

Dog Food Recall Expands

Menu Foods products of all manufacture dates are now part of dog food recall.

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Menu Foods has expanded its recall of “cuts and gravy” style wet dog food to include all products listed in its March 17 announcement regardless of the date they were manufactured, the Food and Drug Administration has announced.

The action was taken upon hearing that some the tainted products remained on shelves, FDA officials said. Previously, Menu had recalled those items manufactured between Dec. 3, 2006 and March 6, 2007.

Earlier in the day, New York state officials and Cornell University researchers said they had found Aminopterin, a toxin used as a cancer treatment in this country and as a rodenticide in some foreign countries, in samples of the pet food Menu Foods used in its tasting tests that killed nine cats. The samples were provided by Menu Foods after the deaths occurred, officials said.

FDA head veterinarian Stephen F. Sundlof, D.V.M., called the substance “very toxic,” even in small doses.

At this time, the FDA says it does not know how the toxin made its way into the pet food, although it is still examining the possibility that a shipment of wheat gluten used by the Kansas and New Jersey plants of Ontario-based Menu Foods was to blame.

The FDA said it could not yet identify the wheat gluten supplier, but said the shipment could have come from both foreign and domestic sources.

The affected pet foods have been linked to 14 confirmed animal deaths, Sundlof said, but the FDA expects that number to rise. More than 4,000 people have flooded the FDA’s recall hotline over the last few days, but it’s going to take time to sort through all of it, he noted.

Owners of pets sickened by the recalled pet foods who wish to file a report can visit the FDA’s website, to find the FDA complaint coordinator in their state.

As a veterinarian, Sundlof said he was concerned that some consumers might make unhealthy food choices for their pets, such as raw foods, in the wake of the recall.

“Pet owners should continue to buy pet foods that are not part of the recall,” he said. No dry food has been implicated in the deaths or other sickness complaints, Sundlof said.

A list of the recalled dog food brands is available at on DogChannel.com.