



# USAHA News Release

United States Animal Health Association

PO Box 8805, St. Joseph, MO 64508

816-671-1144

[www.usaha.org](http://www.usaha.org)

**Contacts:** *Ben Richey* - (816) 671-1144 - [brichey@usaha.org](mailto:brichey@usaha.org)  
*Larry Mark* - (703) 451-3954 - [ldmark@erols.com](mailto:ldmark@erols.com)

*For immediate release:*

## PET FOOD RECALL HIGHLIGHTS ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Reno, Nev., Oct. 22, 2007 – A discussion of the pet food recall during the spring of 2007 highlighted the meeting of the U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) Committee on Environment here this week.

In early March 2007, a company performing pet food palatability trials noted that several cats and dogs eating the food became sick and a number of cats died shortly thereafter. The company also learned that wheat gluten imported from China was among the ingredients suspected of causing the problem. On March 16, the pet food company recalled some 60 million cans and pouches of wet food.

On March 20, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) confirmed 14 dog and cat deaths. On March 30, melamine was announced as the leading suspect and wheat imports from the suspected company were restricted. On April 5 and April 10, the pet food recall was further expanded. On April 27, the University of Guelph, Canada, reported that melamine in combination with cyanuric acid resulted in the formation of crystals in the kidney and urine of the animals consuming feeds containing these materials.

In late April, FDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that a number of hogs and several million chickens had eaten melamine-contaminated feed. On May 7, the USDA and FDA announced that there was a very low risk to human health in such cases involving pork and poultry.

Through the cooperation of numerous state and federal agencies, laboratories and private industries in the United States and Canada, it was discovered that melamine alone in feeds was not sufficient to produce injury in animals eating such feeds. But when feed containing both melamine and cyanuric acid are consumed, large crystals are formed in the kidneys. These crystals produce severe, acute renal damage that results in the death of some cats and dogs. In summary, experimental feeding trials showed that neither melamine nor cyanuric acid alone caused crystal formation or disease, but the crystals and clinical syndrome and lesions were reproduced in cats and swine consuming feed containing a combination of the compounds.

The committee also heard reports on the potentials of health hazards related to the feeding of grain co-products from ethanol and biodiesel production. The annual mycotoxin report from the states was also presented. It was noted that although fumonisins were a common finding in most crop production states in 2007, high concentrations (i.e., greater than 10 ppm) were rare. Rainfall this season in the southern grain belt where aflatoxin is routine evidently

relieved some crop stress so that concentrations of this mycotoxin were lower than usual. Large-scale health problems were not reported during the past year.

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