Dog Paws or Kale?

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The other day I was playing with my dog, Magic, on the living room sofa. He splayed his underside to me, ready for nuzzles, smooches, baby talk, and a belly rub. I obliged him and, in the process, kissed his paws. These are big paws—German Shepherd-Husky-God knows what else paws. And for those who have never kissed a dog’s paw, I can tell you it has a gritty texture, tastes like dirt, and emits a unique scent. Some might call is repulsive.

Not me.

Magic’s paws taste better than kale. OK, I’ll admit that if kale is minced and disguised, I will tolerate it, but if it looks like kale, or bears a rubbery texture and its trademark bitterness, please…give me a smelly, dirty dog’s paw to kiss.

But which is worse: eating kale or kissing dog paws?

I did some research and found it enlightening.

Kale might be dirtier than my dog’s feet. In 2019 it was listed as one of the grubbiest vegetables, with a significant amount of multi-pesticidal residue spread across and ingested within its leaves. And, as you know, kale is almost all leaf. Besides being contaminated with chemicals, kale is likely to contain animal urine or excrement. It’s dirty. Very dirty. Sure, I’d wash it before I eat it, but…yuck!

On the other hand, dogs get into everything. Pesticides, feces, urine, and things a dog owner would rather not know. But it’s easy to clean your dog’s paws. Dip them in a bucket of warm water, wipe them with anti-bacterial wipes, make your pooch wear booties. From the perspective of dirtiness, my dog’s paws are as odious as kale leaves. However, they emit the savory scent of corn chips. Think Fritos®. The aroma comes from normal dog bacteria and sweat. It is more satisfying to sniff dirty corn chips than ingest kale.

So, I will continue to enjoy kissing my dog’s paws, but I’d better keep myself healthy to combat anything my lips might touch on Magic’s feet. To do that, I think I have to consider eating some nutrient-rich kale—thoroughly washed, completely disguised in some sauce, and preferably invisible.