

## FDA Lacks Resources for Cat, Dog Food Issues

**A recent assessment of the FDA finds a lack of resources could pose severe consequences.**

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According to a recent report, the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) devotes only two full-time employees to pet food issues, despite being a \$15 to \$20 billion industry

"The recent pet food safety crisis has strained this overtaxed system. CVM received more than 18,000 telephone calls concerning melamine pet food contamination," says the report prepared for the FDA by a subcommittee of its science board.

The report found the agency is equally challenged by "an explosion of new pet-animal drugs that are essentially a microcosm of the human drugs."

The pet industry, however, was only a minor concern in the report. Overall it found that a decrease in funding during the past 35 years has caused a 78 percent reduction in food inspections despite an increase in imports. In addition, the FDA estimates it inspects food manufacturers once every 10 years, at most. Retail food establishments and food-producing farms are never inspected. Scientific and technological knowledge and resources also lagged behind at the agency, the report found.

"Without a substantial increase in resources, the Agency is powerless to improve its performance, will fall further behind, and will be unable to meet either the mandates of Congress or the expectations of the American public," the report said.

- Rose Gordon, Associate News Editor for DogChannel.com