

October 2009

# Petfood WATT Industry



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the farm

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## Making pets smile

Tamara and  
Garret Jennings of  
Laughing Dog, p. 22

Consumers in charge

Safe sourcing:  
traceability for today



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**On the cover:** Tamara Jennings and Garrett Jennings, co-founders of Laughing Dog Inc., with Olive Pixie and Nell.

Photo by Michael Justice (www.michaeljusticephoto.com)

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## Don't fear the consumer

**“N**o manufacturer or supplier should fear an educated consumer.” Agreed, but should you fear a consumer whose education may not be entirely based on fact or science?

The quote appears on AllNaturalPetCare.com, a new site about natural pet products. Another page says the site is based on “verifiable information.” Judging by correspondence with the site’s owner, Melody McKinnon, I take her at her word. Unfortunately, I don’t believe that standard holds true for a great deal of the information consumers find online.

### Good and bad

It’s difficult to imagine conducting our jobs or lives without search engines, mapping sites, online calculators and myriad other websites and online tools that make modern life easier and vastly expand the range and depth of information we can quickly access.

The Internet has also become an invaluable marketing tool. From ads to articles to brand websites to, yes, consumer blogs, pet owners can find plenty of positive information about your products. “I think there is good in end users gaining information from the Internet,” says Roman Versch, president of the Pet Depot chain of pet stores (based in Glendora, California, USA) and Seasons Pet Food.

But most of us can also cite numerous instances of online information we

**But understand consumers are going online for information on feeding their pets.**

— Debbie Phillips-Donaldson



know to be patently false, whether about a specific product or company, the industry in general or nearly any topic. A whole category of publishing about Internet misinformation, myths and rumors has emerged—for example, Snopes.com, which exists solely to debunk those.

### Most shoppers use it

Fact or fiction, scientific or conspiracy theory, altruistic or agenda-driven—no matter how you classify it, Internet content will only continue growing. The same is true for consumers seeking information online. According to the 2008 *HealthFocus Trend Survey*, 70% of US shoppers of all ages use the Internet (see pp. 28, 38 and <http://members.ift.org/IFT/Pubs/FoodTechnology/Articles>).

So how can you help make sure they find the facts about petfood? I believe the industry should provide science-based information, in laymen’s terms, explaining pets’ nutrient needs, the types of ingredients available to meet those needs, how—and why—these ingredients are used in petfoods. The “why” is very important, because consumers want and need to understand the reasons behind decisions companies make about the products they’re purchasing.

### Ideas to try?

One way to disseminate such information might be to partner with veterinarians and related organizations. (For example, the Veterinary Information

Network, though a members-only portal, works with what it calls “allied industry.” See <http://www.vin.com/Allied/>) Vets deal directly with pet owners asking which foods to feed their pets, wondering if a pet illness is due to diet or a specific product—and often vets themselves are struggling for answers.

Interestingly, Snopes.com has a category devoted strictly to food-related rumors and disinformation. Perhaps our industry needs to band together to create a similar site about petfood? (If you’re interested in pursuing this idea, please e-mail me at [dphillips@wattnet.net](mailto:dphillips@wattnet.net).)

But first, start with your own products and website. “Transparency is the byword these days with human food, and it should be for petfood as well,” says Marion Nestle, PhD, an author and professor of nutrition, food studies and public health at New York University in New York, New York, USA.

Easy to say but difficult to achieve, especially in these highly litigious times. You have serious legal and competitive concerns. But consumers won’t stop seeking, even demanding, more information about what they’re feeding their pets. If you don’t provide it, they’ll find it elsewhere, on that vast Internet. ●

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

### Connecting with vets

For more on the vet perspective, check out “Communicating with pet owners about petfoods and unconventional diets,” a presentation by Kathryn E. Michel, DVM, that will be part of Virtual Petfood Forum: Target on Nutrition. Register for free at <http://www.wattevents.com/Home.aspx>.



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# Industry News

## Quick hits

- ▶ Steadfast Canine, a joint supplement from Arenus (Novus), will sponsor the 2009 Dock-Dogs National Championship October 16-18 in Mason, Ohio, USA.
- ▶ Stella & Chewy's has added a distributor, Supreme Pet Supplies, of Houston, Texas, USA.
- ▶ Pet Factory Inc. recently was selected as a 2009 Category Colonels award winner in the category for Pet Supplies by PL Buyer.

## Virtual Petfood Forum offers free registration

The all-new, first-ever Virtual Petfood Forum: Target on Nutrition is a live educational event held entirely on the Internet. Registration is free. Scheduled for October 28, it features the industry's leading experts presenting information on companion animal nutrition and participating in question-and-answer sessions with attendees.

Speakers and topics include:

- ▶ **Exotic ingredients in petfoods**—Greg Aldrich, PhD
- ▶ **Dietary components in the treatment of canine osteoarthritis**—Anton Beynen, PhD, head of R&D for Vobra Special Petfoods in the Netherlands and professor of animal nutrition, Rajamangala University of Technology, Thailand
- ▶ **Communicating with pet owners about petfoods and unconventional diets**—Kathryn E. Michel, DVM, MS, DACVN, University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine
- ▶ **The science behind grain-free and raw diets for cats**—Brittany Vester Boler, PhD, University of Illinois
- ▶ **When more petfood doesn't equal success**—Sean Delaney, DVM, MS, DACVN, Natura Pet Products Inc.

Virtual Petfood Forum also allows you to interact live with your industry peers and with world-class solution providers and suppliers to the global petfood manufacturing industry. Find out more and register at [www.wattevents.com](http://www.wattevents.com). (If you can't participate live on October 28, you can still view the archive for 90 days afterward as long as you're registered.)



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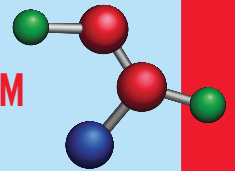
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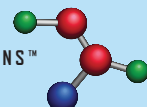
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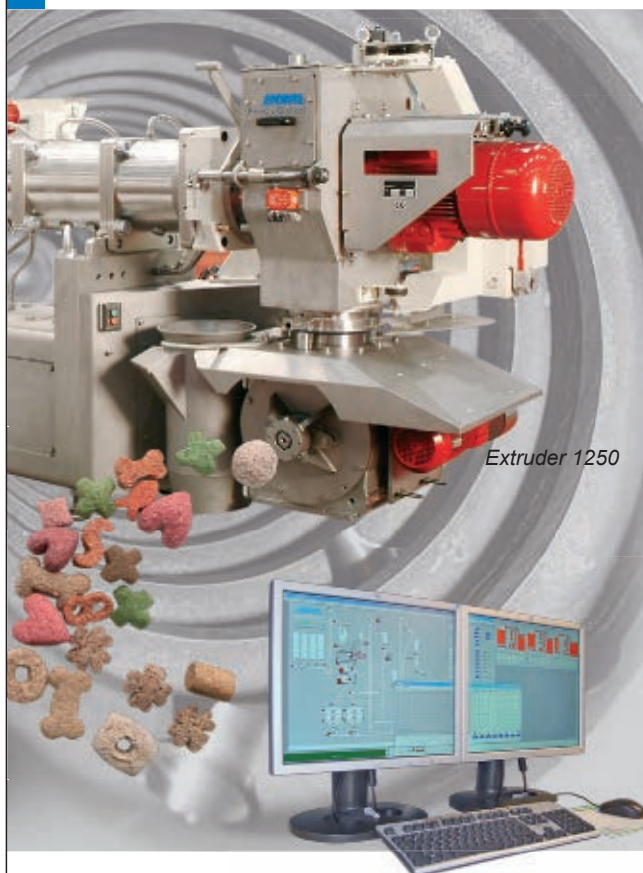


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**Interzoo 2010 registrations ahead of 2008 levels.** Registrations for Interzoo, the international trade fair for pet supplies, have already surpassed 2008 levels, according to the fair's promoter, Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft Zoologischer Fachbetriebe (WZF). Interzoo will be held May 13-16, 2010, in Nuremberg, Germany.

