

May 2009

# Petfood Industry

WATT

**The hit list:**  
What's hot in  
petfood packaging

[www.petfoodindustry.com](http://www.petfoodindustry.com)



## Driven by tomorrow

Sharon De Jong of Jonker, p. 18



**Rising petfood powers**

**Sensitive systems  
and finicky pets**

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## Features



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By Stefania Pes

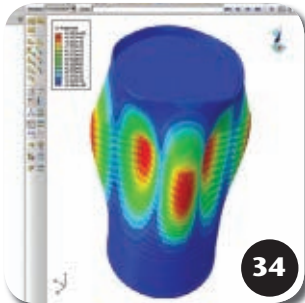
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**On the cover:** Sharon De Jong of Jonker petfood with Laika.

*Photos courtesy of Jonker petfood*

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## Exclusive web content

### State-of-the-art technology

Read more about the hi-tech equipment from Dinnissen and other processing best practices used at Jonker petfood in the Netherlands. [www.petfoodindustry.com/0905PETjonker.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/0905PETjonker.aspx)



**The global petfood market** Find more data on emerging petfood markets and other rising powers in the worldwide petfood industry in Lee Linthicum's Petfood Workshop presentation. [www.petfoodindustry.com/Workshopglobalmarket.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/Workshopglobalmarket.aspx).

**Hypoallergenic or just plain hype?** The Honest Kitchen provides information and research on ingredients and products intended to help mitigate pet allergies. [www.petfoodindustry.com/0905PETallergies](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/0905PETallergies)



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## Feedback

# Natural and organic label claims

**W**e at Pet Food Institute read with great interest two features in the March 2009 issue of *Petfood Industry* on labels. “Editorial Notes” and the article “Are your labels legal?” address some of the most complex and least understood aspects of petfood products, particularly the distinction between products identified as natural or organic.

Having worked within the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) on petfood regulations for years and having chaired the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Pet Food Task Force, I am well versed in the distinctions between these two categories of products. Unfortunately, both articles miss the mark in their attempts to provide clarity.

Contrary to the assertion in the articles, there is a very clear and definite regulatory meaning for natural petfoods and ingredients. AAFCO established guidelines for natural claims for petfood and specialty petfood products some years ago. These guidelines are used by state regulators in their enforcement activities and can be found in the *2009 AAFCO Official Publication* on page 135. The AAFCO guidelines for natural claims ensure consumers can feel confident that the petfood products and ingredients within products labeled natural are what they expect.

In contrast, no specific rules currently exist for organic petfood products. However, last November the NOSB accepted proposed rules for petfood that

have been in development since 2005. The NOSB transmitted those rules to the US Department of Agriculture National Organic Program with the recommendation that federal rulemaking begin for organic petfood standards.

We anticipate federal standards for organic petfood products will be in place in the near future. Once implemented, those rules will add the term organic to the already long list of petfood labeling terms and concepts—including complete and balanced, natural, lite and tartar control—that have strong regulatory meaning and enable consumers to buy with confidence.

*Nancy K. Cook*  
Vice president, Pet Food Institute  
Washington, DC, USA

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## Quick hits

- ▶ Multivac Inc. announced it has received the Hormel Foods Spirit of Excellence Award.
- ▶ The FormRite Group will sponsor the new petfood category in the Food Challenge Awards for 2009, according to *Food Magazine*.
- ▶ Pro-Pet LLC appointed Jim Flora VP of administration and Kevin McAleer joined the company as VP of sales and marketing.
- ▶ Carol Wilcox now is Naturediet's CEO, and Daniel Masters is managing director. Former CEO Robin Orrow will remain director of product development.
- ▶ Brakke Consulting, a Texas-based management consulting firm in animal health and nutrition, is opening a new office in Lenexa, Kansas, USA.
- ▶ K-Tron Process Group is offering a new brochure of its feeding and conveying applications for petfood.

## Petfood-Connection.com is the place to network with industry professionals

The internet is quickly becoming the most efficient and easy way to connect with people for business. *Petfood Industry* has recently launched the new social networking site [www.petfood-connection.com](http://www.petfood-connection.com), designed specifically for those working in any capacity in the petfood industry. Post a picture, create a profile, join a discussion, watch a video — your options are endless. While you're at it, why not visit us at [www.twitter.com/petfoodindustry](http://www.twitter.com/petfoodindustry) and follow along as our editors tweet about the latest, up-to-the-minute news! Get online and get going! 

## PETFOOD INDUSTRY GLOBAL



**Ireland's first pet industry trade event.** PetEx 2009, Ireland's first pet and aquatics trade exhibition, will bring trade buyers and sellers together at one event solely dedicated to the pet and aquatics industry, according to the exhibition's host, Innovative Events.

PetEx 2009 will be a two-day trade event, taking place in the RDS, Dublin, on September 6 and 7, 2009.



Ireland's petfood and pet care products market is valued at around €199.7 million (US\$267.4 million) in 2009 and has been consistently growing. The market is set to be worth €205.4 million (US\$275 million) in 2010 and €211 million (US\$282.5 million) in 2011.

"PetEx will give those involved in serving Ireland's pet industry the opportunity to participate in an event that will attract buyers from all parts of Ireland, allow them to promote their products and services to this audience, meet new customers, develop relationships with those in the industry and benefit from shared experiences and industry knowledge," said Marie Murphy, the event director. For further details on the event and exhibitor details, visit [www.petex.ie](http://www.petex.ie).

**Canadian petfood market grows.** According to a recent report by Euromonitor, growth in the Canadian petfood market is expected to continue. The Canadian pet industry performed well in the review period, due to a good economy, more disposable income in Canada and the humanization of pets, prompting pet owners to spend more on premium petfood, according to the report.

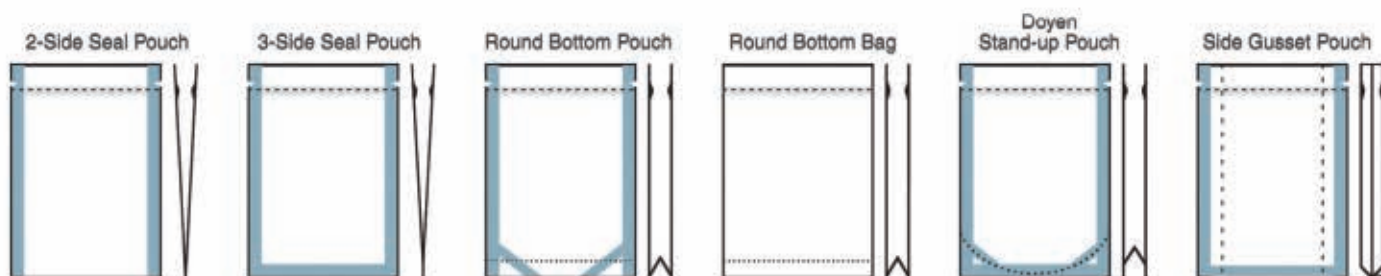
Euromonitor reported the 2007 recalls actually boosted the demand for superpremium dog and cat food, as some consumers wanted higher-quality ingredients. Supermarkets/hypermarkets remain the number one shopping destination for both dog and cat food, according to the report.

The report concluded: "Pet health care and dietary supplements will remain dynamic growth categories, as will superpremium petfoods, as the population of aging and obese pets grows. Accessories, particularly clothing, as well as pet services, also show great growth potential, as consumers are willing to spend increasingly large amounts of money on luxury items for their pets."

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## May

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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<sup>24</sup> / <sub>31</sub>	25	26	27	28	29	30

**Zoomark International**, May 7-10, 2009, BolognaFiere, Bologna, Italy. Contact: Operative Secretariat, Monte Rosa 11, 20149, Milano, Italy, Tel: +39.02.4391.1502, Fax: +39.02.436763, [piesse@zoomark.it](mailto:piesse@zoomark.it), [www.zoomark.it](http://www.zoomark.it).

### BIO International

**Convention**, May 17-20, 2009, Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Contact: Biotechnology Industry Organization, 1225 Eye St. N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20005 USA, Tel: +1.202.962.9200, Fax: +1.202.589.2545, [info@bio.org](mailto:info@bio.org), [www.bio.org](http://www.bio.org).

