

# The Use of 4-D Meat in the Greyhound Racing Industry



## "4-D" meat is used by the dog racing industry to reduce costs

At racetracks across the United State, dogs are fed a diet based on "4-D" meat.<sup>1</sup> This is meat derived from dying, diseased, disabled and dead livestock that has been deemed unfit for human consumption.<sup>2</sup> The United States Department of Agriculture requires that charcoal be added to this meat to discourage human use.<sup>3</sup>



"4-D" meat given to racing dogs in the U.S.

According to an industry handbook, "4-D" meat is used at commercial dog tracks because "it is the most economically feasible for the Greyhound industry at this time."<sup>4</sup>

## Problems associated with the use of "4-D" meat

As a result of eating "4-D" meat dogs can be exposed to pathogenic microorganisms, including *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter jejuni*, and *Escherichia coli*.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the use of "4-D" meat can lead to false drug positives due to drug residues that dogs ingest and pass into the urine.<sup>6</sup> According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, raw 4-D meat "may present a potential health hazard to the animals that consume it and to the people who handle it."<sup>7</sup>

Even the mink industry has discouraged the use of meat from downer cow carcasses, due to outbreaks of Transmissible Mink Encephalopathy, a neurological disease that causes gray matter in the brain to become riddled with holes.<sup>8</sup>

## "4-D" meat is fed to greyhounds raw

The dog racing industry defends the use of "4-D" meat by claiming that it is also used by commercial pet food companies. While it is true that "4-D" meat may be found in commercial pet foods, the use of "4-D" meat at commercial dog tracks is distinctive because it is fed to dogs raw. Cooking meat destroys bacteria, but greyhound trainers are reluctant to do so for fear of negatively impacting racing performance.

*Last Updated on May 5, 2014*

1 Linda L. Blythe et al., *Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound* (Topeka: American Greyhound Council Inc., 2007), 151.

2 Adulterated Food, U.S. Code 21 (2011), §342.

3 Linda L. Blythe et al., *Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound*.

4 Linda L. Blythe et al., *Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound*.

5 Paul S. Morley et al., "Evaluation of the association between feeding raw meat and Salmonella enterica infections at a greyhound breeding facility," *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 228, no. 10 (2006): 1524-1532; Linda L. Blythe et al., *Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound*.

6 Linda L. Blythe et al., *Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound*.

7 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration, *Compliance Policy Guide Sec. 690.500 Uncooked Meat for Animal Food*, Silver Spring, MD: 1989, <http://www.fda.gov/ICECI/ComplianceManuals/CompliancePolicyGuidanceManual/ucm074712.htm> (accessed April 8, 2014).

8 Tawnie K. Bailey & John R. Gorham, "Transmissible Mink Encephalopathy," *Fur Rancher Magazine* 84, No. 3, 2003, 4.