Klaus Oechsner, chairman of the WZF advisory board, said, "95% of the visitors are decision-makers, this means that the fair is suited for product introductions."

WZF is increasing advertising with banners on the Internet and through newsletters. In addition, Hans-Jochen Büngener, chairman of the Interzoo exhibition committee, has said the exhibition stands will not be dismantled early in the afternoon of the last day, which would disrupt the atmosphere in the exhibition halls.

**'Dog care in Thailand to 2013' report available.** Thailand's dog care market grew 5.5% from 2003 to 2008, and the dog food category had a 97.3% share, according to a new companiesandmarkets.com report, "Dog Care in Thailand to 2013."

Mars Inc., Charoen Pokphand Group and Nestle are the major players in the Thai dog care market, the report says.

The report includes information on dog food, dog toys and chews and treats.

**Roark acquires Pet Valu in US\$131 million deal.** Roark Capital Group has acquired Canada-based petfood and pet supplies retailer Pet Valu in a US\$131 million deal.

This is Roark's second major acquisition since last year. Pet Valu had 356 franchised and corporate stores in Canada and the US.

Geoffrey Holt, Pet Valu founder, will retire as CEO and be replaced by Tom McNeely. Pet Valu's board will include Russ Reynolds, CEO of Roark portfolio company Batteries Plus; Steve Romaniello and Ezra Field, managing directors; and Jaime Wall, VP.







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For more information, please contact Kathy Syversen at [ksyversen@niu.edu](mailto:ksyversen@niu.edu) or Tel. +1.815.753.7922.


**Petfood Forum Asia 2010 is held in conjunction with Victam Asia 2010. Registration to Victam Asia is free if made online at [www.victam.com](http://www.victam.com) prior to March 3, 2010. For information on hotels and travel packages, please visit [www.victam.com](http://www.victam.com).**



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### Report says FDA role in petfood recalls not enough

Iowa Senator and, until recently, chairman of the US Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, Tom Harkin has made a series of recommendations to strengthen Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recall authority and improve its effectiveness in monitoring food recalls.

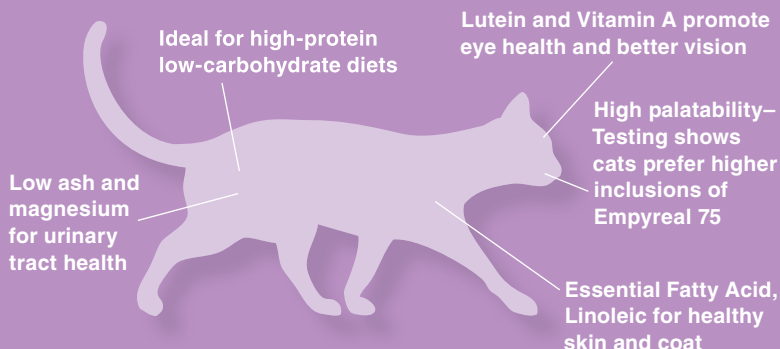
This follows the report of the Office of Inspector General's audit regarding FDA's role in the 2007 petfood recalls, which stated the agency had not done enough to prevent the scandal involving 60 million containers of petfood in the US, most manufactured by Menu Foods and sold under 95 brand names.

FDA's principle deputy commissioner Joshua M. Sharfstein has admitted its "limited resources" were no match for a recall of unprecedented size and scope.

He also said the experience would lead to improvement of the organization's efforts. One such development is the new Reportable Food Registry (see p. 19).

Also, US Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services announced that they have launched a new site designed to provide the latest on food safety and recall information, which will include petfood products.

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dependably pure.

# INDUSTRY CALENDAR

## October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**Pet Food Institute Annual Industry Meeting**, October

13-15, 2009, Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C., USA. Contact: [www.petfoodinstitute.org](http://www.petfoodinstitute.org).

**Dibevo**, October 18-20, 2009, Gorinchem, the Netherlands. Contact: [vakbeurs@dibevo.nl](mailto:vakbeurs@dibevo.nl), [www.dibevo.nl](http://www.dibevo.nl).

**Virtual Petfood Forum: Target on Nutrition**, October 28, 2009. For more information check out [www.petfoodindustry.com](http://www.petfoodindustry.com) and [www.wattevents.com](http://www.wattevents.com).

## November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**Wenger's Pet Food Processing Technology Seminar**, November 10-12, 2009, Sabetha, Kansas, USA. Contact: [ncampbell@wenger.com](mailto:ncampbell@wenger.com), [www.wenger.com](http://www.wenger.com).

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

## ODA, farmer duo locked in legal battle over petfood ingredients

Ohio's Fourth District Court of Appeals was urged to uphold an earlier ruling against the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) allowing two farmers to use raw milk in their petfood products.

That ruling, issued by Washington County Judge Ed Lane November 2008, found ODA officials engaged in violating the constitutional rights of Linda Fagan and Donna Betts, Washington County farmers, to stop them from legally using raw goat and cow milk as a listed ingredient in their petfood products.

Judge Lane had ordered the ODA to pay up to US\$20,000 in attorney fees and court costs and left Fagan and Betts free to resume production of their petfood products.

ODA had appealed the ruling. After mediation efforts failed between ODA and Fagan and Betts, the case was referred to Ohio's Fourth District Court of Appeals.

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## Nutro launches reformulated Ultra dog food

Nutro Inc. has launched reformulated Nutro Ultra food for dogs.

According to the company, the Ultrassential Superfood Blend has proteins, antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables,

whole grains and healthy oils, which are good for a dog's heart and joint health, eyesight and brain function. The recipe has no artificial flavors or colors, Nutro says.

The Nutro dog food is available at US pet specialty stores. The line also has Puppy, Adult, Weight Management and Senior varieties in dry and wet formulas as well as biscuits.

## FDA issues guidance document for registry portal

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a guidance document for submitting reports of reportable food safety incidents through the electronic portal, Reportable Food Registry.



The document answers questions such as how, when and where to submit reports to FDA, who is required to submit reports, what is required to be submitted and what may be required when providing notifications to other persons in the supply chain.

Though the Reportable Food Registry went into effect September 8, FDA announced it intends to exercise enforcement discretion for 90 days, until December 8, 2009, in circumstances where the agency determines that a responsible party has made a reasonable effort to comply with the requirements of section and has otherwise acted to protect public health.

### Tell us what you think!

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- Cuts drying costs—less water required in extrusion.
- Extends product shelf life with high concentration of natural carotenoids and antioxidants.
- Ensures a uniform, consistent kibble with superior elasticity, binding, and coating characteristics.
- Delivers excellent ingredient-commingling and fat-binding properties.

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# New on the Shelves

Find more new products at [www.petfoodindustry.com/ListConsumerProducts.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/ListConsumerProducts.aspx). To submit products, contact Tara Leitner, Tel: +1.815.966.5421, Fax: +1.815.968.0941, [tleitner@wattnet.net](mailto:tleitner@wattnet.net).