### HLASA/CEELA

**Conference**, May 23, 2009, Budapest, Hungary. Contact: Dr. Sandor Fekete, HLASA Chairman, Tel: +1.361.478.4250, Fax: +1.361.478.4124, [Fekete.Sandor@aotk.szie.hu](mailto:Fekete.Sandor@aotk.szie.hu), [www.dietvet.hu](http://www.dietvet.hu).

## June

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28	29	30				

**IFT Annual Meeting and Food Expo**, June 6-10, 2009, Anaheim, California, USA. Contact: Institute of Food Technologists, 525 W. Van Buren, Suite 1000, Chicago, Illinois 60607 USA, Tel: +1.312.782.8424, Fax: +1.312.782.0045, [info@ift.org](mailto:info@ift.org), [www.ift.org](http://www.ift.org).

## July

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**AVMA/AAAP Annual Convention**, July 11-15, 2009, Seattle, Washington, USA. Contact: AVMA, 1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100, Schaumburg, Illinois 60173 USA, Tel: +1.847.925.8070, Fax: +1.847.925.1329, [avmainfo@avma.org](mailto:avmainfo@avma.org), [www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org).

A complete listing of 2009 events is available at [www.PetfoodIndustry.com](http://www.PetfoodIndustry.com)

## 'BARF' diet plan meets criticism

Australian veterinarian Ian Billinghurst, who introduced his raw petfood diet known as BARF several years ago, is facing new criticism from veterinarians and petfood manufacturers, according to an article by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. BARF stands for Biologically Appropriate Raw Food.

Billinghurst wants dog owners to reproduce the elements of a prey animal when they feed their pets. He recommends a diet of muscle meat, organs and bones along with pulverized raw vegetables, probiotics, cultured foods like yogurt and a few supplements.

The article said that people perceive locally grown fresh foods to be cleaner, more humane and better for their animals and the environment, despite health warnings from veterinarians and petfood manufacturers stating that homemade raw diets cannot possibly provide all the necessary ingredients for pets' health that commercial petfoods do.

## Tyson, Kemin open new manufacturing operation

Tyson Foods Inc. and Kemin Industries Inc. announced the opening of a new manufacturing operation that is producing petfood flavor enhancers known as palatants under the Palasurance brand, according to Kemin.

The manufacturing initiative is the result of an alliance Tyson and Kemin formed in 2008 to develop, manufacture, market and sell liquid and dry palatants to petfood companies. The goal, according to the companies, is to provide cost-competitive, high-quality petfood palatants. The new palatant operation is housed at Tyson's animal protein facility in Scranton, Arkansas, USA. Production began in March and will be a 24-hour operation, according to the release.



"The Scranton facility is located near several of our largest poultry processing plants," said Jeff Webster, group vice president and general manager of Tyson's Renewable Products division. "This gives us excellent access to the fresh raw materials needed to manufacture high-performing palatants for some of North America's largest petfood makers."



## PFMA fights obesity in UK

A survey by the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association released March 26 showed that only 10% of pet owners are concerned about their pets' weight, despite one out of three pets in the UK being overweight, according to a press release by PFMA.

Petfood manufacturers are sometimes blamed for the problem because of the myth that daily food rations suggested on petfood labels are excessive. In an effort to counter this myth, the PFMA has started an awareness campaign, including a Pet Size-O-Meter and video, on how to assess pets' body condition.

"We urge pet owners to start using our Pet Size-O-Meter and make sure they and their pets have the best chance for a long happy life together," said Michael Bellingham, chief executive of the PFMA.

## Finding a place for organic petfood

Some organic petfood makers are finding it difficult to have their products carried at retailers for an extended period—a trend that may be due to the economic climate, according to an article from Britain's *Telegraph*.

For Rozanne Gallon, founder of Organic Pet Food Company, organic pet treats often are viewed as a special-purchase item. "We've been trying to get a full listing in Sainsbury's," she said. "In the present climate, there's insecurity among retailers and everyone is being very cautious."

The upside? Gallon's Christmas sales showed demand, and she sees the organic petfood market as more than a fad.



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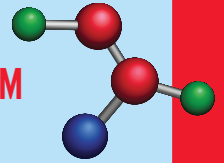
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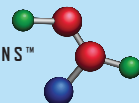
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## « Holistic dog treats

KicX Nutrition Inc. recently launched Fetch'erz Ballz treats for dogs. The treats come in four varieties: Chicken Stew, Fish & Chips, Fruit & Veggie Medley and Sweet Peanut Butter Crunch. Ingredients include hemp meal, whole flax seed (high in omega-3 and -6), rosemary and spelt flour. The treats are holistic, according to the company, and designed to promote digestibility. [www.kicxnutrition.com](http://www.kicxnutrition.com)

## Cherry feline supplements»

Hip Flex Feline from Overby Farm is a supplement for cats to promote agility, according to the company. The supplements come in the form of chewable bites made from cherries, salmon and tuna. The company focuses on using cherries and berries in its products for their antioxidant-rich properties. [www.overbyfarm.com](http://www.overbyfarm.com)



## « Turkey strips

Healthy Partner Pet Snacks offers All Natural Turkey Strips Wholesome Pet Treats. The treats are made in the US and, according to the company, contain turkey meat, natural evaporated cane juice and salt. [www.healthypartnerpetsnacks.com](http://www.healthypartnerpetsnacks.com)



## Bison treats»

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# Driven by tomorrow

Family-owned and operated for over 70 years, Jonker looks toward the future with private labels and brand names

BY STEFANIA PES

With the installation of a modern milling and mixing line, as well as expanding silo storage to reach a sum of 25 raw material silos with a total capacity of 2,250 metric tons and 59 end product silos with a total capacity of 2,500 metric tons, Jonker was able to increase its total production capacity.



Netherlands-based Jonker, which now revolves around the manufacture of quality petfood internationally marketed under Jonker's own brand names as well as under private labels, started as a flours and compounds trading company in 1937. Ever since making the transition to petfood, the Jonker family—which still runs the business—has been particularly in tune to market changes, foreseeing upcoming opportunities.

## Moving on up

The ability to realize new possibilities for continuous improvement and expansion of the Jonker brand led to the decision during the 1970s to start the company's own pellets production, first both for feed and dog food and soon after only for dog food. Between the 1980s and 1990s, many other changes were made, including:

- ▶ The setup of the first extrusion line

## Business basics

**Headquarters and Facilities:** Waalwijk, the Netherlands

**Officers:** Tjerk Jonker, owner; Martin Penders, general manager; Martin Sonneveld, production and logistic director; Sharon De Jong, administrative department

**Annual Sales:** EU€25 million (US\$33.2 million)

**Employees:** 40

**Exports:** All EU countries, Russia, Turkey, Belarus, Georgia, Saudi-Arabia, Arab-Emirates, Suriname, Switzerland, Norway, Algeria, Albania

**Brands:** Top-Winner and private labels

**Website:** [www.jonkerpetfood.nl](http://www.jonkerpetfood.nl)



The Jonker headquarters and facilities, located in Waalwijk, the Netherlands, reflect the company's foresight to sense upcoming opportunities and adapt accordingly.

for the development of new kibble products;

- ▶ A progressive range extension to add cat food and new varieties; and
- ▶ The establishment of a new, larger and modern facility in the Northern Brabant industrial basin in the Netherlands, strategically locating the new firm in a better position,

son of the original Jonker founder. "As a company, we always want to be ready and prepared to meet new market requirements in preparation for further growth."

### Putting people first

Human resources are a key asset to the company's inner work-

## Every gradual improvement has constantly been designed and implemented while thinking ahead.

especially in terms of logistics.

"Every gradual improvement has constantly been designed and implemented while thinking ahead," says Tjerk Jonker, current owner and

ings. According to Jonker: "Business success is largely influenced by people's dedication and personal welfare. It is of greater importance to us, as a business, to provide a good, stimulating work environment for our employees."

Martin Sonneveld, production and logistic director, is living proof of this company culture. Sonneveld started with Jonker about 18 years ago as a production operator, developing his skills and experience until his current position as a director. He has witnessed and has been involved to a great extent

Jonker's successful brand name, Top-Winner, adds to its already lucrative private label business.



