

Pet Owners Confused About Dog Food Recall

Petco study reveals pet owners are concerned, confused about what to feed their dogs in light of the dog food recall.

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A survey of 400 dog and cat owners revealed that nearly three out of every four pet owners believe the pet food they buy may not be safe, even though government officials have said the public should feel secure in purchasing pet food not subject to the recent Menu Foods Inc. pet food recall.

The survey, conducted in early April by Petco, found that consumer concerns are consistent with what retailers are hearing from their customers, as well as with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's report of more than 12,000 consumer inquiries about the pet food recall.

"Given the complexity and fluidity of the situation, it's not surprising that consumers have questions and are looking for information," Tom Edling, DVM, director of veterinary medicine for Petco, said.

The survey revealed that although 90 percent of pet owners have not changed their brand of dog or cat food, nearly half are now more likely to look at pet food ingredients before making a pet food purchase.

It also showed that 70 percent of cat and dog owners do not see a meaningful difference in nutritional value among the various brands and types of pet food.

The results suggest that consumers want and need more information to feel comfortable making a good food decision for their pets, Edling said. There are differences in nutrition among pet food recipes, he added.

When selecting a dog food, Edling suggests that consumers consider the following factors:

- //bullet// Ingredient list — Consider the entire ingredient list and how those ingredients work together. Don't just look at the first three ingredients.
- //bullet// Premium brands — These brands generally provide the highest quality and level of nutrition. Higher nutrition levels mean that animals need to eat less food and will produce less waste. These brands usually have greater consistency in their ingredients, so food purchased today will be the same as food purchased in six months.
- //bullet// Activity level — Find a diet formulated for individual activity level. Dogs who expend more energy will have different nutritional needs than dogs who sleep all day.
- //bullet// Age — Older dogs need foods with lower protein levels to ease kidney work, whereas puppies need food with more fat and protein to properly develop.

Menu Foods initiated the dog food recall on March 16. Products recalled over the last month account for only about one percent of the nation's pet food supply, according to the FDA.

For more dog food recall updates, visit www.dogchannel.com/dog-news/dog-food-recall-updates.aspx.