



Safe animal feed products are necessary for healthy pets and livestock. Animal feed and product recalls do occur – so it is important to stay informed to ensure that your animals are receiving safe, healthy food.

Requirements and Responsibilities

- **Animal feed products are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).**
- **Animal feed, like human foods, must be:**
 - Pure and wholesome
 - Produced under sanitary conditions
 - Free of harmful substances
 - Truthfully labeled

Additives and Medicated Feed

Some animal feeds may contain additives or medications, such as antibiotics, hormones, anti-parasitic drugs, and anti-bloating drugs (in cattle), to prevent or treat diseases or to improve animal growth or productivity.

- Any and all additives or drugs that are used in feed products must be approved by the FDA.
- The drugs used in feeds must not leave hazardous residues in human foods, such as meat milk and eggs, and the drugs should not contribute to bacterial drug resistance.
- By law, feed manufacturers must be licensed if they intend to use certain medications in their feeds.
- Routine inspections ensure that the laws and regulations are being followed.

Feed Ingredients and Mad Cow Disease

- In April 2008, FDA issued a final regulation banning certain cattle materials from all animal feed, including pet food.
- The banned materials are the cattle tissues that have the highest risk for carrying the agent thought to cause BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy or “mad cow disease”).

Pet Food Regulations

Pet foods and treats are regulated by the FDA. Pet food labeling has regulations at both the state and federal level. The FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine establishes standards that apply to all animal feeds:

- Proper product identification
- Net quantity statement
- Manufacturer's address
- Proper listing of ingredients

Many state regulations follow the pet food regulations of the Association of American Feed Control Officials. These regulations are more specific than federal regulations, and cover aspects of labeling such as:

- Product name
- Nutritional adequacy statement
- Feeding directions
- Calorie statements

Reporting a Suspected Animal Feed Problem

- **You can report a complaint about animal feed, electronically through the FDA's Safety Reporting Portal at www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov**
- **When reporting a complaint, have the following information ready:**
 - Name of product
 - Type of container (e.g., box, bag, can, pouch)
 - Lot number
 - Best by, best before or expiration date
 - The expiration, best by, or use-by dates apply only to the manufacture-sealed packaging.
 - Once a container is opened, these dates do not apply to the unused portion of the product.
 - UPC (or bar) code
 - Net weight
 - Purchase date and location where purchased
 - How food was stored, prepared, handled
 - Description of the problem

Food Safety Recall Alerts

- **There are three different classes of recalls, depending on the severity of the suspected problem.**
 - **Class I:** Dangerous or defective products that could cause serious health problems or death.
 - **Class II:** Products that might cause a temporary health problem, or pose only a slight threat of a serious nature.
 - **Class III:** Use of products that are unlikely to cause any adverse health reaction, but that violate FDA labeling or manufacturing laws.
- **You can find current recalled products, at:**
 - <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/recalls/index.html>
 - You can also sign up for food safety recall alert emails.

What to Do with Recalled Products

When a food recall alert is issued, it usually includes information to help you identify whether you have the product and advises you what to do with it.

- **Check the recall notice.**
 - Manufacturers will provide information on what to do with the product.
 - Typically, this will involve returning the product to the store where you bought it, for a refund, or disposing of it properly (especially if it has been opened).
- **Do not feed the material to your animal.**
 - Even if you believe the recall to be just a precaution, do not use the food.
- **Do not open the food container.**
 - Opening the food and checking it can potentially release bacteria or viruses that cause illnesses.
 - If you do open or handle the product, wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap.
- **Preserve the evidence.**
 - If a portion of the suspect food is available, keep it, wrap it securely, mark “DANGER” and freeze it.
 - Save all packaging materials (e.g. cans, labels, cartons).
 - Save all purchase receipts.
- **Seek treatment, if necessary.**
 - If your animal becomes ill and you believe the illness may be due to a feed product, contact your veterinarian.

Safe Handling Tips for Pet Foods and Treats

- **Pet foods and treats can be potential sources of bacterial contamination, such as *Salmonella*. Take the following steps to help prevent illness in you, your family or your pet.**
- **Hygiene.**
 - Purchase products in good condition, without signs of damage to the packaging such as dents or tears.
 - Wash your hands for 20 seconds with hot water and soap before and after handling pet foods and treats.
 - Wash pet food bowls, dishes and scooping utensils with soap and hot water after each use.
 - Dispose of old or spoiled pet food products in a safe manner, such as in a securely tied plastic bag in a covered trash receptacle.
 - Keep pets away from garbage or household trash.

- **Storage.**
 - Refrigerate promptly or discard any unused, leftover wet pet food.
 - Dry products should be stored in a cool, dry place – under 80°F.
 - If possible, store dry pet food in its original bag inside a clean, dedicated plastic container with a lid, keeping the top of the bag folded closed.
 - Keep pets away from human food storage and preparation areas.
- **Raw food diets.**
 - Raw food diets can lead to significant health risks for your pet or yourself.
 - Keep raw meat and poultry products frozen until ready to use.
 - Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.
 - Keep raw food diets separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, utensils (including cutting boards, preparation and feeding bowls), hands, and any other items that touch or contact raw meat, poultry or seafood with hot, soapy water.
 - For added protection, kitchen sanitizers should be used on cutting boards and counter tops periodically.

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