## « Hypoallergenic dog food

Wellness Petfood from Old Mother Hubbard has added dry Rice & Lamb and Rice & Salmon formulas and three canned flavors—Duck & Rice, Lamb & Rice and Salmon & Rice—to its Simple Food Solutions line for dogs. The line is designed to manage allergies by removing additional proteins, carbohydrates, fillers and additives, using just one protein source and one easily digestible carbohydrate source, the company says. [www.wellnesspetfood.com](http://www.wellnesspetfood.com)

## Baked kibble »

Mulligan Stew Pet Food offers a dry dog food line, Premium Baked Kibble for dogs. The food is formulated with functional ingredients and without chemically manufactured supplements, according to the company, and it is baked for high nutrient absorption and good digestibility. [www.mulliganstewpetfood.com](http://www.mulliganstewpetfood.com)

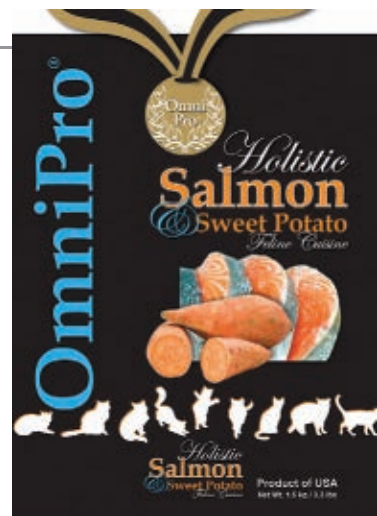


## « Complete Natural Nutrition offers Real Food

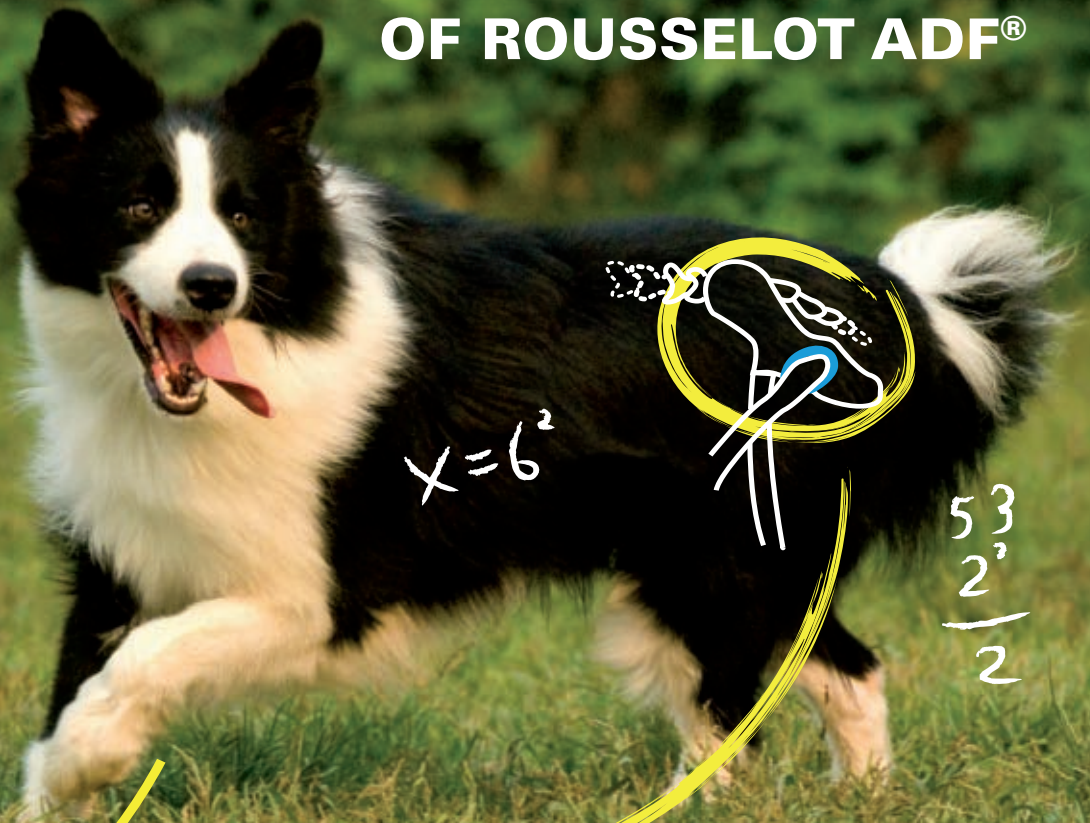
Toppers are made with US human-grade meat and freeze dried, according to the company. The treats are appropriate for dogs and cats of all ages and can be eaten dry or rehydrated with warm water. They come in several flavors, such as Pure Chicken Breast, Pure Wild Salmon, Pure Beef Sirloin and Pure Beef Liver. [www.completenaturalnutrition.com](http://www.completenaturalnutrition.com)

## Holistic salmon formula »

OmniPro carries a holistic Salmon & Potato kibble variety for dogs and Salmon & Sweet Potato for cats. The formulas include antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids. No grain, soy or corn is included, according to the company. [www.omnipropet.net](http://www.omnipropet.net)



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**sonac**

Brother and sister team Garrett and Tamara Jennings developed Laughing Dog Heritage Diet in hopes of increasing the longevity and health of companion animals.

# Making pets smile

Natural, healthful ingredients are no laughing matter for this new premium line of petfoods and treats

BY JESSICA TAYLOR

 **Online exclusive: Q&A with Laughing Dog** Get an inside peek at more from the interview with Garrett and Tamara Jennings, co-founders of Laughing Dog Inc., at [www.petfoodindustry.com/LaughingDog.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/LaughingDog.aspx).

Business basics





### Online extra!

Laughing Dog Inc. uses probiotics in its unique blend of petfood. Read about the research Dr. Larry Roth has conducted on the use of direct-fed microbials with dogs at [www.petfoodindustry.com/DirectFed.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/DirectFed.aspx).

**G**arrett Jennings, co-founder and CEO of Laughing Dog Inc., hasn't always been in the business of making petfood. "I started the company Think Products and a nutrition bar line in the early 1990s," Garrett explains. "We were utilizing a lot of nutraceuticals for human consumption—using a lot of herbs and vitamins. We were originally trying to enhance mental performance." Garrett quickly became well versed in moving a brand to market and formulating specific, healthy nutrition.

"Through enhanced pet nutrition we have the capability of increasing the longevity and health of our most precious companions," Garrett attests. "Had I been conscious of the efficacies of crossover human nutrition to pets, I believe my dogs could have lived healthier, longer lives." In 2000, Garrett stepped down as president of Think Products to become chairman of the board and started focusing on increasing the lifespan of dogs and cats after his two aging Chow Chows passed away.

"I decided one day it was time to provide better nutrition to our canine companions as a tribute to my late Chow Chows, Pugsy and Symone," he says. "I wanted to focus on bringing the best petfood in to fruition, along with Tamara, of course." Tamara Jennings, co-founder and president of Laughing Dog, is Garrett's sister. A call to his sister inquiring into her desire to make her beloved pets healthier, to create a food nutrient that is rich and healthy, resulted in a resounding, "Let's make the best food

on Earth, a food so healthy that our animals will enjoy great lives, a food that will give them back the precious energy and spirit that they give us!" And Laughing Dog was born.

### A powerful process

"We started talking and figuring out what our company was all about, right around the time of the initial petfood recalls," Tamara says. "So though we weren't directly affected, when we started looking for a manufacturing system we wanted to make sure that it was a facility that hadn't even seen any of those prod-



**All formulations contain whole grains and rice, essential amino acids and a plethora of other dog-good ingredients.**

ucts. That was important to us." Laughing Dog's petfoods and treats are now processed in a human grade facility—the very plant that manufactures the Think nutrition bars.

The process developed for the manufacturing of their food is unique as well. "All of us here at Laughing Dog are proud of the vacuum infusion system (VIS) we use to process our petfood," brother and

sister agree.

Once the Laughing Dog kibble is ground, extruded and properly dried, it goes through a screening process that should eliminate any broken pieces of food or dust. Then the kibble enters the distinctive VIS. "The reason Laughing Dog is very proud of VIS is because it allows us to add active enzymes, found only in raw diets, and probiotics that are the good bacteria," explains Tamara.

