

KKNW (1150 AM) Radio Show
Talk With Your Animals
May 27, 2003 at 5:00–6:00 PM (PDT)
with Guest Russell Louie, Optimum Choices, LLC

Introduction

Russell owns a complementary wellness business named Optimum Choices. He believes that people who cannot find time for health now are obliged sooner or later to find time for illness. He teaches that healthy choices for you and your pets, doesn't have to be expensive or take all your valuable time. You just need to be informed so you can make the right choices. He shares his experience, knowledge and choices towards optimum health with a product line of all-natural super premium dog food, therapeutic essential oils, BioSuperfood spirulina and subtle energy modalities of Reiki and Bach Flower remedies.

Russell has studied holistic health and spirituality for over 20 years. He specializes in integrating his scientific background with his knowledge of holistic healing to create wellness programs that promote optimum health for people and pets.

Russell teaches classes in aromatherapy, essential oils, and Taoism (*pronounced Dow-ism*) through **Journey Bookstore** and the **Spirit Fire** organization in Denver. His education includes a degree in geophysical engineering from the Colorado School of Mines and he served as executive director, teacher and minister of the Creative Light Center in Golden from 1987-2000.

Optimum Choices specializes in offering optimum health care products and foods for people and pets. Through their 50+ years of experience in the holistic health field, Optimum Choices recommends a select group of products they consider to be only the best. Their product offerings include super premium, all-natural dog food, essential oils, a fruit & vegetable supplement and BioSuperfood spirulina. Services offered include aromatherapy treatments, Reiki for both people and pets, and Bach flower remedies. Contact Optimum Choices toll-free at 866-305-2306 or e-mail them at info@OptimumChoices.com or visit their website at www.OptimumChoices.com.

Optimum Choices is all about making healthy choices for people and pets. Tell us how you came to include dog food?

It is my opinion that the solution to better health for people is the same for our companion animals. We need to improve our pets' diet and give them food as close as possible to what nature intended them to eat. The current generic, low-priced dry kibbles available in grocery stores are equivalent to eating fast food and frozen dinners everyday for humans. One certainly cannot expect optimum health by eating fast food and frozen dinners everyday. So, why feed our companion pets this grade of food everyday in the form of dry kibbles?

How does food affect our animal companions' health?

Statistics from veterinary organizations show the average life span of our dogs and cats today is half of what it used to be in the 1950s and 60s. I can remember dogs routinely living to be 15 or 16 and it was not unusual for cats to live into their 20s. Our aging pets are now often plagued with many human old age conditions not commonly found in animals a few decades ago such as kidney and liver disease, arthritis, hip dysplasia, diabetes, and cancer. Many of these conditions can be directly linked to years of feeding our pets poor, sub-standard diets that are not aligned with what nature intended them to eat.

I understand you believe that feeding animals as closely as possible to Mother Nature's design is best. What do you mean by that?

Dogs are carnivorous (meat-eating) animals. Their diet that they have thrived on for thousands of years is primarily raw meat and bones. Dogs are naturally predators. They will also eat some vegetables and grains but they are primarily meat-eaters. Dogs can survive as vegetarians though this is not their natural diet. In nature they eat 60 to 80% meat.

Dogs thrive on a diet of raw meat plus added vegetables, grains and supplements. Their coat will be glossy and health problems disappear. They will be much less likely to develop the degenerative diseases that plague so many of our pets these days, like cancer, diabetes and kidney disease. In addition, if you feed your pets raw bones, this will clean their teeth, reducing the need for brushing and professional teeth cleaning. Be sure you are giving them raw and not cooked bones, which can splinter.

There are lots of people who feel the task of knowing what to include in a raw diet and how to do it is overwhelming. Do you have any suggestions?

Yes, we have books and videos on our website, www.OptimumChoices.com, explaining how to prepare a raw food diet with a minimum of effort at reasonable costs. It is also important when feeding a raw food diet to make sure it is balanced. Raw meat alone does not provide all the nutrients your pet needs and your pet will develop deficiencies if you only feed, raw muscle meat, such as ground beef or turkey. Additional supplements must be added to round it out, such as organ meats, bone meal, kelp and vegetables.

Do you think that a raw food diet is right or practical for everyone?

A raw food diet does take more time and money. If a raw food diet is not practical for someone, the next best thing is a good premium canned, frozen or freeze dried raw food. We have just published a natural pet care booklet listing some excellent sources for good premium canned, frozen or freeze dried raw food. Your listeners can go to our website at

www.OptimumChoices.com to request a free electronic copy or a printed copy for a small shipping and handling charge.

Another option is to feed a super premium dry kibble.

We often hear the term super premium pet food. What does that actually mean? And what kinds of ingredients might our listeners expect to find in super premium food?

Super premium food is food that contains pure meat, no meat by-products (such as feet, feathers and beaks) and a small amount of good quality grains. I ask your radio listeners to look at their current dog food and see where the ingredients of beef, lamb or chicken are listed on the package labels. Beef meal, lamb meal or poultry meal is OK as an ingredient but it should not be the primary source of meat.

Why is super premium food better?

Super premium food does not contain indigestible grains of wheat, soy and whole corn. A better source of binding agents would be barley and rice which are more digestible and hypoallergenic. Super premium food should not have a higher ratio of carbohydrates to meat.

A good super premium food should not contain any artificial preservatives such as BHA, BHT and ethoxyquin. Some brands have now removed ethoxyquin due to concerns that it may cause cancer. Vitamin E is a good natural way to preserve food.