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Jonker >

## Getting it done with Dinnissen

When Jonker decided to set up its third extrusion line, the company was not just looking for extra capacity but also for high flexibility, the most advanced technology of the entire extrusion process and to gain both in cost efficiency and product quality. Jonker found the right partner with Dinnissen, explains Martin Sonneveld, who closely followed the extension project, which was completed and fully operational by 2007. The new line, called Magi-N.ext, was adapted to fit inside the existing building and completed with dosing silos for finished product and a system to minimize contamination and manual cleaning.

"The Magi-N.ext's major benefits for us are the ability to switch fast and efficiently to new products and recipes, enabling us to produce a wide variety of petfoods of different kinds and range—like standard to premium and superpremium—all from the same single line," says Sonneveld. "We also realize savings in terms of energy consumption and production costs due to downtime reduction."

in Jonker petfoods development efforts. As director, Sonneveld has been working tirelessly to progressively increase the production capacity, as well as to upgrade production methods, process technology and product quality.

"The continuous search for improvement is critical for us, and we're still

pushing further advances we achieved during the past decade and beyond," explains Sonneveld. With the installation of a modern milling and mixing line, as well as expanding silo storage to reach a sum of 25 raw material silos with a total capacity of 2,250 metric tons and 59 end product silos with a total capacity of 2,500 metric tons, Jonker was able to increase the total production capacity to about 20 metric tons per hour.



**Pegasus vacuum coater, dry dye before extruder and fines and lump separation/sieve.**

## A piece of every pie

This remarkable volume is achieved through three extrusion lines. The multiple lines are entirely automated from dosing, mixing, drying, coating to cooling of the finished product.

Jonker petfood is able to cover different market segments because of its innovative production facilities. Its highly lucrative private label production, for example, offers over 200 customized recipes formulated internally. Several packaging options are also available according to customer demand, such as 10 or 20 kg to 2-5 kg or smaller (1 kg to 200 g), bulk and bags to be repacked.

Jonker focuses on quality control and good manufacturing practices and meeting, if not exceeding, customer demands. Continuing to set the bar for innovation and flexibility, the Jonker plant has recently been certified and is suitable for the production of organic petfood. "One of the more recent and promising niche-segments, which appears to be increasingly attracting consumers despite these latest challenging times," is how Jonker describes the business-savvy move. ●

### Online extra!

For more about Jonker's extrusion line using Dinnissen equipment, check out [www.petfoodindustry.com/0905PETJonker.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/0905PETJonker.aspx).



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# Rising petfood powers

Brazil and Russia are claiming a spot among the world's elite, with Thailand, Romania and others showing rapid growth

BY DEBBIE PHILLIPS-DONALDSON

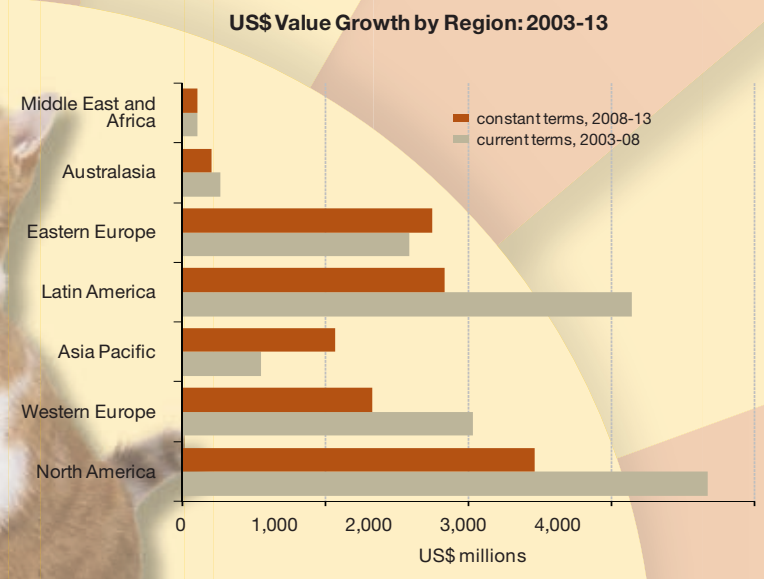
North America and the US may still be king of the petfood world, but new challengers to the throne are on the rise. By 2013, Euromonitor International projects, Brazil will have vaulted to become the second largest petfood market over Japan, with Russia climbing to No. 6 while also showing the strongest compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between now and then. Petfood sales in countries such as Thailand, Romania and India will also grow rapidly through 2013.

According to Euromonitor, North America and Latin America saw the largest petfood sales increase from 2003 to 2008, followed by Western Europe (Figure 1). Eastern Europe's growth was just behind that of its western counterpart, and from now through 2013, Euromonitor projects Eastern Europe will overtake Western Europe in growth and come close to Latin America and North America. Asia Pacific will start catching up to Western Europe, too.

Looking at individual countries, you can see the players pushing these developing regions onto the world petfood stage.

## Figure 1: Regional petfood growth, 2003-2013

From 2003 to 2008, North America, Latin America and Western Europe saw the largest growth in petfood sales; from now through 2013, Euromonitor projects, Eastern Europe will overtake its Western counterpart while growth in both parts of the Americas will stay strong.





## Figure 2: Top 10 petfood markets by 2013

According to Euromonitor International, countries such as Brazil, Russia and Italy will vault into the top 10 largest markets for cat and dog foods, with Brazil and Russia showing the largest compound annual growth rates (CAGR).

### 10 largest markets by 2013

Country	Retail sales (US\$m) 2013	CAGR % 2008-13
USA	18827.1	2.7
Brazil	4724.9	6.1
Japan	4089.1	2.6
UK	3718.6	1.7
France	3054.8	1.3
Russia	2625.8	13.3
Italy	2512.1	4.9
Germany	2379.5	-0.8
Mexico	1462.5	2.1
Canada	1407.8	2.2

## Growth is the key

Euromonitor projects that by 2013, the US will still top the petfood ranks by a large margin, US\$18.8 billion in sales vs. US\$4.7 billion for the No. 2 country, Brazil (Figure 2). Yet Brazil will grow at 6.1% CAGR, compared with only 2.7% for the US. At No. 6, Russia will reach US\$2.6 billion in sales and grow at a torrid 13.3% CAGR. Mexico is another developing market that will figure in the Top 10 in petfood by 2013, at US\$1.5 billion in sales and 2.1% CAGR.

Among the top markets from more developed regions, only Italy will still be growing at close to 5% CAGR. Most of the other

## Figure 3: Top 10 growing petfood markets by 2013

Euromonitor projects healthy compound annual growth rates (CAGR) in cat and dog food sales for these 10 countries.

### 10 fastest-growing markets by 2013

Country	Retail sales (US\$m) 2013	CAGR % 2008-13
Russia	2625.8	13.3
Thailand	386.9	11.8
Romania	315.3	11.6
India	55.7	11.4
Indonesia	26.3	9.5
China	407.5	9.0
Ukraine	283.5	8.9
South Korea	325.7	8.9
Bulgaria	49.8	8.5
Argentina	646.5	8.4

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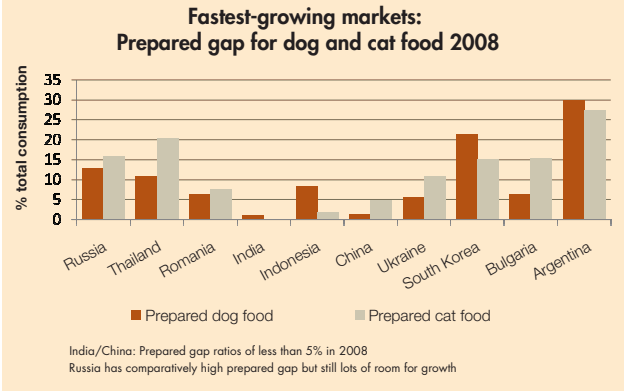
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## Rising >

### Figure 4: Opportunities in top growth markets

In the top 10 fastest-growing markets for petfood, Euromonitor's 2008 figures show there is still great opportunity for manufacturers to move pet owners from feeding table scraps to prepared petfoods.



developed countries among the 10 largest petfood markets will see growth in only the 1-2% range, with Germany experiencing a negative CAGR (-0.8%). This is because German consumers continue to be price-sensitive and prefer to buy private label petfoods or from discounters, Euromonitor says.

