



CENTER FOR VETERINARY MEDICINE

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INFORMATION FOR CONSUMERS

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
CENTER FOR VETERINARY MEDICINE

INFORMATION ON MARKETING A PET FOOD PRODUCT

There is no requirement that pet food products have premarket approval by FDA. The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act does require that pet foods, like human foods, be pure and wholesome, contain no harmful or deleterious substances, and be truthfully labeled. Canned pet foods must be processed in conformance with low acid canned food (LACF) regulations designed to ensure that the finished product is free of any viable microorganisms. Producers must file acceptable processing methods with the Agency. These LACF regulations are listed in Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 113.

The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act states that foods intended for man or animals are adulterated if they contain color additives that have not been proven safe to the satisfaction of FDA for that particular use. Title 21 of the CFR, Parts 73, 74, and 81 list the approved color additives and the conditions under which they may be safely used in food, including the amounts that may be used.

Regulations which apply specifically to food additives in animal pet foods are published in Title 21, Part 573 of the CFR. Additives in pet food must be approved by FDA based on scientific evidence that supports their safety and utility. If FDA has reason to believe there is a problem with the safety of a particular food additive, the Agency can take action to have it removed from the market.

There are also Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) substances which are permitted to be used in pet foods, because of their long history of safe use in foods. These are published in Title 21, Part 582 of the CFR.

Regulations concerning the labeling of pet food are published in Title 21, Part 501 of the CFR. Copies of the CFR may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

Pet food labeling is regulated at two levels. The Federal regulations, enforced by FDA, establish standards for all animal feeds: proper identification of the product as a pet food; net quantity statement (weight, volume, or count); name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor; and proper listing of all ingredients in descending order of predominance by weight and identified by their common or usual names. Some States also enforce their own labeling regulations. Many of these follow the pet food regulations of the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). AAFCO includes officials from all States and the Federal government who are responsible for enforcing the laws regulating the production, labeling, distribution, and/or sale of animal feeds. One of AAFCO's main goals is to provide a mechanism for developing and implementing uniform and equitable laws, regulations, standards, definitions, and enforcement policies for animal feeds.
December 1998

The Association of American Feed Control Officials has issued a series of pet food regulations

that has served as a model for State laws and regulations. These include more specific requirements regarding product names, flavor designations, guaranteed analysis, nutritional adequacy statements, proper ingredient names, and other aspects of labeling. The organization also provides test requirements or protocols for manufacturers so that they can meet State requirements of proof of safety and nutritional quality before a pet food is marketed. A product clearly identified as a "snack" or "treat" does not require a nutritional adequacy statement, but it must meet the other pet food regulations.

To order a copy of its official publication, you may write to:

Sharon Senesac
Assistant Secretary, AAFCO
P.O. Box 478
Oxford, Indiana 47971
(765) 385-1029

Although not explicitly addressed in FDA or AAFCO regulations, there are also policies or procedures regarding other aspects of labeling, such as health claims, use of the term "natural," etc. For further information or clarification of these issues or FDA pet food regulations, you may contact:

Center for Veterinary Medicine
Division of Animal Feeds (HFV-220)
Office of Surveillance and Compliance
7500 Standish Place
Rockville, Maryland 20855
(301) 827-6657

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