The kibble enters a large round chamber and then is gently rotated inside while all the air is removed. Then the liquids—chicken fat, fish oil, omega 3, 6, 9s, enzymes and probiotics—are misted on the kibbles by sprayers located in the vacuum chamber and thoroughly coated. "We then allow the air to re-enter VIS under a controlled system. As the air goes in it pushes the liquid that is coating the kibble and it actually pushes it inside," Tamara continues. "Subsequent entries of air push the liquids further into the kibble. At the end of the process, the kibble comes out dry but with the exact measured amount of oils in it and of course the still active enzymes and probiotics." According to Laughing Dog, this one-of-a-kind process (at least in petfood manufacturing) ensures a non-degradable product.

### Dancing cats, laughing dogs

"When we started doing research on the petfood market, we noticed that some of the premium brands weren't using premium ingredients in their formulations," says Garrett. "That's when we decided to make our focus the natural, holistic approach. We wanted to be something different and be something that meant more than just clever marketing on

**Headquarters:** Ventura, California, USA

**Officers:** Tamara Jennings, president; Garrett Jennings, CEO and chairman of the board

**Number of Employees:** 3

**Facilities:** Food manufactured at an European Uncion-certified plant in Canada; treats manufactured at human nutrition bar manufacturer near San Francisco-Oakland, California, USA; warehouses in Canada,

Northern and Southern California

**Brands/Products:** Laughing Dog Pet Products, Dancing Cat Native Cat formula, Soaring Spirit Organic Nutrition Bar treats for Dogs, Laughing Dog Wise Dog Mature/Lite formula, Brave Dog Adult Formula, Young Dog/Puppy formula

**Distribution:** Canada, California, East Coast and Midwest US and rapidly expanding

**Website:** [www.laughingdoginc.com](http://www.laughingdoginc.com)

**Online extra!**

Amino acids and omega 3, 6, 9s are buzzwords in companion animal nutrition, but what do they really do? Find out at [www.petfoodindustry.com/Omega.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/Omega.aspx).

a package of kibble.” And when you look at the ingredient lists for their foods, it’s easy to see Garrett and Tamara Jennings take the quality of what goes in to their petfood seriously. All formulations—whether it be their Dancing Cat feline formula or Wise Dog blend for aging canines—contain whole grains and rice,

essential amino acids and a plethora of other do-good ingredients:

- ▶ **Enzymes and probiotics** aid in absorption and digestion;
- ▶ **Cranberries** protect the urinary tract and fight yeast infections;
- ▶ **Blueberries** provide antioxidant support; and
- ▶ **Vitamins C & E** benefit heart, kidneys, liver, skin and coat.

“After approximately two years of working with chief formulator David Lawrence, we have developed what we feel is the best petfood for dogs and cats on the market today,” says a confident Garrett. “Our all-natural ingredients are rich in antioxidants to help prevent the breakdown of cells, and wild herring along with vacuum-infused omega oils and vitamins add a rich nutritional profile not available in lower quality foods.” The company says no wheat, corn filler or animal by-products are allowed in any of their products.

While such attention to detail may mean a slightly higher price tag, Laughing Dog asserts it also translates into shinier coats, optimal weight and an overall healthier demeanor. In the long run, healthier pets mean fewer trips to the vet, says Garrett. “And that’s a real savings to the consumer.”

**Further down the trail**

While starting a petfood company in the midst of a recession is no easy feat, Garrett and Tamara are already looking toward Laughing Dog’s continued success and future. They are launching a new blend of dog treats, expanding distribution, as well as escalating their current cat food line. “We may even look into wet varieties,” says Tamara. “There are endless possibilities!”

Setting goals and reaching them seems to be this brother and sister’s strategy for success, and the expansion of their business has plenty of pet owners excited. “We get calls and e-mails all the time about what our products are really doing out there,” says Garrett. “Old dogs acting young again, shiny coats and more energy in cats—that’s what keeps us going.” ●



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# Consumers in charge

Industry professionals and others offer perspectives on dealing with educated and empowered pet owners

BY DEBBIE PHILLIPS-DONALDSON

**The Internet contributes to consumer awareness; one survey showed 70% of all US shoppers use the Internet. But sometimes this leads to a spread of misinformation.**

If you've ever doubted that today's consumers are empowered and concerned, consider this:

- ▶ Three-fourths of US shoppers say they feel in control and have an impact on their own health, according to the 2008 *HealthFocus Trend Survey*;
- ▶ 80% of consumers say they are knowledgeable about health and nutrition issues (same survey, reported in the August 2009 issue of *FoodTechnology*); and
- ▶ Six in 10 Americans worry about food safety, according to Mintel.

With pets elevated to full family member status, is it any wonder their owners approach pet care and feeding with the same mindset? Combine that with hyper-awareness of the 2007 and subsequent petfood recalls, and you have the perfect recipe for involved pet owners who not only want, but demand, to know everything possible about petfood products, ingredients and processing.

Sometimes this involvement allows petfood manufacturers and the industry to shine; sometimes it puts companies in the crosshairs, particularly if it rises to the level of activism. What's the best way to respond?

I've posed this question in various ways over the past few months—on the Petfood-Connection.com blog and to a few individuals within and outside the industry. The feedback provides a lot of food for thought, but one theme stands out strong and clear: the need to be proactive, forthright and transparent.

## The educated consumer

"The average consumer isn't an extreme activist at all," says Melody McKinnon, owner of AllNaturalPetCare.com, a new site offering information about natural pet products that will soon have products for sale. "What the pet industry has to face is the educated consumer. The Internet has allowed consumers to become

## Give them credit

"Give consumers a little credit for being reasonable, and don't make the fatal mistake of insulting their intelligence," says Melody McKinnon, owner of AllNaturalPetCare.com. "I think you will be surprised by another benefit to that: Your new view will inspire new and original ideas, and before you know it, you and the consumer will be smiling all the way to your bank."

educated and aware in record time."

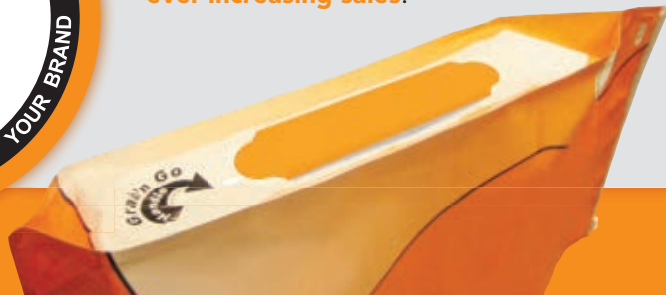
McKinnon, based in British Columbia, Canada, describes herself as both a "proactivist" and a member of the pet industry. She adds: "Awareness and education are always positive. Consumers are able to make educated choices, resulting in more healthy pets and a thriving industry. They are more than willing to spend good money for good products to ensure a healthy companion animal."

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## Stay on message

George Fahey, PhD, professor of animal and nutritional sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, suggests the industry present a united front. "Petfood manufacturers need to stay on message: We produce good quality, well-balanced foods that meet all the lifestage requirements of dogs and cats. There is government oversight of our processes and procedures, and recalls are few and far between given the amount of petfood produced throughout the world on an annual basis."

Others in the industry also see positives with increased consumer involvement. "Communication among consumers can be helpful for manufacturers that have good products that perform," says Roman Versch, president of the Pet Depot chain of pet stores (based in Glendora, California, USA) and soon-to-launch Seasons Pet Food. "Blogs about pets with improved health due to better quality diets are sharing results with the world. Most consumers are trading up in nutritional quality, which means higher sales and profit."

