

## Australia Changes Imported Dog Food Requirements

**Move requires labels on irradiated dog food to indicate product must not be fed to cats.**

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Note: This report updates a previous article, "Australia Bans Cat, Dog Food Irradiation," posted June 10, 2009.

The Australian government has changed its policy on imported cat and dog foods. The government has banned the practice of irradiating certain types of imported cat food — a change prompted by a number of cats who died or became ill after eating irradiated cat food manufactured by the Canadian company, Champion Petfoods Ltd.

Importers of dog food will still be offered the option to use gamma-irradiation in order to meet government sterilization requirements. However, those who use irradiation will be required to prominently label the product indicating it must not be fed to cats.

In mid-May a branch of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry recommended that, in light of international and local evidence, irradiation should no longer be considered a suitable sterilization process for imported dried or semi-moist cat food. The evidence included information supplied by an Australian veterinary neurologist and other unpublished reports, according to a department spokesperson.

Late last year, Champion issued a voluntary recall of its Orijen cat food in response to multiple reports of cats showing symptoms of neurological problems after eating the food. At that time, the company reported that 30 to 40 cats were affected and four or five cats had to be euthanized.

Champion eventually pulled out of the Australian market after concluding that the health issues were caused by Australia's irradiation process. Additionally, Champion changed its policy to one that prohibits it from selling to countries where its products will be irradiated.