When you look at the Top 10 markets by growth through 2013, all are from the developing world (Figure 3, p. 23). This includes five countries from Asia, plus four from Eastern Europe and one from Latin America (Argentina). After Russia, Thailand checks in with the second strongest CAGR (11.8%), followed closely by Romania at 11.6% and India at 11.4%.

### More mouths to feed

The reasons for the strong growth vary from country to country but Euromonitor identifies two common trends:

- Changing demographics in emerging markets, including increasing pet ownership;
- Large gaps between the number of cats and dogs owned and the amount of prepared petfoods fed.



By 2015, half the world's population will live in urban environments, Euromonitor says, with countries like China and India experiencing the greatest urban growth as people are drawn to the increasing concentration of global economic activity in cities.

This leads to rising disposable incomes, creating more favorable conditions for modern retail trade (even with the

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current recession causing a slowdown). Increasing urbanization and disposable incomes also mean higher levels of pet ownership in emerging markets, which have already seen huge growth rates over the past 10 years. From 1998 to 2008 the number of cats and dogs owned in Brazil and Turkey rose 49%, reaching a total of nearly 50 million pets in Brazil.

China's total of pet dogs and cats now stands at almost 38 million after 38% growth over the last 10 years. India saw 45% growth and now has 7.6 million cats and dogs.

### Scrapping table scraps

Not only are there all those canine and feline mouths now to feed in these developing countries but the relatively low level of pet owners feeding commercially prepared foods means a huge potential market for the petfood industry. Among the Top 10 fastest growing petfood markets, only Argentina has total consumption of prepared petfoods above 25%, which still lags far below the levels in developed markets, according to Euromonitor.

In many of these fast-growing markets—Romania, India, Indonesia, China and Ukraine—the total consumption of prepared petfoods barely reaches 5-10% (Figure 4, p. 26). This creates plenty of opportunities for petfood companies to encourage pet owners to switch from table scraps and home-cooked foods to more convenient prepared petfood.

Countries like Brazil and Russia, already on their way to

joining the Top 10 largest petfood markets, demonstrate how filling the gap between pets owned and prepared petfoods fed leads to growing sales. In Brazil, consumption of prepared petfoods surpassed 40% in 2008, Euromonitor says, an increase of nearly 20 percentage points from 1998. Accordingly, the three fastest-growing petfood companies from 2006 to 2007 were all from Brazil: Nutriara Alimentos Ltda, Total Alimentos SA, Mogiana Alimentos SA. Nutriara and Total are among the Top 10 largest petfood companies worldwide.

As Euromonitor points out, with more first-time petfood buyers in emerging markets trading up from table scraps to economy and mid-price products, these owners may become the premium petfood customers of tomorrow. ●

*Based on reports and presentations from Euromonitor, [www.euromonitor.com](http://www.euromonitor.com).*

#### Online extra!

For more information about the global petfood market, including these hot growth countries, check out the Petfood Workshop 2009 presentation by Euromonitor's Lee Linthicum at [www.petfoodindustry.com/Workshopglobalmarket.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/Workshopglobalmarket.aspx).

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# Sensitive systems and finicky pets



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**H**ypoallergenic diets for dogs and cats are gaining popularity and do offer some health benefits, but some marketing can mislead pet owners because petfood allergies are entirely specific to the individual pet, according to The Honest Kitchen. There are lots of different theories about how and why petfood allergies occur. Pets don't actually develop allergies as a result of exposure to allergens but because they have suddenly become susceptible or vulnerable in some way.

Bad-quality food in itself may deplete the immune system over time because it can be laden with toxins and other substances that place unnecessary burden on the body or because it lacks important nutrients, antioxidants and enzymes.

Petfood allergies are defined as immune system or inflammatory responses triggered by certain foods. Other pets may not have true allergies but are still sensitive to certain ingredients on a less severe level. For many

## Hypoallergenic foods and ingredients for pets with allergies

BY JESSICA TAYLOR

pets, the most common culprits are wheat, corn, soy, rice and sugar beet pulp—as well as various preservatives.

### Allergen-free: the way to be!

A pet's diet has a tremendous impact on its skin, digestion and overall metabolism. Pets with sensitive systems can be highly allergic to less expensive,

lower-quality petfood ingredients, such as protein fillers, or even premium ingredients. That's why California Natural dog and cat food's mission is to "refuse to use allergens" in its production, according to the company.

For California Natural Pet Food, a Natura brand, it's what's missing that matters. With its lines of natural dog food, cat food, puppy food and dog treats, you'll never find fillers, by-products or artificial preservatives that can cause allergic reactions or stomach issues in pets, claims company literature.

California Natural also says it has the shortest ingredients list of any dry petfood but is still able to offer a variety of flavors in a complete and balanced diet. The list of ingredients used includes:



**Label for petfood containing natural, gluten-free pea pulses.**



- ▶ **Essential fatty acids**, including omega-6 and omega-3, are provided in optimal proportions to assure healthy and lustrous skin and coat and provide efficient sources of energy to support exercise and endurance and a strong immune system;
- ▶ **Sunflower oil** is added as a high-quality source of omega-6 fatty acid to help animals that may be prone to itchy skin; and
- ▶ **Single carbohydrate sources** come from rice (whole, ground brown and/or white) and whole sweet potatoes.

Perhaps what is more important is what is NOT listed in the California Natural dog food and cat food ingredients. The company produces nothing with wheat, corn, soy, artificial preservatives, artificial flavoring, added coloring and/or by-products.

The California Natural line includes:

- ▶ Lamb Meal & Rice Adult Dry Dog Food;
- ▶ Chicken Meal & Rice Adult Dry Dog Food;
- ▶ Herring & Sweet Potato Adult Dry Dog Food;
- ▶ HealthBars—Large or Small Dog Treats;
- ▶ Dog and Cat Skin & Coat Supplement;
- ▶ Chicken & Brown Rice Dry Cat



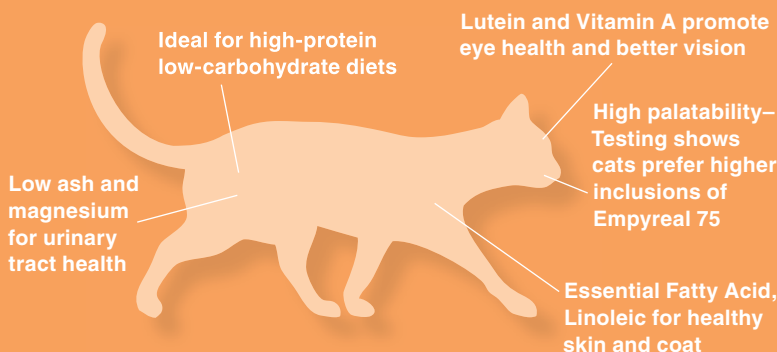
**Hill's Prescription Diet Hypoallergenic Treats are designed for pets with allergies and sensitive skin.**

- and Kitten Food;
- ▶ Venison & Brown Rice Canned Cat and Kitten Food;
- ▶ Deep Water Fish & Brown Rice Canned Cat; and
- ▶ Salmon & Sweet Potato Canned Cat and Kitten Food.

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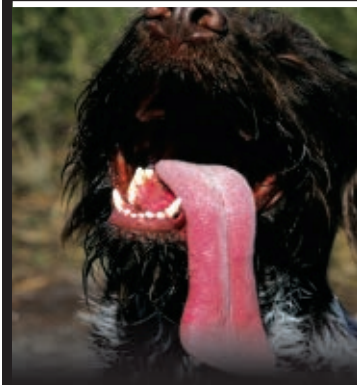
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and contribute to overall good health. According to the same research, pulses can help manage weight-related health problems, such as type II diabetes and heart disease, and have shown great promise in addressing certain cancers.

Peas are the predominant pulse crop and are grown in very large volumes, so supply can readily be established for petfoods and treats.

There are a number of processing plants that separate the components of peas so purchasers can get the whole

#### Online extra!

To read more about what The Honest Kitchen has to say about the hypoallergenic vs. plain hype debate, check out [www.petfoodindustry.com/allergy.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/allergy.aspx).

pea or pea fractions as ingredients. The primary components are the starch, fiber and protein. The protein fraction of peas contains over 50% crude protein, making it comparable to other protein concentrates.