## Preying on fear

But most petfood industry professionals find many things wrong with this new level of consumer empowerment, especially when it expands into full-blown activism. "Caution is a good thing, it makes us ask questions. Fear is not a good thing," McKinnon says. "People prey on fear, and consumers are at risk of being drawn into a fear-mongering

circle that is profiting from it. Extremists are often the result. The good news is most level-headed consumers will dismiss an extremist. Far more damaging are the fear opportunists; they're much more subtle and sly in planting seeds of doubt."

Versch describes what he sees as two classes of activists: One is genuinely interested and concerned about pet nutrition; the other, often referred to as consumer activists, seek monetary gain. He believes this latter group sometimes includes attorneys looking to capitalize on recalls. "After having a taste of blood from the melamine recalls (a scandal initiated by human deception), these attorney groups are setting up websites and blogs to build consumer legal recourse clubs, trying to develop something out of nothing in most cases. At play here is the emotional connection humans have with their pets."

Tom Willard, PhD, industry consultant and former owner of Performance Foods, also places some blame with the legal profession. "Part of this comes from the way our legal system works," he says. "The admission of a problem or guilt most likely opens a company to product liability claims and endless lawsuits. Most companies' lawyers tell their clients not to admit guilt and to stall or put up a smoke screen when talking to the press."

## Spreading like wildfire

Willard believes the media exacerbate the situation: "The press and news organizations, too, have an agenda many times, so often a negative spin is part of the story."

"On the Web, anyone can find all kinds of bad press regarding commercial foods," adds George C. Fahey, PhD, professor of animal and nutritional sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA. "And more pet owners than ever now

believe they can do a better job of feeding their animals by preparing homemade diets. This, of course, is totally false, and many homemade diets are seriously deficient in nutrients."

Whether from traditional media or rapidly multiplying websites and blogs, agendas and other viewpoints spread like wildfire online. "In my opinion, this phenomenon seems to be limited to the Internet, with almost no reference by everyday consumers shopping at our stores," Versch says. "Misinformation is easily circulated and can be damaging to retailers and petfood manufacturers. How can a company keep up with the

## Be proactive

Roman Versch, president of the Pet Depot chain of pet stores, offers these suggestions to petfood manufacturers:

- Do everything to satisfy a customer who makes the effort to contact you—within reason. Replace, refund or recommend an alternative product. Always ask: "What would you like us to do, if we can do it for you?"
- Keep manufacturing testing results on file for long periods to prove your position if ever needed.

- Be proactive and post information to rebut any false or misleading communication on blogs or websites.

rapid, daily consumer opinions that might be posted?"

## Tell the truth

Keeping up can be tough. "Some pet owners will distrust petfood no matter what the companies do or say," says Marion Nestle, PhD, professor of nutrition, food studies and public health at New York University in New York, New York, USA, and also a blogger ([www.foodpolitics.com](http://www.foodpolitics.com)) and author (*Pet Food Politics: The Chihuahua in the Coal Mine*, University of California Press, 2008, and *Feed Your Pet Right*, Free Press/Simon & Schuster, due out May 2010). "Of course,

## Deal with complaints

"My recommendation is to appoint a petfood ombudsman to deal with consumer complaints," says Marion Nestle, PhD, author and professor of nutrition, food studies and public health at New York University. "I have the same recommendation for petfood companies. What doesn't work is ignoring complaints. Petfood deserves to be taken seriously. Pets and their owners deserve no less."





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pet illnesses occur for plenty of reasons other than what's in the food."

But there is hope, Nestle suggests: "Companies that take complaints seriously and treat customers with respect ought to do just fine in the long run. Be respectful, be honest, tell the truth. The rest will be easy."



### Join the discussion

Check out [Petfood-Connection.com](http://Petfood-Connection.com) to read blog posts on this issue and many others. Or share your own thoughts and experiences. You have to join the site to post a blog or comment, but registration is free, quick and easy. If you prefer to give your feedback offline and not for publication, send an e-mail to [dphillips@wattnet.net](mailto:dphillips@wattnet.net).

"We have to earn respect and trust," McKinnon agrees. "To do that, we have to tell the consumer the truth. If our product is the best kibble out there

because we process it at 50 degrees less than our competitors, then say so. Do what you can to make it the best kibble it can be, then market what makes it different. When consumers ask you if it contains fishmeal that is pre-processed at 200 Celsius and it does, then tell them and tell them why it does."

### Changes in order?

But McKinnon also believes manufacturers may need to consider changing their products or practices to meet increasing consumer demands. "If you can't give a consumer a straight answer about any facet of your product, you have to change that facet," she says. "Has your honesty resulted in complaints about your using high-heat processed fishmeal? Then it's time to source some freeze-dried salmon. Go ahead, mark up the price a few cents. If there's one thing we know about today's pet market, it's that pet owners will spend more for a truly premium product."

Willard advises changes, too. "We as an industry need to get our collective house in order and stop cutting corners. The most egregious error is when quality procedures are not followed. All procedures involving receiving, handling or storing ingredients are as important as the processing and handling of the finished products. Inspecting our suppliers is absolutely the first line of defense and must be followed to the letter."

Still, Willard infuses his advice with praise: "The petfood industry is one of the best in the world. We provide safe, reliable, efficacious and nutritious food for millions of pets daily throughout the world. We need to always remember we serve two masters: the human customer and, most importantly, the pet. Both rely on each of us to do our best each day. We must follow the strictest QA and QC procedures and always take personal responsibility for each and every mistake before it becomes manna for the activists." ●

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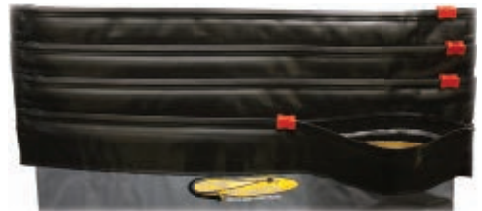
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# Fresh from the farm

Locally grown, natural ingredients and 'made in the USA' labeling ease consumers' residual recall worries

BY JESSICA TAYLOR

**U**S pet owners have started a dull roar of demand for a return to specialization and localization of the ingredients being used in their pets' food and treats. Why? There are several factors. Their order of importance depends on the individual consumer.

- ▶ **Health.** In surveys, pet parents cite freshness as the top concern about petfood. When they know their pets' food came from someplace nearby, they believe it is fresher, healthier and safer for them to eat.
- ▶ **Altruism.** People believe they are helping out their local economy, but more especially farmers, when they "buy local."
- ▶ **Quality.** Aside from petfood safety concerns, consumers tend to report that locally produced ingredients look better, have better texture and perform better in homemade dog and cat food recipes.

## Going green: dollars and cents

Desmond Jolly, a retired professor from the University of California, did important work that shows there are plenty of reasons to believe this emerging trend is not going away. He also sees it as more than just a luxury of the coveted

Consumers are increasingly looking to verify the integrity of ingredients and materials that make up the products they give their pets, yet wading through the quagmire of ingredient lists can be daunting.

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wealthy segment of the US. Interestingly, one survey he conducted showed 55% of US households buying petfoods that touted “locally grown,” “fresh” and “made in the USA” labeling earned over US\$60,000 per year, meaning almost half of such households earned *less* than US\$60,000 per year.

Equally remarkable, according to US Department of Agriculture-supported research by Ohio State University, US pet owners are willing to go above and beyond if they know it means the ingredients going in to Fido and Fifi’s bowl are locally grown. As a broad example, shoppers at farmer markets were willing to pay twice the price as retail grocery shoppers for the same locally produced foods since they perceived the products to be fresher and, therefore, better for them.

American consumers tend to favor buying food produced by small farms over what they perceive as corporate operations, the Ohio State research

concluded. So surely, this holds true for those same consumers’ pets. Take, for example, Del Monte’s Wholesome Goodness Meow Mix line of cat foods that has the tagline, “The same ingredients you’d choose.”

