

IAHAIO POSITION STATEMENT AGAINST THE FEEDING OF RAW PROTEIN OF ANIMAL ORIGIN TO ANIMALS INVOLVED IN AHI

IAHAIO advises against the feeding of raw protein of animal origin to animals involved in AHI. This is due to the many risks of such feeding practices to human and animal health, particularly for those who are immune-compromised.

IAHAIO recommends that all AHI practitioners follow the latest scientific evidence to provide a safe and well-balanced diet for animals involved in AHI.

Background

There is growing concern amongst public health bodies, for example, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Public Health England (PHE), regarding the documented zoonotic risks associated with the trend of feeding raw proteins of animal origin to dogs and cats.

There is much misinformation and many myths about such feeding practice. To date, there is no scientific evidence to support the suggested benefits of such a diet, whilst the risks to in-contact people and to animals are many and are well documented. Should an adverse incident occur as a result of an AHI animal being fed on raw protein of animal origin, then the effect is likely to have a major negative impact on the field of AHI.

Animal-Assisted Interventions (AHI) are often carried out with individuals with vulnerable health status who may be particularly susceptible to infectious diseases. They are therefore at greater risk of contracting a zoonotic illness from animals fed on raw protein of animal origin and of developing very serious sequelae, including death.

This IAHAIO statement has been prepared primarily for those engaged in delivering AHI. It provides an overview of the main documented risks to humans and animals associated with feeding raw protein of animal origin. It draws on the latest published research and scientific evidence. Based on this evidence, IAHAIO advises on good practices that should be implemented by AHI practitioners to ensure the health and safety of all AHI participants – human and animal.

The references provided allow for more in-depth reading on these topics. Additionally, further information can be obtained from your program veterinarian/s.