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ASPCA Issues Urgent Advisory As Pet Food Recall Widens
Contaminant Found In New Protein Supplement—Not Just Wheat Gluten—for Pet Food

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Urges Pet Parents to Stay Alert and Aware to New Developments in the Recall

NEW YORK—The ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) today urgently reminded pet parents that the pet food recall crisis, which started almost five weeks ago, is far from over—and, as such, pet parents need to stay alert to new developments as well as the health of their pets.

“Until the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has conclusively identified all the contaminants in the affected pet food, where they came from, and which products they were used in, we cannot consider this crisis over,” said Dr. Steven Hansen, a board-certified toxicologist and senior vice president with the ASPCA, who manages the ASPCA’s Animal Poison Control Center (APCC), located in its Midwest Office in Urbana, Ill.

“Further, the actual link between the adverse effects of melamine and the illnesses or deaths of so many pets around the country is still not clear and, as a result, what exactly is sickening and killing our pets is still a mystery,” said Dr. Hansen.

Though the FDA has officially confirmed 16 animal deaths as being linked conclusively to the recall, unofficial estimates, including by those in the veterinary community, suggest the number of recall-related deaths may be far higher, perhaps in the hundreds, or even thousands.

“With the FDA today expanding the recall to include products containing rice protein concentrate, it is imperative that we stay abreast of recall news, and remain extremely vigilant to our pets’ wellbeing. If they show any of the signs generally attributed to kidney failure—or illness in general—please take them to your veterinarian immediately.”

Dr. Louise Murray, director of medicine at the ASPCA’s Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital (BMAH) in New York City, agrees. “Information about the recall is constantly changing, and we know that can be confusing to pet parents. This is why we are updating the ASPCA Pet Food Recall Resource Center (www.aspca.org/recall) on a real-time basis. I strongly urge veterinarians and pet parents alike to try to keep up with the news on this issue, whether via our Resource Center, or other sources such as the FDA’s Web site.”

Drs. Hansen and Murray have the following important reminders for pet parents:

- **Be sure to closely follow news on the recall**, since it is possible more contaminants and contaminated ingredients may be identified, extending the recall list even further. Visit the ASPCA’s Pet Food Recall Resource Center at www.aspca.org/recall frequently for updated information on the
current situation of the recall. “It is important for pet parents to remember that this recall affects cats and dogs all over the country,” said Dr. Hansen, “and the list of recalled products could change any time. Please keep abreast of news related to this crisis.”

- Until we know exactly what is making pets sick, continue to be alert for early signs of a problem that may be recall-related, such as excessive thirst, decreased appetite, or vomiting, and take your pet to the veterinarian immediately. “This is especially important, even if your pet’s food is not among those that have currently been recalled,” said Dr. Murray.

- If your pet is ill, save any food you think may be contaminated, instead of returning it to the store—even if it is a food not currently on the recall list. “Even if you’re not sure what to do with your pet’s food, freeze it, and ask your veterinarian for further advice,” says Dr. Hansen. “(S)he may ask you to bring it in for testing, which could help in the overall investigation of this crisis.”

- Don’t assume that just because a certain product is still available on a store shelf, it is safe. Because of the growing number of additional recalls, store inventory may not reflect the latest recalls. “This is extremely important,” said Dr. Murray. “As recently as last week, we were still admitting pets into BMAH that were unwittingly being fed contaminated products. It is critically important for pet parents to check as to whether there have been any additions to the recall list—especially since that list could change overnight.”

- If you think your pet is critically ill and you can’t reach your veterinarian immediately, please call the APCC for emergency advice (a $55 fee applies). The APCC hotline is staffed 24/7 by board-certified veterinary toxicologists, certified veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants. “This is a call we hope you’ll never have to make,” said Dr. Hansen, “but in the event you are unable to reach your veterinarian in time, that phone call may mean the difference between life and death for your pet.”

The ASPCA also provides the following information to pet parents (these and more are listed at www.aspca.org/recall):

- Adverse effects or deaths of pets linked to eating the contaminated foods should be reported to the FDA at http://www.fda.gov/opacom/backgrounders/complain.html.
- The FDA’s resource site on the pet food recall is at http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html.
- The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has a wealth of resources at http://www.avma.org/aa/menufoodsrecall/default.asp.

About the ASPCA®
Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) was the first humane organization established in the Western Hemisphere and today has one million supporters. The ASPCA’s mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. The ASPCA provides national leadership in anti-cruelty, animal behavior, humane education, government affairs and public policy, shelter support, and animal poison control. The NYC headquarters houses a full-service animal hospital and adoption facility. The Humane Law Enforcement department enforces New York’s animal cruelty laws and is featured on the reality television series “Animal Precinct” on Animal Planet. Visit www.aspca.org for more information.

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