

Pet Food Maker Closes Plant After Voluntary Recall

Mars Petcare US to stop production of food at a facility involved in Salmonella scares.

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After a nationwide voluntary recall was issued by Mars Petcare US on Sept. 12 because of potential contamination with Salmonella Schwarzengrund in dog food products manufactured at its Everson, Penn., facility, the company has decided to permanently close the plant.

The company halted production at the Everson facility July 29, when it was alerted of a possible link between dry dog food produced at the plant and two isolated cases of people infected with Salmonella Schwarzengrund. There have been no reported cases of death or illness since the recall was issued.

The recall affects 31 states and includes brands such as Pedigree, Country Acres, Members Mark, Retriever, Red Flannel, Special Kitty, Doggy Bag, Natural, Ol' Roy, Paws & Claws, Wegman's, Pet Pride, and PMI Nutrition. The Everson plant was also closed for a cleaning in 2007 after Salmonella had been discovered in dog food products produced there.

The company urges consumers to look at the production lot codes under the UPC code to determine whether a product is affected. Concerned pet owners can also visit www.petcare.mars.com to find out if a product they purchased is affected.

Regarding measures Mars has taken following the voluntary dog food recall, spokeswoman Debra Fair said that even though no direct link between product produced at the Everson facility and human or pet illness has been detected, the company took the precautionary action of issuing a recall to protect pets and their owners.

"Since we have not yet identified the source of the Salmonella Schwarzengrund at the Everson facility, we do not plan to resume production out of a commitment to the safety of our pet owners and their pets, customers, and associates," Fair said.

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