

Cold noses and sweeter smells

Nutrition

Jonathan Theobald
heralds the prospect
of a green pet food.

BRITAIN's streets and parks could soon smell sweeter, thanks to an environmentally friendly pet food.

Nutritionists in Denmark have discovered the benefits of feeding dogs on cereal-based foods mixed with tiny amounts of yucca plant. Dogs become less flatulent, and dog faeces breaks down more quickly.

Yucca schidigera — a cousin of the common houseplant — contains emulsifiers that help digestion. It was first used in factory farming when it was discovered that animals fed on it produced less unpleasant gases like ammonia and hydrogen sulphide.

However, the main advantage is the reduction of respiratory diseases and resulting improvement in living conditions which allows meat-eating animals, like pigs, poultry and mink, to grow faster. Another advantage is that faeces decompose more easily because the action of microbes is boosted.

Bardsey Mills, a farm-feed

merchant near Harrogate, has recently started making the pet food, Herald, in an effort to contribute to canine pollution control. 'Unfortunately, it's not an easy product to demonstrate,' says the director, Simon Wetherald.

'Nevertheless, we have tried it on 600 dogs in this area with results that smell promising — or so our customers tell us. Certainly Bella, our 11-year-old black labrador, is now much more welcome in the office.'

Mr Wetherald boasts that his is the first 'green' pet food. He is confident that, as street-fouling legislation is tightened and owners find themselves obliged to carry pooper scoopers, it will become more popular.

'When your dog does his little bit in the park it can take ages to disappear, and keeps on smelling horrendous,' he says. 'But when he does it on Herald, he is doing his little bit for the environment too.'

Whether that is a promise that would placate the Oxford don who once described the dog as 'that indefatigable and unsavoury engine of pollution' remains to be seen.

Observer Discovery is
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