To explore the potential to use pulses in dog food formulations, a two-fold research project was recently completed with the cooperation of Petfood Ingredients Inc., Wenger Manufacturing, Forte Consulting and Kennelwood Inc. For more on this study, read it online at [www.petfoodindustry.com/PeaPulses.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/PeaPulses.aspx).

### Hypoallergenic treats for pets

Several petfood companies are entering the hypoallergenic market with treats for cats and dogs. Hill's Prescription Diet Hypoallergenic Treats are designed for pets with allergies and sensitive skin. According to the company, the treats, available in canine and feline formulas, help eliminate the potential for adverse reactions to foods, as they contain hydrolyzed proteins.

Additionally, the canine treats support skin barrier function and nourish the skin and coat with antioxidants and omega fatty acids. The canine and feline treats are sold exclusively through veterinarians.

Aunt Jeni's Home Made offers Dogitos dehydrated natural dog treats in three varieties: beef, lamb and goat. The crispy "chiplike" pieces are hypoallergenic, holistic and organic, according to the company. Aunt Jeni's also claims the treats contain no preservatives, yeast, soy, chemicals, salt, sugar or grains.

Fishin' Chips from Aunt Jeni's Home Made are holistic cat treats with a crisp texture. The Seafood Medley variety contains fish, baby shrimp, clams, beef, lamb and/or goat lung "chips." According to the company, Fishin' Chips are hypoallergenic and all-natural. ●

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# The **hit** list:

## what's hot in petfood packaging materials and equipment

### 5 innovative products changing the way petfood is packaged

BY JESSICA TAYLOR

Looking for a more sustainable packaging solution? Perhaps you're searching for a way to speed up palletizing time while keeping costs low. Is predicting just how durable your packaging is your number one concern? Find solutions to these problems and more in the 2009 edition of ground-breaking packaging materials and equipment.

#### SuperTube woven polybags

Coating Excellence has recently launched SuperTube packaging: woven polybags that allow for superior graphic and printing capabilities (up to 10 different colors) with less than half the carbon footprint of paper bags. According to Coating Excellence, the bags weigh less, ensuring your shipping costs will be reduced. Also, polybags are preferred by most retailers. SuperTube bags reduce damage claims by 65-75% and provide a better moisture vapor transmission rate so your product stays dry. According to the company, SuperTube bags will not de-laminate with high-fat products, and based on testing, dogs prefer the taste of food from SuperTube bags over imported bags.

SuperTube woven polybags are versatile for the following reasons:

- Process printing up to 10 colors;
- Available in tubular (seamless) or back seam form;
- Available in white or clear;
- Many closure options;
- Variety of lamination options;
- Runs well on automated or manual equipment; and
- UV approved for 200+ hours.

SuperTube also has the benefit of being made in the US. This allows for reduced lead times, lower shipping costs, quality

#### Figure 1. Paper vs. SuperTube

**When tested against paper bags, SuperTube is stronger and more durable.**

*Data from Coating Excellence International.*

Type of Test	Paper Bag	SuperTube
Tear Strength	200-300 g	>2,000 g
Tensile Strength	50-80 lbf/in	>150 lbf/in
Burst Strength	135 psi	355 psi
Cross-Machine Taber Stiffness	3.4	4.2
Drop Test	Fair	Excellent
Static COF Slide Angle	20-30	20-30
Grease Barrier	Good	Excellent



**SuperTube bags will not de-laminate with high-fat products. Based on testing, dogs prefer the taste of food from SuperTube bags over imported bags.**

assurance and dependability for US-based petfood companies, according to Coating Excellence.

[www.coating-excellence.com](http://www.coating-excellence.com),  
[www.super-tube.com](http://www.super-tube.com)

#### Chlorine-free Eco-Tite shrink bags

Groundbreaking Eco-Tite bags contain no polyvinylidene chloride (PVdC) and use 25-33% less material yet deliver superior sealability, barrier, abrasion resistance and aesthetics, according to Bemis Packing and Curwood. These bags, developed for meat and cheese, would work well for fresh, pasteurized or raw petfoods and treats. Eco-Tite bags are ideal for most applications where traditional shrink bags are used.

Eco-Tite bags were first developed to meet the stringent need for chlorine-free packaging in Europe. PVdC, a common material used in barrier packaging, can contaminate recycling streams and release carcinogens when incinerated.

The multilayer Eco-Tite structure includes:

- A durable outer layer to resist puncture and abrasion;
- An EVOH layer for superior oxygen barrier without PVdC; and
- A high-flow sealant layer for excellent caulking and sealing under a wider range of sealing conditions.

Eco-Tite bags also feature excellent

**The Eco-Tite bags feature a high-flow sealant, so they seal better through wrinkles and folds to reduce leakers, reworks and waste.**



shrink for a tight fit with minimal dog ears, according to the company. The bags are also thinner and stronger than conventional bags, allowing significant downgauging. The downgauged material improves the product-to-package ratio so more bags fit in a carton and on a pallet, reducing warehousing and shipping costs.

[www.bemis.com](http://www.bemis.com)

### State-of-the-art simulation software

The latest in realistic simulation software is enabling Silgan Containers to increase its speed-to-market and reduce tooling costs for many of its new metal can projects, according to the company. The software enables Silgan to predict “real-life” performance of its cans with a high degree of accuracy before a single container is manufactured.

“These software packages can model very thin material with a high degree of accuracy, which is key to predicting physical can performance,” explains Alvin Widitora, director of new product development, Silgan Containers.

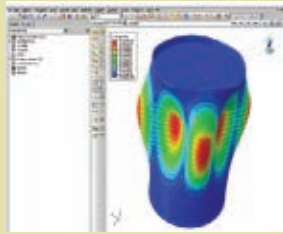
Silgan is using Abaqus Finite Element Analysis (FEA) software from SIMULIA, the Dassault Systèmes brand for realistic simulation, to evaluate the physical behavior of design concepts as well as project how the container will behave after it is filled with the product and then distributed. Each design is evaluated from a variety of mechanical performance aspects including axial load (stacking ability) and corresponding panel load (crush strength). As a result, Silgan is able to reduce as much as three to six months from the design phase and thousands of dollars in tooling costs.

“We have validated our modeling and simulation process up to a 97% level of accuracy that the actual container will perform as predicted,” says Widitora. “That means we can take a lot of the guesswork out before you get to the tooling stage with your canned product. This not only saves time but also money.”

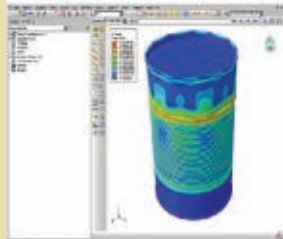
[www.simulia.com](http://www.simulia.com)

### Domestically manufactured woven polypropylene bags

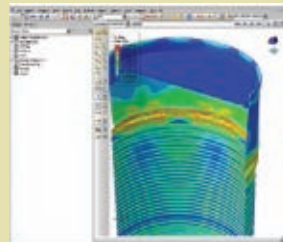
Exopack LLC recently announced its



**Contour:** This shows the stress of a steel food can subjected to axial compression. According to SIMULIA, this helps analyze stacking in storage or during transportation.



**Cross-section:** A zoom-in view of a cross-section, showing the deflection of the body beads under compression.



**Paneling:** Buckling mode of a steel food can under exterior pressure. In addition to stacking load, exterior/interior pressure is another important factor to evaluate, says SIMULIA.

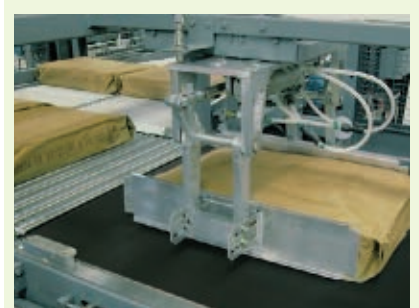
new offering of woven polypropylene bags and sacks under its Rave portfolio of branded large-format bags. These bags, Rave WPP, are offered in a variety of sizes and constructions with high fidelity graphics using up to 10 colors. Exopack has partnered with American Synthetics (Charleston, South Carolina, USA) to offer a complete solution to North American customers.