Another big benefit of super premium food is less supplements are needed for a balanced diet. This saves on vet bills and extends your companion pet's life to where it should be.

Is super premium food good for over weight pets?

Super premium food can be good for pets with overweight issues. The pets will trim down because they are not eating the high amount of carbohydrates and poor quality protein found in cheaper brands.

What about cats?

Cats are “obligate carnivores”, meaning they must have meat to survive. They need 70 to 95% meat in their diet versus 60–80% for dogs. Domestic cats are descended from the African wild cat whose natural diet includes rodents, birds, eggs, reptiles and insects. So the ideal meal for a cat would be a mouse or lizard. This wild cat was domesticated by the Egyptians 4,000 years ago to protect their granaries from rodents. The cat was ideally suited to this task, since it did not eat grains. Yet today, we feed our cats kibbles that contain more grains than meat.

What type of diet do you recommend for cats?

We highly recommend a raw food diet for cats. If that isn't possible there are freeze-dried and frozen raw food alternatives. Canned food is acceptable because it has a higher protein and water content than dry kibbles, which cats need. In our opinion, it is impossible to make a dry food with a high enough meat content for cats because the food would fall apart. The carbohydrate content in the dry food helps hold it together. We therefore do not carry a dry food kibble for cats.

Are there things that make super premium foods different other than the obvious list of ingredients?

Even if you pick a brand of pet food that contains high quality ingredients, the food may lose its nutritional value in storage, before you buy it. With the long distribution channel for pet food from the factory, to the warehouse, to the wholesaler, to the retailer's storehouse and finally to the retail outlet, your pet's food could be anywhere from six to eighteen months old. Your brand could have the best ingredients on the label but their nutritional value could be severely decreased and the oils could be turning rancid by the time you buy the bag in the local store. Therefore, ordering food directly from the manufacturer is the best way to ensure freshness.

Another factor is how the dry kibble is manufactured. Look for a food that is steam extruded which locks in the nutrients, as well as the flavor and smell. The cooking temperature never should exceed 240°, thus preserving the quality of the food, unlike most commercial steaming processes that exceed 260° which denatures the food.

Since there are quite a lot of super premium foods on the market, how can you know if they are feeding a good quality one?

Comparing the ingredients on labels is a good start. But I judge the quality of the food by the results I get. Here are some questions to ask. After feeding super premium food to your dog for several months is the dog's coat shiner, silkier and smoother? Is there less shedding? Is there less waste to pick up? If the answers are yes, then the dog is digesting and absorbing more of the nutrients of a good quality super premium food.

What brand of super premium dog food does Optimum Choices offer?

Optimum Choices offers a brand called Prosperous Pet Products. It is only available through independent distributors such as ourselves and is not available in stores. Prosperous Pet Products super premium food is shipped direct from the factory to your customer's door and is no more than 30-days old.

Why is Prosperous Pet Products' food better than store-bought food?

Optimum Choices offers Prosperous Pet dog food because it is made with human-grade meat which is listed as the first ingredient on the label. Our food contains no meat by-products.

Our food has a high digestibility factor of 81%. With a high digestibility factor dogs will poop 20–30% less and will eat less each month. This, of course, saves customers money.

Our food is manufactured using a fixed not a variable formula. According to law, if pet food manufacturers change their formulation of ingredients, they have six months to change their label. This means if they are short of fresh meat one month they could legally substitute meat by-products or by-product meal and not have to change the label ingredients or otherwise inform the buyer for six months. Has your pet ever experienced a negative reaction to the same brand pet food you always buy at the store? Perhaps the ingredients were different in the last bag of food you bought.

I'm sure many of our listeners want to know about the expense of buying your super premium dog food?

We charge for UPS Shipping but no sales tax. So, if you compare our total price to premium store-bought food from a pet specialty store plus sales tax, our prices are right in the middle of the stack. But we offer the convenience of never having to lug home a 50 lbs. bag of dog food any more or ever running out if the customer orders on our autoship program.

Why would people want to be on your autoship program?

We have an autoship program where our food is shipped direct from the factory to your customer's home within 30-days of manufacturing. You can't get any fresher than that. Our food is so fresh some dogs go crazy when UPS delivers the box to the door. We had one customer's dog scratch and try to open the box after it was delivered. When their cat came into the room the dog jumped up on the box and barked loudly claiming the dog food box as his own.

Our autoship program sends whatever size bag your customers need shipped automatically to them at whatever interval they specify to meet their pet's needs. This takes the hassle out of running to the store every time they run out of pet food. The customer can change the size bag and shipping interval at any time without cost. There is no contract or obligation and they can cancel at any time. And best of all we give all customers on the autoship program the wholesale price.

How can one get more information on Optimum Choices' super premium dog food?

Your listeners can go to our website www.OptimumChoices.com and click on the [Products] button then [Dog Food] button.

They can call us toll-free at 866-305-2306 or send e-mail to info@OptimumChoices.com.

We have just published a natural pet care booklet listing some excellent sources for good premium canned, frozen or freeze dried raw food. The previously discussed information on super premium food is also included. Your listeners can go to our website at www.OptimumChoices.com and click on the [Information] button then [Animal Care] button to request a free electronic copy or a printed copy for a small shipping and handling charge.

Again, that's www.OptimumChoices.com or e-mail at info@OptimumChoices.com.

Thank you, Joy, for this opportunity to serve our companion animals.