

But we are having a lot of fun doing this. The day before shooting, we have to shop for all ingredients for the four recipes a shoot and in some cases, we have to have double the amounts because we may have to reshoot from different angles or if there is a problem. Like if I burn the Horse Muffins because the human crew are packing in takeaway curry for the lunch break.

Then it's a matter of lining up all of the cookware, knives, appliances, bowl, measuring cups and spoons and implements, double checking them against the recipes before heading for bed early so as not to look too grim when shooting commences the next morning for a full day.

First day, it's in our house for the non-cooking recipes-Pupsicle frozen dog treat, Trilling Tortilla bird wrap, Pussy Pate stinky liver and tuna balls, and a version of Bones And Raw Food that set the food processor doing a dance across the table as we all cracked up. I had mistakenly thought our home food processor could handle the addition of chicken necks when in fact, all it could do was chicken mince. Change the recipe, reshoot the scene and note, 'Necks to be served on the side.'

Our biggest problem is the heat. It's one of the hottest days in Sydney and our area is not air conditioned nor could we have the fans on with camera rolling. While we had two fans roaring in between shots, and towels mopping the brow just before we hit 'Roll em!', it's still a bit sticky. But the Pupsicles prove to be a cool treat for the dogs when we shoot them and I force my producer Anna to eat one since all of our cooking uses human grade ingredients. She has two and the crew look on in hilarity.

We end up doing five segments that day including one on Disasterproofing Your Pet which came about from the article in this magazine that we had proposed. End of day, it's a wrap as they say and Jackson makes a perfect shot with the Trilling Tortilla in claw using hefty beak action.

A week later and it's only two days past New Years, we've shopped for the cooking segments which are Dog Soup, Sweet Potato Parrot Mini-Muffins, Kitty Kookies and the newly discovered Horse Muffins-which I had mentioned to producer/director Anna the day before, not knowing that Anna's mum has horses. Anna got excited about the muffins and begged for a horse recipe amidst the treats for dogs, cat and birds. Sure why not... we need to cater to pets of all persuasions. Anna also insisted on it because her mother has a horse to test it out. Little did we know at the start of shoot as we loaded in Lilly the Dali and Jacko the Eccy, that the empty containers in the hall of the commercial kitchen were for Producer's Take Away. After all, they had paid for the ingredients and had the bucket ready for Mum's dogs to sample the soup.

Another hot day and no air-conditioning so we had to assemble a newly purchased fan and have one sent from the office along with the pre-cooked demo dog biscuits and special bowl. But there's one problem. The house cat. She's loud, hissing, spitting and cranky enough to scare the dog and bird. So she's relegated to the back laundry during shooting and I think in revenge, ignores my Kitty Kookies when offered them on camera. Cats--can't live with 'em, can't shoot 'em!

After another stellar performance of Jacko slaving over the prep work for Dog Soup and an equally well mannered and camera greedy Lilly doing tricks for treats, we settle down for lunch with the resident housesitter who has been watching the proceedings with bemusement, falling in love with Lilly and calling his daughter to come over and watch the shoot. No autographs.

But lunch turns tragic as the uncaged and suddenly spooked Jackson shoots out from Lisa's grasp, flies through the house and heads for the backyard. The good news was the back sliding glass doors were closed. The bad news is that Jacko had what appeared to be four door options to aim for outside, not knowing they were glass. And the result was a thud, a fall and a dazed parrot for a while-fortunately having a thick skull and big beak to soften the impact.

Once we determined he was shaken but stirred from his daze, we kept him quiet, hoping to bring out for the completion of the parrot muffin sequence. We also made a note to procure large sticker-like bird shaped decals that cling to the inside of windows by static and prevents birds from ploughing into them. Also in the panic, we forgot which of five Hawaiian shirts (one for each segment) we had for the parrot muffins, forcing us to go back to the footage to find out. Memo: put a piece of paper in each pocket to identify segment. Tick!

To take a break in the proceedings before we finished the Horse Muffins-which the recipe called for brown sugar coating but we eliminated to protect from tooth decay that equines are prone to-we did two segments on pet cookbooks of all types and also the more outrageous pet magazines that have come into vogue, or dogue as the case might be. I heard from Anna later that the horse muffins went down a treat with her mum's horse-Snuggles, who got mad when he had to share them with her dad's horse Christopherson.

Finally, Jackson and Lilly took their final bows, the cat typically shunned us and it was time to wrap up gear, divvy up the food and force the crew to try the Sweet Potato Parrot Muffins which were laced with chili peppers. To their credit, they consumed the samples and took home the leftovers of other recipes to their cat, dog or horse.

(Postscript) A week prior to going to print, we were notified by the ABC that they anticipated this to be a big hit and wanted four years instead of the one they had contracted for and also international rights which they had agreed previously were not a part of the deal. How exciting! Then the day before we went to print they tried to offer us a few pennies more a day to sign away our rights to the ABC here and overseas for years.

Unfortunately, they were not going to pay residuals nor share any income from overseas sales and wanted us to amend the deal to their benefit and our detriment. So after shooting 14 segments, we decided it was best not to knuckle under to a last minute attempt at savaging our rights and we agreed with them that it was best for them to find another pet chef. The good news is that our time is freed up and we won't kick ourselves for a few years over getting screwed by the ABC. The bad news is... well actually, there is no bad news-but it certainly made for an interesting few weeks and couple of pages!

PET ORGANICS INTRODUCES... Dick Van Patten's Natural BalanceTM Organic formula

- Premium dry dog food that's certified organic.
- A superb combination of quality ingredients, grown naturally, to result in a highly nutritious formulation.



♥ ALL NATURAL ♥ ALL NATURAL ♥

NEW PRODUCT

We believe when your dog is good for you, you should reward your dog with something that is good for them. That's why Dogon Ezy Treats are 100% Natural!

100% ALL NATURAL 100% ALL NATURAL

Dogon Ezy Re-sealable Bag

All Natural Charcoal Biscuits

Your dog will ♥ them!

Promotes Health and fresh breath!

DR NEIL'S

100% ALL NATURAL 100% ALL NATURAL

Dogon Ezy Re-sealable Bag

All Natural Special Treats

Your dog will ♥ them!

Peanut Butter

DR NEIL'S

100% ALL NATURAL 100% ALL NATURAL

Dogon Ezy Re-sealable Bag

All Natural Special Treats

Your dog will ♥ them!

Classic Carob

DR NEIL'S

100% ALL NATURAL 100% ALL NATURAL

Dogon Ezy Re-sealable Bag

All Natural Special Treats

Your dog will ♥ them!

Savoury Cheese

DR NEIL'S

100% ALL NATURAL 100% ALL NATURAL

Dogon Ezy Re-sealable Bag

All Natural Training Treats

Your dog will ♥ them!

Praise and Reward...the way to go!

DR NEIL'S

Dr Neil's

Pet and Equine Supplies Pty Ltd

Your dog will ♥ them!

All enquiries to Dr Neil's at
Dr Neil's Pet & Equine Supplies 1800 032 139
to find your nearest "Dogon Ezy" Stockist
www.drneils.com.au

♥ ALL NATURAL ♥ ALL NATURAL ♥