With large-format bags (containing more than 10 lbs. of packaged product), retailers want less damage, consumers want more convenience and packaged goods companies want lower overall cost. When strength is the primary goal, Rave-WPP is a top pick, according to Exopack. Available with a woven polypropylene

core, this style of bag is traditionally found in a sewn-open-mouth (SOM) format and can have either paper or OPP as the outer print ply. The strength characteristics of this product lend themselves to the largest formats (more than 40 lbs.).

In addition, Exopack (through its Global Packaging Linx service organization), can provide customers with a fully commercial, rotogravure-printed package that meets or exceeds all FDA requirements for food contact packaging.

[www.exopack.com](http://www.exopack.com)



**A-B-C Packaging has introduced a high-speed overhead orienter that accepts product for palletizing and turns it 90, 180 or 270 degrees to automatically form the optimal pallet configuration for each product.**

### High-speed palletizing

A-B-C Packaging has introduced a high-speed overhead orienter that accepts product for palletizing and turns it 90, 180 or 270 degrees to automatically form the optimal pallet configuration. The orienter can turn bags to form pallets with “butts-out” bag orientation and rotate cases and trays for pallets requiring specific panel orientation. Servo-powered for smooth handling and reliable operation, the mechanism quickly and gently grips and rotates the product to the proper position during high-speed product accumulation, according to the company. Operation is fully automatic and pre-programmed according to palletizing requirements for one-touch operation at the palletizer’s touch-screen display panel. New orientation sequences may be programmed by computer input at the control panel or remotely by modem uplink, says A-B-C.

[www.abcpackaging.com](http://www.abcpackaging.com)

# New BSE rules will affect petfoods

**U**S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations to help mitigate the risk of possible transmission of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or “mad cow disease”) among cattle in the US have been in place since 1997. These rules do not have much direct impact on the formulation, processing or labeling of petfoods compared to other segments of the animal feed industry.

However, FDA’s “enhanced feed ban” will likely affect the availability (or at least the composition) of some ingredients for use in petfoods. The regulations were originally scheduled to become effective as of April 27, but at the time of this writing FDA announced a postponement in implementation until October 26, 2009.

## Existing rules

The current regulations essentially prohibit the feeding of protein-containing mammalian tissues to

**By the time you read this there will be only a few months to bring all products into compliance.**

**The enhanced feed ban will likely impact rendered products used in petfoods.**

— David Dzanis



ruminants (e.g., cattle, sheep and goats). There are exceptions to this rule—such as gelatin, blood and milk products, plate waste and materials exclusively from swine or horses—but otherwise inclusion of such materials cause a ruminant feed to be “adulterated” and subject to enforcement action. However, these prohibited materials currently are allowed in non-ruminant feeds, including petfoods.

Also under the existing rules, the labels of non-ruminant feeds that contain or may contain prohibited materials must bear the statement, “Do not feed to cattle or other ruminants.” But while distressed or salvage petfoods are also required to bear this statement, the labels of petfoods offered at retail are exempt from this requirement.

## What’s changed?

In addition to the present ingredient restrictions pertaining to ruminant feeds, the new regulations prohibit specified high-risk materials from all animal feeds, including petfoods. Defined in the regulations as “cattle materials prohibited in animal feed” (CMPAF), these include:

- ▶ The entire carcass of BSE-positive cattle;

- ▶ The brains and spinal cords from cattle 30 months of age and older;
- ▶ The entire carcass of cattle not inspected and passed for human consumption, unless the cattle are less than 30 months of age or the brains and spinal cords have been effectively removed;
- ▶ Tallow derived from BSE-positive cattle;
- ▶ Tallow derived from CMPAF that contains more than 0.15% insoluble impurities (but ruminants can’t be fed any tallow containing more than 0.15% impurities, regardless of CMPAF status of source); and
- ▶ Mechanically separated beef derived from CMPAF.

It is important to note that these new restrictions only affect materials from cattle and buffalo and not other species, including other ruminants such as sheep and goats. Also, these rules affect imported as well as domestic products. The exporting country can apply for exemption from these requirements based on its BSE risk status.

## Why the change?

It can be debated that the new rules are unnecessary because the 1997 feed

ban was effective in its intent. Of the three cases of BSE diagnosed within US borders, one cow was imported, and all were born before (or in some cases arguably at least close to) the implementation of the ban.

Thus, while it is impossible to prove what would have happened had it not been in place, the ban on mammalian protein in ruminant feeds may very well have prevented BSE from establishing itself in the US.

Many people who argued against the new regulations during the proposal stage cited the low incidence of BSE in the US and a high compliance rate with the existing ban. Despite these statistics, FDA considers this enhancement of the ban as prudent to further protect public and animal health.

As explained by FDA, "The removal of high-risk materials from all animal feed will protect against inadvertent transmission of the agent thought to cause BSE, which could occur through cross-contamination of ruminant feed, with non-ruminant feed or feed ingredients during manufacture and transport or through misfeeding of non-ruminant feed to ruminants on the farm."

## What's the effect on petfoods?

The bulk of the burden imposed by the new regulations will fall on the rendering industry. It will impact what animals they accept, how materials are segregated and processed and to whom products may be distributed. However, exclusion of CMPAF from protein meals will likely affect composition, costs and availability of rendered products. Thus, petfood manufacturers may need to reformulate products based on these factors.

Very importantly, there is no provision to allow manufacturers to deplete inventories of ingredients or to sell products containing CMPAF after the ban takes effect. Although implementation was delayed until the fall, by the time you read this there will be only a few months remaining to bring all products into compliance.

One aspect that may have been

considered during development of the regulation but did not make it into the final rule was a change in the labeling requirements for petfoods. Even with

### Online resources

An excellent brochure on the handling and labeling of salvaged and distressed petfoods is available from the Pet Food Institute, [http://www.petfoodinstitute.org/documents/SadBrochure\\_New.pdf](http://www.petfoodinstitute.org/documents/SadBrochure_New.pdf).

FDA provides information on the new BSE regulations, including the regulatory text, FAQs and guidance documents, at <http://www.fda.gov/cvm/bsetoc.html>.

implementation of the new requirements, a petfood intended for retail sale does not have to bear the label statement warning about feeding it to ruminants. However, this labeling

exemption does not apply to petfood products sold for animal feed (e.g., out-of-spec, past the sell-by date, in damaged packaging or otherwise unfit for retail sale).

While the renderer may bear the brunt of the responsibility as the regulations are written, FDA expects all parties to practice due diligence in excluding CMPAF from their respective products. Thus, it is prudent for petfood manufacturers to familiarize themselves with the new requirements. This material may also be helpful in answering consumer concerns regarding the risk of the BSE agent in petfoods. ●

*Dr. Dzanis is a writer and consultant on nutrition, labeling and regulation. Contact him at Tel: +1.661.251.3543; E-mail: [dzanis@aol.com](mailto:dzanis@aol.com).*

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## Plankton: coming soon to a petfood near you

**P**etfood manufacturers have for years been aggressively exploring the world for quality economical ingredients. More recently, companies have tried to find novel and unusual ingredients to attract pet owners' attention. But a new motivation may soon be pushing the introduction of novel ingredients—scarcity.

A number of staple petfood ingredients are becoming more difficult to purchase, in part because of:

- ▶ Competition within the industry fueled by growth;
- ▶ Competition with other industries such as aquaculture for similar ingredients;
- ▶ Regional droughts and shortages; and
- ▶ Decreasing waste in human food processing.

There are also growing concerns about pathogenic bacterial contamination, declines in quality with changes in the mix of by-products reaching rendering, an increase in cases of allergy and hypersensitivity to conventional ingredients and growing demand for antioxidant carotenoids and essential fatty acids.

### Topping the list

At the top of the scarcity list are marine products: proteins and fatty acids. Growing human populations, increasing knowledge regarding fatty acid requirements and over-fishing are expected to put greater pressures on fisheries, with the expectation that fish stocks will soon be incapable of supporting demand. This affects people and their pets. So what can we do?