### The wake of recalls

According to Mintel, the petfood recalls of 2007 spurred growing consumer concern about ingredients and materials used in petfood manufacturing. Pet owners now scrutinize packaging to make sure they were manufactured in the US, with US-sourced ingredients. Shifting the source of ingredients and manufacturing location can be a costly endeavor, but it may become increasingly necessary to retain customers.

Of US pet owners who changed petfood purchases because of the recall



**Consumers perceive “fresh” and “natural” ingredients by color, texture, smell and shape. The product on the left may appear more natural, while the kibble look and treats to the right might look “artificial,” so less appealing.**

(30% of those who buy petfood and were aware of the recall), some 71% changed the brand of petfood they buy, according to a Mintel report. The majority of change came in the form of this reported brand switch, opening up a new competitive paradigm where consumers opt for brands that they perceive to be healthier for their pets.



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Touting features such as “made in the USA” or “from US-sourced ingredients” could encourage brand adoption.

Euromonitor also notes post-recall consumers’ intense interest in product safety and ingredient quality. They cite increased sales for small companies active in natural, organic and human-

grade petfood products.

### Good enough to eat

Pet personification will continue to affect pet trends as there is growing concern about the ingredients and materials used in the food and products that we feed ourselves and our pets. Eco-



#### Online extra!

Check out a gallery of natural, locally sourced and “made in the USA” petfood products at [www.petfoodindustry.com/ConsumerProducts.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/ConsumerProducts.aspx).

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conscious consumers are also seeking products that reduce their carbon footprints.

The greatest sales growth exists for products positioned as natural, says research from both Mintel and Euromonitor. According to Mintel’s Global New Products Database, the number of new petfood introductions with an “all-natural” claim grew 29% from July 2007 to 2008. Products such as the Goodlife Recipe (both cat and dog), Iams Healthy Naturals dog food and Purina Cat Chow Naturals realized some of the greatest sales successes.

Additionally, sales growth through natural store channels has exceeded that of the overall market. While a number of the larger players have introduced products that meet this growing consumer demand, there is ample room for others to grow into this arena.

### The fresh future

Consumers are increasingly looking to verify the integrity of ingredients and materials that make up the products they give their pets, yet wading through the quagmire of ingredient lists can be daunting. Savvy manufacturers are angling ingredients with human-quality attributes and highlighting the whole food form of what they include in their foods. This trend has just started to grow legs, but indications are that this tactic is highly successful and that there is room for additional similar line extensions.

A strong investment in health and wellness petfood remains important, particularly in markets where there is a high level of consumer awareness, like the US and Western Europe. Euromonitor suggests providing consumer education on the benefits of your product offerings and making them widely available.

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## SAFE SOURCING:

# traceability for today

## Consumer concerns over their pets' health are advancing the development of petfood traceability standards

BY JESSICA TAYLOR

According to a recent presentation by Caroline Smith DeWaal, food safety director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest ([safefoodinternational.org](http://safefoodinternational.org)), pet owners' perspectives on the importance of food safety and traceability practices have been shaped by recent recalls in both human and petfoods. Despite modern technology, reported cases of foodborne illness, contaminated ingredients and unknown sources of origin are on the rise. Governments, consumers and company stakeholders expect unblemished safety processes from barn to bowl, and they increasingly do not care where in the

supply chain the failure occurs, points out Melissa Hersh and Hester Shaw in their *Food-Safety Strategies* white paper. Consequences for growers, processors, manufacturers, distributors and retailers are serious and can result in significant financial damage.

Retailers, once mostly shielded by their branded vendors from reputational harm, now face significant exposure through their own private label petfood brands. To minimize potential liability and financial damage, organizations need to be proactive and have demonstrable systems in



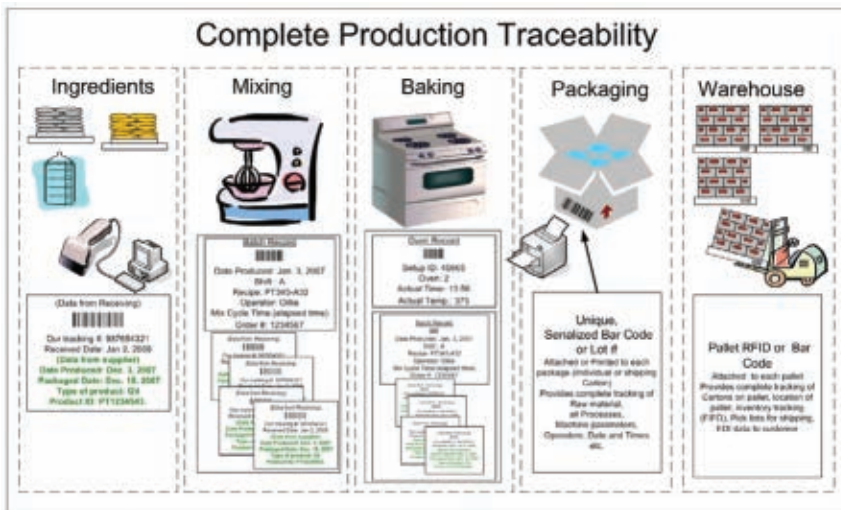
place to protect pets by managing petfood safety risks across their supply chain. If your company is part of the chain of custody, your reputation and financial performance are at risk.

### Regaining consumer confidence

According to research conducted by the Center for Science in the Public Interest in the 2009 report *Consumer Perspectives on the Importance of Improved Food Safety and Traceability Practices Worldwide*, Americans' confidence in food safety is plummeting:

- ▶ 78% of consumers do not believe food is safer now than a year ago;
- ▶ There is a 48% decline in consumer confidence overall;
- ▶ 46% admit to worrying about their pets getting sick from food; and
- ▶ 52% have only some or little confidence in the food inspection systems currently in place.

Complicating matters for both petfood safety and supply continuity is the increasingly global nature of growing locations,



A simple traceability system such as this allows you to track your petfood products through every step from barn to bowl.



processing, packaging and markets. Petfood supply chains are now exposed to more points of hazards, contaminants, spoilage, delays, disruptions and third-party participants. According to *Food-Safety Strategies*, decentralized petfood production, outsourcing/offshoring of packaging, foreign sourcing and outsourced logistics operations that move and store food-related goods can increase risk exposure.

To combat the growing risks, all commercial operators in the supply chain should consider enacting more stringent controls and increasing their petfood safety vigilance both within their internal operations and across their supply chain partners.

### Don't beat the system, set the curve

The modern petfood control system shifts the focus of product safety strategies from response and recovery following a contaminated product reaching consumer markets to strategies of prevention. It is critically important that organizations understand the shift under way in which the primary responsibility for implementing and monitoring food safety strategies is now falling to industry.

Government regulations, best practice guidelines and other incentives aimed at the petfood and feed industries have helped prevent supply chain failures and encourage safe petfood production, but more still needs to be done to help boost pet owners' assurance. For instance, industry-imposed safety standards can serve multiple purposes, including to:

- ▶ Safeguard consumers and their pets against the harmful effects of contaminants;
- ▶ Ensure access to safe sourcing, impacting operational continuity for

#### Get more online!

For a full listing of traceability technology such as domestic ingredient suppliers, monitoring systems and integrated software, check out the manufacturing product database at [www.petfoodindustry.com/ListManufacturerProducts.aspx](http://www.petfoodindustry.com/ListManufacturerProducts.aspx).

