

MELAMINE CASE STUDY

Summary

On March 15, 2007, FDA learned that certain pet foods were sickening and killing cats and dogs. FDA found contaminants in vegetable proteins imported into the United States from China and used as ingredients in pet food.

A portion of the tainted pet food was used to produce farm animal feed and fish feed. FDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture discovered that some animals that ate the tainted feed had been processed into human food. Government scientists have determined that there is very low risk to human health from consuming food from animals that ate tainted feed.

All tainted pet food, animal and fish feed, and vegetable proteins were recalled and destroyed.

As a result of FDA and USDA's comprehensive investigation, on February 6, 2008, FDA announced that two Chinese nationals and the businesses they operate, along with a U.S. company and its president and chief executive officer, were indicted by a federal grand jury for their roles in a scheme to import products purported to be wheat gluten into the United States that were contaminated with melamine. source <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html>

Whole Foods Market Response

Our Private Label team reviewed product movement and vendor production dates for all pet food or treat items that were for sale in Whole Foods Market stores or would be. In addition all pet food formulas and ingredients were reviewed to ensure they did not contain the implicated ingredients (gluten), and if it did the source of the ingredients were confirmed. Retained samples of dry dog food, pet treats, and wet dog foods were tested by Silliker Laboratories for the presence of melamine. All samples came back below the limit of detection. In addition, our vendor provided a corrective action plan to ensure our products would be not be impacted by similar issues moving forward.

In addition to pet food, WFM also addressed the risk of animal feed. An official letter and affidavit was sent to pig and poultry suppliers that asked them to have raw feed ingredients that originated from China tested for melamine. Whole Foods identified and sent letters to high risk vendors and the vendors were responsible for identifying their high risk products and having them tested, while Whole Foods tracked and verified compliance. In summary, there were a small number of suppliers who conducted testing. All other suppliers were not implicated as their feed supply did not include the suspect ingredient(s).