One emerging option to this dilemma is plankton. It might seem like a real stretch, right? Well, not quite as big a stretch as you might think. A number of

**Microalgae products have much untapped promise for supplying essential nutrients.**

— Greg Aldrich



plankton or “microalgae” are suitable for industrial exploitation. While still somewhat futuristic, efforts have been under way for more than 50 years to grow, harvest and evaluate scores of organisms for productivity, nutrient composition, safety, agro/aquacultural sustainability and economics.

### Filling a niche

These varied species of plankton originate in large bodies of water such as the world's oceans and lakes.

By definition, they are floating or drifting organisms incapable of controlling their own motility or direction and fill an ecological niche rather than a phylogenic or taxonomic family. They are

acids) that accumulate with each successive trophic order of marine organisms. In other words, the omega-3 fatty acids in fish are derived from their diet, rather than their own synthesis, and these fatty acids are produced by plankton.

The more commercially viable plankton can be found in the families of green algae, cyanobacteria and protists. They have crazy sounding names, including such green algae organisms as *Chlorella*, *Dunaliella* and *Haematococcus*, cyanobacterium such as *Arthrospira (Spirulina)* and *Aphanizomenon*, dinoflagellates such as *Cryptocodinium* and chromista such as *Shizochytrium*.

Some of these organisms are photosynthetic, thus taking CO<sub>2</sub>, nitrogen

**A new motivation may soon be pushing the introduction of novel ingredients—scarcity.**

commonly referred to as phytoplankton, zooplankton and bacterioplankton.

These mostly unicellular organisms are at the ground floor of the ocean's food chain, supporting a broad diversity of organisms, and are the primary source of numerous essential nutrients (e.g., long-chain fatty

and light and producing valuable carbon compounds such as simple sugars and amino acids. Others are heterotrophic organisms that utilize simple sugars and salts along with heat to produce more complex molecules such as carotenoids and long-chain fatty acids.



## Nutritional benefits

Plankton are composed of proteins, carbohydrates and fats that rival some terrestrial proteins—for example, *Spirulina* can exceed 60% protein, 13% carbohydrate and 6% fat on a dry matter basis. Plankton proteins are nutritionally available, although somewhat lower in quality than casein or soy. This is most likely due to a slightly lower protein digestibility combined with a lower ratio of essential amino acids such as methionine and histidine.

A viable source for most essential water soluble vitamins, carotenoids and tocopherols (vitamin E), plankton are also reported to be a rich and nutritionally available source of iron, selenium and iodine, among other minerals. Plankton are reputed to possess numerous nutraceutical compounds and anti-inflammatory mediators. Generally speaking, plankton are safe for consumption but the amount in the diet may need to be limited. Under certain stressed growing conditions, though, toxic agents can be a concern.

While nutritional utilization of the plankton biomass may have been the original intent, today the principal consideration in the production of plankton is for harvest of specific nutrients. In other words, plankton are being farmed in ponds and grown in fermentation tanks for the production of specific molecules such as long-chain fatty acids. This is the application that holds the greatest near-term use for human foods and petfoods.

## Limited but promising

Consumption of whole blue-green algae (*Spirulina*), beta-carotene extracts from *Dunaliella* and astaxanthin from *Haematococcus* are reported for human, livestock and marine diets. However, reports of this sort are not readily found for dogs or cats.

The long-chain fatty acid docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) extract derived from *Cryptocodinium* (a dinoflagellate protist) has been used in infant formulas. More recently, this same source of DHA has made its way into specialized pet diets. This application offers a targeted source of DHA devoid of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) common to fish oils.

More work needs to be done to deter-

mine how pets are affected by the various sources of plankton and how it might be effectively used to augment current supplies of critically limited nutrients from terrestrial sources. The controlled production of these organisms in ponds and fermentation vessels provides a deliberate and safe method to produce quality proteins, vitamins, antioxidant carotenoids and essential long-chain fatty acids.

The future of plankton (microalgae)

products in pet diets has much untapped promise as a source of safe, quality sustainable biomass and supply of essential nutrients in a time of increasing scarcity. ●

*Dr. Greg Aldrich is president of Pet Food & Ingredient Technology Inc., which facilitates innovations in foods and ingredients for companion animals.*



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# Research Notes

## Guaranteed analysis vs. measured nutrients

The purpose of this study was to

compare the guaranteed analysis of commercial petfoods to their measured nutrient concentrations. Data were

collected regarding the guaranteed and measured concentrations of crude protein, crude fat, crude fiber, moisture and ash of petfoods from annual feed inspection reports from South Dakota (2003–2005), Indiana (2004–2005), Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey (2005–2006). The difference for each nutrient was compared among types of food (dry, canned or treat), intended species, target lifestages, manufacturers and reporting laboratories.

Significant differences were found. For all foods, the mean  $\pm$  one standard deviation of the difference was  $1.5 \pm 2.0\%$  for crude protein,  $1.0 \pm 1.7\%$  for crude fat,  $-0.7 \pm 1.3\%$  for crude fiber,  $-4.0 \pm 3.3\%$  for moisture and  $-0.5 \pm 1.0\%$  for ash. The difference in crude protein was significantly greater for treats than for other food types. The difference in crude fat was significantly less for dry foods than for other food types. The differences in crude fiber and moisture were significantly less for canned foods than for other food types. Only the differences in crude fiber differed significantly among target species, lifestages, manufacturers or laboratories.

More accurate estimations of the nutrient composition and calculated

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Key Concepts

### ► Guaranteed analysis vs. measured nutrients

(JAPAN 93:141. doi:10.1111/j.1439-0396.2009.00921\_1.x)

More accurate estimations of the nutrient composition of commercial petfoods can be obtained by making adjustments to the guaranteed analysis.

### ► Canine obesity and oxidative stress

(JAPAN 93:141-142. doi:10.1111/j.1439-0396.2009.00921\_2.x)

The results of this pilot study suggest obesity is associated with an increase in antioxidant potential.

metabolizable energy content of commercial petfoods can be obtained by making adjustments to the guaranteed analysis. This includes adding 1.5% and 1% to the guaranteed minimums for crude protein and crude fat, respectively, and subtracting 0.7%, 4% and 0.5% from the guaranteed maximums for crude fiber, moisture and ash, respectively.

Source: C.J. Choate, *et al.*, 2009. Comparison of the Guaranteed Analysis with the Measured Nutrient Composition of Commercial Petfoods. *JAPAN* 93:141. doi:10.1111/j.1439-0396.2009.00921\_1.x

## Canine obesity and oxidative stress

It has been demonstrated that obesity increases oxidative stress in obese children, cats and other species. Oxidative stress can result in DNA damage, and these effects predispose animals and humans to numerous disease processes and cancer. The objective of the study was to demonstrate that obese dogs are under oxidative stress, resulting in DNA damage and decreased endogenous antioxidant protection measured by serum glutathione levels and the ratio of reduced (GSH) to oxidized (GSSG) glutathione.

Ten obese dogs were compared with age-matched, healthy control dogs. Dogs with a body conditioning score (BCS) of 7 or greater on a nine-point scale were considered obese. Dogs were evaluated by history, physical exam, BCS, CBC, serum biochemical analysis and total T4, with both groups showing no significant differences in CBC, serum biochemical or T4 analysis. Single-cell gel electrophoresis was used to measure DNA damage, and high performance liquid chromatography was used to measure serum glutathione. Reduced glutathione levels were significantly higher in the obese group ( $p = 0.012$ ).

The results of this pilot study suggest obesity is associated with an increase in antioxidant potential, justifying a larger study with antioxidant supplementation to determine how antioxidants in weight loss diets affect endogenous antioxidant capabilities.

Source: M. G. Cline, *et al.*, 2009. The Relationship between Obesity and Markers of Oxidative Stress in Dogs. *JAPAN* 93:141-142. doi:10.1111/j.1439-0396.2009.00921\_2.x



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# Product News

## Oxygen analyzer



Mocon Inc. now is offering the Pac Check Model 450 EC benchtop oxygen headspace analyzer. The analyzer lets users go from setup to test quickly, according to the company, and can measure an oxygen concentration range from 0 to 100% in package types ranging from small blisters to large pouches.

