

ACVN Statement on Pet Food Recalls

The American College of Veterinary Nutrition expresses its sincere condolences to any dog or cat owner whose pet has been adversely affected by a pet food contamination incident. Most members of the College are pet owners as well, and we share in your concern for the safety and well-being of our animals. Further, as an organization of veterinarians dedicated to the understanding and application of nutrition as a means to both foster good health and fight disease, such incidents affect us deeply.

We understand that, even in a widespread contamination incident – like the melamine incident in 2007 – only a very small proportion of the pet food on the market tends to be implicated in the resulting recall, and much of that product is recalled as a precautionary action only. However, the seemingly ever-changing news about a pet food recall can create confusion and panic among the public. In the past, this has allowed for wild speculation about the safety and wholesomeness of commercial pet foods in general and mistrust of both the industry and government oversight of the industry. Some parties have taken advantage of these dire situations to enflame concerns so that they may advance their own causes or agendas. Although many reputable news sources strive to be fair and accurate in their reporting on this issue, the predilection for sensationalism by some segments of the media has served to further complicate matters.

The College has confidence that the authorities do everything they can to identify the source of contamination and isolate pet foods affected by the contamination. While we all want immediate, definitive answers, as scientists we appreciate the complicated nature of this process, and realize that answers take time and are subject to change as new information is discovered and revealed. We also believe that as a whole, the pet food industry is duly diligent and acts responsibly in its response to such incidents. Contrary to the assertions of some, it simply is not in the best interest of companies to want to sell potentially unsafe product. The long history of the industry's provision of safe and nutritious products to the consumer – and even the very act of carrying out a recall at great expense to the industry – speaks to its dedication to the health and well-being of pets.

The College encourages pet owners to keep informed of the latest news regarding any recall by visiting the web sites below, and to follow their recommendations as to what foods are implicated and should be avoided. Owners of pets who may have been exposed to a food listed in a recall should contact their veterinarians immediately. While the vast majority of the pet food on the market will most likely not be affected by any given recall, we also advise those pet owners considering home formulation of diets for their pets to be duly cautious. Many recipes found on the web or elsewhere, even from well-meaning sources, may not be complete and balanced, creating the possibility of significant long-term harm to animals fed diets based on these recipes. Advice on home formulation from a professional with sufficient training in the science of dog and cat nutrition is highly prudent.

The following link will take you to the web site page of Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine which contains up-to-date information on pet food recalls, what brands and products are affected:

<http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth/RecallsWithdrawals/default.htm>

Other FDA CVM advice to concerned pet owners can be found on the following page:

<http://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/products/animalfoodfeeds/petfood/ucm2006475>