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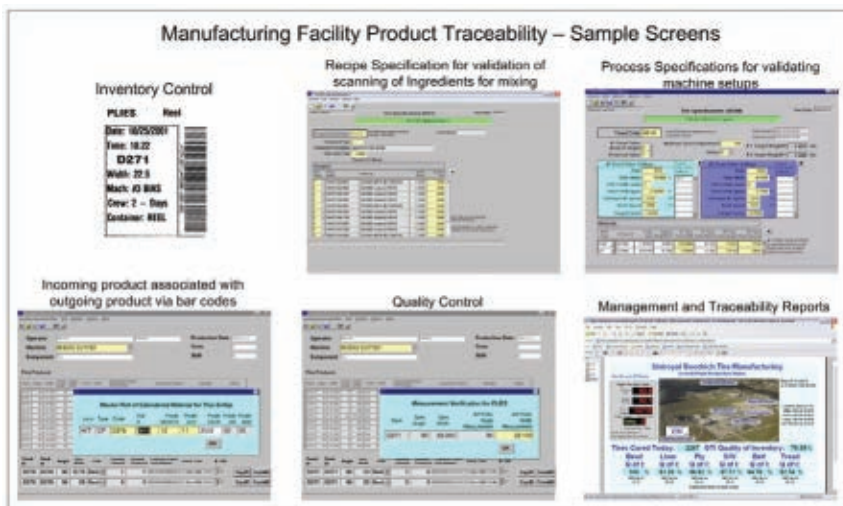
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As ingredients are received, an in-house barcode or RFID is applied to incoming raw materials with the Can-Trace system. This process continues through the production, packaging and shipping functions.

- petfood producers; and
- ▶ Protect local production capabilities and trade relationships at the domestic, regional or global levels.

You cannot rely on regulatory authorities alone to assure full application and compliance to safety standards—importing and exporting markets may have different standards. Currently, many efforts are under way to improve traceability in the US and abroad. US initiatives include the Produce Traceability Initiative, the National Animal Identification System, establishment of the Food and Drug Administration’s new foreign offices, country-of-origin labeling and pending federal legislation. International efforts involve the International Organization for Standardization definitions, World Health Organization programs and the European Union’s TRACE project, which seeks harmoniza-

tion through uniform standards that track through different technologies.

### Best practices to follow

So what should you be doing to ensure

the safety of your product from barn to bowl? Try sticking to this checklist:

- ▶ Undertake a supply chain vulnerability assessment;
- ▶ Enhance policies and procedures;
- ▶ Strengthen supporting technology;
- ▶ Apply risk transfer at critical points;
- ▶ Ensure you have sufficient marine cargo and rejection insurance that covers physical product damage incurred during transit and the costs related to goods that you ship that are refused by your buyers or halted by a customs agency; and
- ▶ Appoint a chief petfood safety officer.

Traceability is the ability to accurately record and report on what ingredients, processes, machines, operators and recipes were used in the production of your petfoods and treats. Your processing facilities need to be able to assure consumers that quality ingredients are used in the production of your petfood products. ●



### International foodborne disease surveillance & investigation websites

- ▶ FoodNet ([www.cdc.gov/FoodNet](http://www.cdc.gov/FoodNet))—active surveillance
- ▶ PulseNet ([pulsenetinternational.org](http://pulsenetinternational.org))—laboratory network that performs microbial sub typing
- ▶ Outbreak Alert! ([www.who.int/csr/outbreaknetwork/en](http://www.who.int/csr/outbreaknetwork/en))—food attribution



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# Protein from potatoes?

**T**he terms potato and protein don't often come up in the same sentence—probably because we think of potatoes solely as a starch source. But in our ever-expanding search for useful ingredients in the petfood industry, potato protein, a concentrated extract from the potato tuber, has turned up in several specialty petfoods in the last couple of years.

Like other concentrated vegetable proteins—for example, soy protein concentrate, wheat gluten or rice protein concentrate—potato protein is low in ash, retains some modest amount of food functionality and has a high content of protein and corresponding essential amino acids. In addition, like the others, it can:

- ▶ Complement animal-based proteins in the diet;
- ▶ Help control the influence of ash on urine pH in feline diets; or
- ▶ Qualify for use in novel protein or hypoallergenic diets.

However, unlike the other, more common vegetable proteins, potato protein is a bit unique in the annals of ingredients for petfoods because it isn't saddled with commodity or livestock feed perceptions, nor does it carry the tarnish of a recall. Yet it is not without liabilities, probably the largest of which is its relative newcomer status as a petfood ingredient, meaning we don't know much about its value or drawbacks. So, maybe it's time to do some digging to find out what we do know about potato protein.

## Glue to sweets

To start, commercial sources of potato protein are derived from specially selected high-starch potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) grown primarily in Western Europe. The starch from these potatoes is used for industrial applications like glue production for construction materials, feedstock for enzyme fermentation or conversion to

**Potato protein has features that make it a viable candidate for petfood applications.**

— Greg Aldrich



sugars for sweeteners in confections, soft drinks, etc.

In the process of extracting the starch, a protein-rich juice is produced. To remove the proteins from the juice, acids and heat are added to coagulate them; then they are precipitated and removed by filtration or centrifugation. The isolated proteins are dried, resulting in a free-flowing powder of high protein content (more than 80%) and high biological value. The fat and ash content are approximately 3% each, and carbohydrates are minimal (starch by difference of around 6% and crude fiber less than 1%).

## In the right direction

Much of the published research on potato protein is found in aquaculture and livestock feeds, where it has been considered a partial replacement for more traditional protein meals like soybean meal, corn gluten meal, poultry by-product meal or fish meal. In these instances it compares favorably.

But with its higher concentration of protein, the more appropriate comparison is to concentrates or isolates.

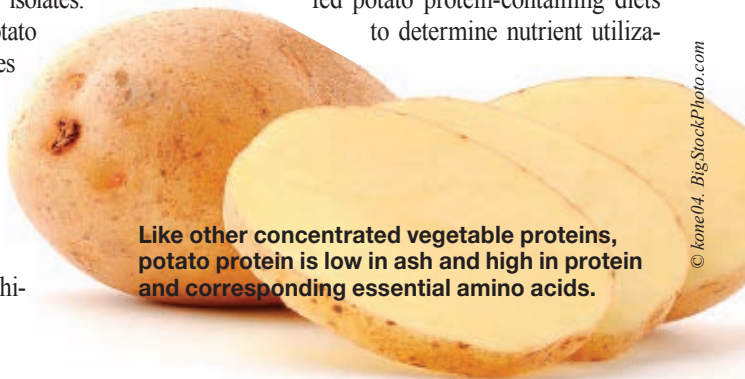
Specifically, potato protein compares well with soy protein concentrate, rice protein concentrate and spray-dried meats and livers. For example, lysine, methi-

onine, phenylalanine and total essential amino acid concentrations (g/16g N) were greater for potato protein than those found in soy protein concentrate (Clapper *et al.*, 2001), spray-dried chicken or spray-dried chicken liver (Dust *et al.*, 2005).

In one of the few reports available in the literature in which potato protein has been directly evaluated in terrestrial monogastric species, using potato protein-containing diets was reported to sustain performance of weanling pigs when it replaced traditional ingredients such as animal plasma, fish meal and spray-dried blood meal at 4 to 8% of the diet (Kerr *et al.*, 1998).

The only other reports of potato protein utilization of relevance to companion animals are found in a supplier's technical literature (Avebe Feed, 2005) in which ileal digestibility of amino acids in pigs averaged 91% and *in vitro* "small intestinal" digestibility (FIDO methodology) of total amino acids in potato protein was 88%.

So, while it would be ideal to have *in vivo* data from studies in which the target species—dogs or cats—had been fed potato protein-containing diets to determine nutrient utiliza-



**Like other concentrated vegetable proteins, potato protein is low in ash and high in protein and corresponding essential amino acids.**

tion and effects on elimination, the smattering of information we do have seems to point in the right direction.

