



WHERE GLOBAL PET FOOD MEETS

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Comparing the market development of invasive species-, insect-, lab meat- and plant-based dog food

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Abstract details:

Pet food companies are incorporating overpopulated species, insects and cultured meat as ingredients as a response to the increasing environmental impact of pet food and decreasing biodiversity.

The objective of my research is to investigate the marketing and development of alternative protein dog foods from a geographical perspective, with a focus on the advantages and limitations of the use of overpopulated species as ingredients.

My findings so far are based on 20 semi-structured interviews and participant observation of the supply chain development and as a sales ambassador. I have found that overpopulated fish are accepted by many dogs, and they offer health benefits as compared to traditional proteins. The development of the overpopulated species supply chain has been socioeconomically beneficial and opens doors for conversations on sustainability. However, the development of the supply chain is also a limiting factor: It still needs to be developed and it lacks infrastructure. Furthermore, as “invasive” species, their welfare is not currently part of the development agenda.

I conclude that the use of overpopulated species may reduce some of the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of pet food but further research needs to be done on their welfare, especially as consumers become more conscious of not only sustainability but animal wellbeing as well.

Biography:

Carly Baker is a dog owner and social scientist committed to researching sustainable solutions in the pet food industry. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Cardiff University in the School of Geography and Planning. Her doctoral research investigates the use of alternative proteins: Insects, overpopulated species and cultured meat. Prior to conducting research, she worked as a veterinary technician for thirteen years in general practice, field medicine and specialty hospitals. She has combined her passion for animal health with her concern about climate change and food injustice for her doctoral project on alternative protein dog food.