

The Local **PET** Food Movement

Michael Clune

Photos by Molly McDonald Peterson

**Consumers want local, safe food—for themselves and for their pets.
Carole King has your pets covered.**

Russ, an energetic terrier cross, was zestful and dynamic, always ready for the next adventure. So it was a real surprise when, one morning, he could hardly move. His owner, Carole King, rushed him to the veterinarian, who diagnosed him with a rare form of anemia. After two weeks in intensive care, the little dog succumbed to his illness, devastating King and her husband.

Though grief-stricken, King felt compelled to find alternatives to conventional veterinary care that could prevent such a devastating nutrition-related loss. In memory of Russ, she vowed that she would learn as much as possible so other pet owners would never have to experience the untimely death of a beloved pet.

Be the Change

In researching holistic healing methods, homeopathy, Reiki, and raw foods, King became convinced that feeding pets raw foods, properly sourced and formulated, is not only natural, but optimal. According to King—who at that time was the owner of Doggie Dooty, a dog walking and pet-sitting service in Northern Virginia—her conclusions were confirmed by her interactions with hundreds of dogs who, in her opinion, lacked vigor because their conventional pet food did not provide ade-



quate nutrition.

To supplement her research, King returned to school to become certified as a veterinary assistant, increasing her knowledge of canine and feline anatomy, physiology, and health. Soon she began providing individual consultations to clients regarding holistic preventative care and raw pet food. Initially experimenting with commercial raw foods, King found that she was uncomfortable using foods whose ingredients' origins were unknown. Rather than compromise, she decided to start making foods for her own menagerie of cats and dogs.

King began directly sourcing from farms who meet strict criteria for animal husbandry and land stewardship, including The Farm at Sunnyside, Edgeworth Farm, Heartland Harvest, and Pleasant Hill Farm—all in Virginia. “We feel strongly about doing the right thing—sourcing from some of the best local organic and ‘beyond organic’ farms in the commonwealth that aren’t doing things the easy way, but the right way,” says King. Whether buying whole lambs, poultry, or vegetables, King purchases only products that she would feed her family. “Our animals should eat as well as we do. Our

Chow Now founder Carole King, shown here with Gil, purchases poultry and lamb from area farms for the company's line of raw pet food products.