### Protective problem?

One of the potential drawbacks is that potatoes are known to possess protease inhibitors and glycoalkaloids. The protease inhibitors are not considered an issue because they are destroyed during production of the potato protein; however, the glycoalkaloids can be a problem.

Glycoalkaloids are one of nature's protective mechanisms, designed to retard consumption of seeds and fruits by animals or insects looking for a meal. Their primary method of deterrence is through a bitter taste and then mild toxicosis for the pillager.

In potatoes, two glycoalkaloids are of primary concern:  $\alpha$ -chaconine and  $\alpha$ -solanine. Since high-starch potatoes are intentionally selected for lower levels of glycoalkaloids and the refining process further reduces the glycoalkaloid concentration, their impact should be diminished. Specifications from most suppliers list glycoalkaloids (primarily solanine) at levels from approximately 150 ppm for "low glycoalkaloid" products to 3,000 ppm for "conventional" potato protein.

## In the process of extracting the starch, a protein-rich juice is produced.

What does this mean in animal terms? Inclusion of conventional potato protein in piglet diets at levels around 8% of the diet were reported to slightly decrease voluntary food intake but not performance (Kerr *et al.*, 1998). The authors attributed the reduction in food intake to the bitterness associated with glycoalkaloids, an issue that all but disappeared for diets that contained low-glycoalkaloid potato protein.

Tests in dogs corroborate these findings: In diets containing 10% potato

protein, palatability was similar to other protein meals such as fish meal and chicken meal, and low glycoalkaloid sources were preferred over conventional sources (personal communications).

### Need more information

Potato protein has some features such as elevated protein content, favorable amino acid profile and low ash levels that make it a viable candidate for a number of petfood applications. There remains a need for more supporting information about its utilization in the target species, especially in cats. As with other concentrated protein sources, vigilance regarding non-protein nitrogen levels (e.g., melamine) should be part of the quality assurance routine. ●

*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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# AAFCO marks 100th year, passes new regulations

**I**n August the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) commemorated its 100th anniversary with its annual meeting, held in Washington, DC, USA, the same location as the first meeting in 1909. The meeting included events to mark the milestone, the introduction of a new logo and important votes, such as passage of several model regulations.

## GMP is key

The General Session is where the AAFCO members have the opportunity to vote on all the issues put forth by the various committees during the previous year. New Model Pet Food Regulations regarding labeling and other requirements for raw milk products distributed as petfood were passed, along with changes to the requirements for net content declarations to more closely follow the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act. These amendments will appear in the 2010 AAFCO *Official Publication*.

However, the vote of greatest impact on the petfood industry was the passage of new Model Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Regulations for Feed and Feed Ingredients, which set forth requirements for manufacturing, storage

**AAFCO is considering establishing an executive director position.**

**New model GMP regulations will have the greatest impact on petfood.** — David Dzanis



and transport of feeds, sanitation of facilities and equipment and other procedures necessary to minimize the risk of adulteration. I'll discuss the effect of mandatory GMPs on the manufacture of petfoods in detail in next month's column.

## Pet Food Committee work

Reports from several working groups under the Pet Food Committee noted continued progress. These include:

- ▶ The group deliberating on the American College of Veterinary Nutrition proposal, introduced in 2005, that would mandate calorie content statements on all dog and cat food labels;
- ▶ An expert panel reviewing the AAFCO Dog and Cat Food Nutrient Profiles and feeding trial protocols, which is nearing completion of at least some sections; and
- ▶ A working group looking at means to facilitate compliance by small treat manufacturers with state registration and labeling requirements, now reorganized and hoping to make significant progress in the coming months.

It is anticipated each of these groups will have recommendations for the committee to consider in time for its next meeting in January 2010.

The committee also discussed proposed changes to the requirements for

guarantees for specialty petfoods to make them more akin to the requirements for dog and cat food guarantees. Presently, guarantees for specialty petfoods must follow the format required for livestock feeds, which can be confusing for the manufacturer, regulator and public.



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A question was raised about the requirements for placing non-essential nutrient guarantees. A suggested amendment to the proposal would affect foods for specialty pets and dogs/cats. Also discussed was the definition for the feed term "natural" and whether irradiation should be considered one of the permitted processes for foods so claimed. Both issues are now open for comment and further discussion in January.

## Only act: camelina meal

Usually, the Pet Food Committee has at least one or two proposed regulations for the Model Bill & Regulations Committee (MBRC) to review, but not at this meeting.

In fact, for the first time in recent memory, MBRC had no active items on its agenda! The Ingredient Definitions Committee acted on a few procedural items and one new definition (camelina meal), but its actions at this meeting will not have a great impact on petfoods.

The Carbohydrate Working Group under the Feed Labeling Committee did not reach a consensus regarding carbohydrate-related claims for petfoods, so no recommendations were forwarded to the committee. The group did make recommendations for new regulations regarding “less (sugars, dietary starch and/or fructans)” claims for horse feeds.

Also, motions were made to consider mandatory guarantees for carbohydrate fractions on both horse feed and petfood labels. However, after some discussion, all motions were sent back to the working group for further deliberation.

The Feed Manufacturing Committee accepted recommendations to amend the Model Bill to better coincide with the existing provisions in the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act with regard to exported animal feeds and petfoods. Under this amendment, products that did not necessarily meet US requirements but were expressly intended for export only and met the requirements of the importing country would not be considered adulterated or misbranded. This amendment still has to undergo several more steps before it can come to a vote by the membership.

## Other items of note

AAFCO is considering establishing an executive director position to provide management support of organizational functions and represent the association externally. The January 2010 “mid-year” meeting will be held in warm and (usually) sunny Redondo Beach, California, USA. ●

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*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.*



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## Key Concepts

### ► LCAT activity and canine weight loss

(*Lipids*. PubMed ID: 19255797) Lecithin:cholesterol acyltransferase (LCAT) activities increased over time but were not different after controlling for percentage weight loss.

### ► Novel fish proteins for senior dogs

(*JAPAN* 93:447-455. doi: 10.1111/j.1439-0396.2008.00826.x) Fish protein substrates were found to be effective substitutes for poultry by-product meal, providing diets of high nutritive value for senior dogs.

## LCAT activity and canine weight loss

The relationship between lecithin:cholesterol acyltransferase (LCAT) activity and weight loss in dogs was investigated. Twelve obese female Beagles were fed four experimental weight-loss diets composed of high (HGI) or low (LGI)

glycemic index starch and diacylglycerol or triacylglycerol oils. The LGI groups lost more weight than the HGI groups due to starch digestibility differences. LCAT activities increased over time but were not different after controlling for weight loss.

**Source:** R. Angell *et al.*, 2009. Plasma LCAT Activity and Lipid Subfraction Composition in Obese Beagles Undergoing Weight Loss. *Lipids*. PubMed ID: 19255797.

## Novel fish proteins for senior dogs

An experiment was conducted to analytically define several novel fish substrates and determine the effects of feeding them on total tract nutrient digestibilities and immune status of senior dogs. The control diet contained poultry by-product meal while test diets contained 20% milt meal, pink salmon hydrolysate and white fish meal. Apparent nutrient digestibility coefficients and immune indices were not affected. Fish protein substrates were found to be effective substitutes.

**Source:** K.E. Zinn *et al.*, 2009. Fish Protein Substrates can Substitute Effectively for Poultry By-product Meal when Incorporated in High-quality Dog Diets. *JAPAN* 93:447-455. doi: 10.1111/j.1439-0396.2008.00826.x

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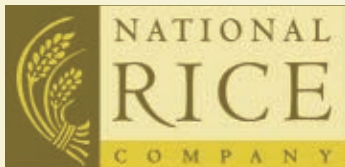
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