
450
451
452
453
454
455
456
457
458
459
460
461
462
463
464
465
466
467
468
469
470
471
472
473
474
475
476
477
478
479
480
481
482
483
484
485
486
487
488
489
490
491
492
493
494
495
496
497
498
499
500
501
502
503
504
505
506
507
508
509
510
511
512
513
514
515
516
517
518
519
520
521
522
523
524
525
526
527
528
529
530
531
532
533
534
535
536
537
538
539
540
541
542
543
544
545
546
547
548
549
550
551
552
553
554
555
556
557
558
559
560
561
562
563
564
565
566
567
568
569
570
571
572
573
574
575
576
577
578
579
580
581
582
583
584
585
586
587
588
589
590
591
592
593
594
595
596
597
598
599
600
601
602
603
604
605
606
607
608
609
610
611
612
613
614
615
616
617
618
619
620
621
622
623
624
625
626
627
628
629
630
631
632
633
634
635
636
637
638
639
640
641
642
643
644
645
646
647
648
649
650
651
652
653
654
655
656
657
658
659
660
661
662
663
664
665
666
667
668
669
670
671
672
673
674
675
676
677
678
679
680
681
682
683
684
685
686
687
688
689
690
691
692
693
694
695
696
697
698
699
700
701
702
703
704
705
706
707
708
709
710
711
712
713
714
715
716
717
718
719
720
721
722
723
724
725
726
727
728
729
730
731
732
733
734
735
736
737
738
739
740
741
742
743
744
745
746
747
748
749
750
751
752
753
754
755
756
757
758
759
760
761
762
763
764
765
766
767
768
769
770
771
772
773
774
775
776
777
778
779
780
781
782
783
784
785
786
787
788
789
790
791
792
793
794
795
796
797
798
799
800
801
802
803
804
805
806
807
808
809
810
811
812
813
814
815
816
817
818
819
820
821
822
823
824
825
826
827
828
829
830
831
832
833
834
835
836
837
838
839
840
841
842
843
844
845
846
847
848
849
850
851
852
853
854
855
856
857
858
859
860
861
862
863
864
865
866
867
868
869
870
871
872
873
874
875
876
877
878
879
880
881
882
883
884
885
886
887
888
889
890
891
892
893
894
895
896
897
898
899
900
901
902
903
904
905
906
907
908
909
910
911
912
913
914
915
916
917
918
919
920
921
922
923
924
925
926
927
928
929
930
931
932
933
934
935
936
937
938
939
940
941
942
943
944
945
946
947
948
949
950
951
952
953
954
955
956
957
958
959
960
961
962
963
964
965
966
967
968
969
970
971
972
973
974
975
976
977
978
979
980
981
982
983
984
985
986
987
988
989
990
991
992
993
994
995
996
997
998
999
1000

All of the major superpremium brands of pet food are owned by multinationals so the issue can't be avoided. People will buy from companies they trust, whether they be small companies or large multinationals.

Advertising. We all make decisions based on emotion and advertisers know this and exploit it when advertising pet food. This is not to say it is wrong – it is just a fact of life. Some ads are very clever or funny. We have included some below.

(to see more check out http://inventorspot.com/articles/10_hilarious_international_ads_for_pet_products_17594 and http://inventorspot.com/articles/pet_ads_2_17896)



Part of advertising is the use of celebrity endorsements. We have many people tell us they buy “Dr. Harry’s brand” of dog food presumably because if Dr Harry recommends it, it must be good! It seems that nowadays Dr Harry’s star is waning and now whatever Dr Chris (of Bondi vet fame) says must be true.

Dr. Peter says, beware of celebrity endorsements – they don’t do them out of the goodness of their heart.

Convenience. This is becoming more and more one of the most important issues for many people with busy lives. Many do not want to spend time cooking meals for their pets and adding extra ingredients to balance it out. Superpremium dry foods are increasingly popular as they are balanced and extremely convenient.



Cost/Value. This is another important issue for many people although it is probably value that is more important than actual cost. Food that costs more than another food may in fact represent better value, especially when other factors such as convenience and quality are taken into account.



Costs are best compared on a per day basis as pet food vary enormously depending on type and digestibility. As a general rule superpremium dry foods such as Eukanuba and Hills are a similar cost per day as top of the range supermarket canned foods.

Natural vs Commercial. Although this may seem to be a food factor rather than a human factor, the truth is it has more to do with people’s philosophical leanings than the benefits of the food itself. Some vegetarians and vegans for instance insist on feeding their pets a vegetarian or even vegan diet simply because of their own beliefs.

The term ‘natural’ is interesting in relation to pet foods as it is so vague as be almost meaningless. Many commercial foods have ‘nature’ or ‘natural’ in their brand name or advertising. Is it ‘natural’ for cats to eat tuna? It is unlikely that in the wild, cats would swim out into the ocean to do battle with a large blue fin tuna fish, so in a sense, most of the meat that is fed to dogs and cats is not a ‘natural’ diet. A ‘natural’ diet for cats would be birds, mice and insects!

Home prepared diets may be fresher than commercial diets but are not necessarily more natural and neither are they necessarily better for the pet.



So what to make of all this?



While we feel qualified to comment on pet factors and food factors and in the next part of this series we will discuss these, the human factors above are very much an individual choice which we must respect. Being aware of them can help us to make more informed choices. In the next part we will explore what makes a good diet and why some are better than others.