**Mocon Inc.**  
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## GC/MS software

Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc.'s Lab Forms 2.5 is a GC/MS software suite aimed at specific laboratory applications such



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as food safety. The software packages incorporate Method Forge, which provides an automated pathway to generating full-scan methods. Wizards and templates ensure straightforward programming of daily batches, according to the company.



**Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc.**  
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## Bag discharger

The Spiroflow Type 3 bulk bag discharger, which meters bulk ingredients and minor additives, is available from Spiroflow Systems Inc. The discharger dispenses bulk ingredients and additives from 20- to 3,500-pound batches using electronic load cells directly below the top bag holding frame. An integral transfer conveyor can be suspended from the holding frame, if needed.



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5C0908-Horizon Systems S/S 3 cu ft / 60L Bag Break Station  
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## Let's have a debate

Last year saw a record number of global new petfood product introductions: 2,553 SKUs (stock-keeping units), according to Productscan Online, a data-monitor service. And that figure was only through October 15, 2008, the latest data available for Packaged Facts to include in its report *Pet Food in the US*, released in January ([www.packagedfacts.com](http://www.packagedfacts.com)).

The SKUs comprised a total of 669 new product launch reports. Of those, Productscan and Packaged Facts say, the most frequent marketing or packaging claim was “natural,” with 183 instances. Also showing up were claims such as high protein (115 mentions), no wheat (67) and no gluten (38).

These claims caught my eye because of the increasing number of new petfoods developed on the concept that the best, most nutritious pet diets are grain-free and “evolution based”—using only ingredients that pets would eat if still living in the wild. (For more on these products, see the March article [www.petfoodindustry.com/PetfoodGoesWild.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/PetfoodGoesWild.aspx).) Judging by an ongoing discussion thread and blog posts on the new networking site Petfood-Connection, the products are catching the attention of many others in the industry.

### Don't shudder!

Say “blog” or “online discussion” to many petfood professionals and they might shudder or become rather agitated. We all know of too many petfood-related blogs and websites that proliferate misinformation or emotion-fueled opinions backed by little to no fact or science, especially since the 2007 US petfood recalls.

But there are well-done, well-informed blogs and sites, too, and blogging as a form of online communication and dissemination has proven its worth in many instances. The same can be said of social networking sites—once the province of

**Online discussions and networking sites offer the industry a way to share knowledge.**

— Debbie Phillips-Donaldson



teenagers and online junkies but now a valuable tool for many people and groups, including professional ones, to connect and share information and knowledge.

That's why we started Petfood-Connection: to be an online community and communication nexus for petfood professionals around the world. Though it's hosted by *Petfood Industry* (and our parent company, Watt), our goal is for it to belong to its members. We keep an eye on it for any truly inappropriate or objectionable content, but otherwise we don't edit, filter or delete anything posted.

This can lead to some interesting exchanges of thought and experience—such as the recent discussion on grain-free petfoods.

### Much flurry?

Most of the Petfood-Connection members participating in the discussion think the primary reason for this trend is the growing number of pets becoming allergic to more traditional petfood ingredients, including commonly used grains. “I am no expert on this, but I suggest allergies might be polyfactorial in that it may be a combination of genotype or breeding line, component of the diet and maybe even more importantly component of the diet early in the pet's life,” posted one member.

Other members mentioned consumer views as a possible driver of the trend. “The perception of pet owners that animals are carnivores is another point,” one posted.

Tom Willard, PhD, a nutritionist, threw cold water on all the heat over grain-free on the Petfood-Connection blog. “Like so many topics on the internet, there is much flurry, a lot of emotion and little data or facts presented,” he wrote. “I do believe grain-free diets may benefit a few animals, but as a whole it is misleading to say that a grain-free diet is better than one with whole grains or other sources of carbohydrates. Grains supply many beneficial nutritional constituents such as natural antioxidants, essential vitamins and minerals that do not exist in non-grain sources such as potatoes. In addition, grains furnish carbohydrates necessary to support cooking or gelatinization. Allergies are almost always associated with the protein fraction, not the carbohydrates.”

### Join the discussion

Regardless of where you side on the grain-free debate—or any other trend or issue affecting the industry—you can join the discussion, too. Just go to [Petfood-Connection.com](http://Petfood-Connection.com); it takes minutes to sign up, and membership is free to any professional involved in the global petfood industry. ●

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*Phillips-Donaldson is editor-in-chief of Petfood Industry magazine. E-mail her at [dphillips@wattnet.net](mailto:dphillips@wattnet.net).*



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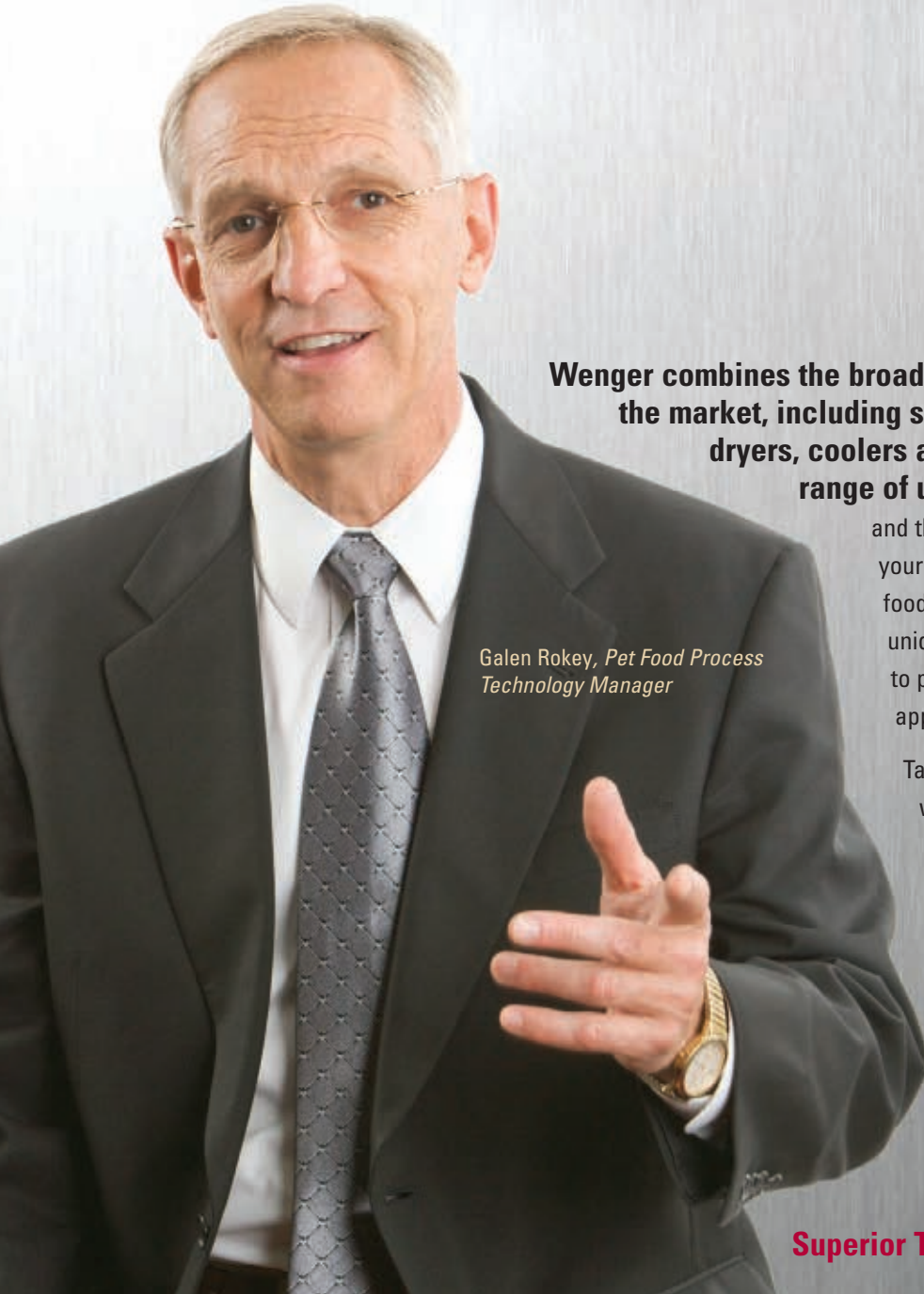
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