



It's back. It's better. It's safer.

Why are you recalling all your products?

As a result of thorough tests conducted we found that the cause of the problem was a specific batch of contaminated raw material (corn gluten). Although not all products have been shown to be contaminated we know the time frame during which this raw material was used, and as such, took the precautionary measure of recalling all products produced in that period.

What is corn gluten and why do you add it to pet food?

Corn gluten is the protein fraction of the corn/maize kernel which remains after the starch, bran and germ have been removed. It is a concentrated source of protein, with a higher digestibility than plain cereals due to its moderate fibre level. This ingredient is thus beneficial in maintaining a highly digestible pet food product. This source also provides amino acids which are important to maintain the condition of the hair and skin, and to provide urinary acidification. Corn gluten is also low in phosphorus which assists in the formulation of diets where decreased phosphorus is essential, such as those intended for aged animals, susceptible to renal deterioration. Corn gluten is also free of anti-nutritive factors, such as those responsible for inhibition of protein digestion, and fermentable carbohydrates which may lead to flatulence. Finally, due to the high lutein and beta-carotene content, which are yellow in appearance, corn gluten contributes to product appearance. Beta-carotene is also an effective anti-oxidant.

What is melamine?

Melamine is a synthetic organic compound, which is normally manufactured in industry by mixing urea with formaldehyde. The resultant resin is used to manufacture plastics, counter tops, whiteboards, floor tiles, kitchen ware, etc. Melamine is not approved for use in food for humans or pets. Symptoms include decreased appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy, and increased thirst. External animal studies have shown that ingestion of melamine may lead to kidney stones in dogs, and result in excessive urination, however, no toxicity has been observed in these studies in the short-term. However, Melamine does, have the potential to convert to other compounds under certain conditions and it could be one of these compounds, or the interaction between them, that is contributing to the toxicity.

Why would a supplier add melamine to corn gluten?

Melamine is suspected to have been added by an indiscriminate supplier in order to increase the apparent protein value of the raw material. This is due to the fact that melamine has a significantly high nitrogen content, which laboratory techniques rely on to calculate the protein level of ingredients and finished products.

What tests do you usually do?

As a standard procedure, depending on the raw material we conduct various tests. In the case of corn gluten the following tests are conducted prior to acceptance of the raw material: odour, colour, moisture, protein level, starch content, identified risk mycotoxins and foreign bodies. The other parameters for analysis include cellulose, xanthophyl (natural pigment), and ash.

I have seen articles in the media that mention anti-freeze (Ethylene Glycol) as being the origin of the problem. Is this true?

No, Ethylene Glycol is not the origin of the problem nor have we ever added Ethylene Glycol to our food to increase palatability. The information given through the media channels was incorrect.

How can I recognise if the product in my possession is being recalled?

Those products subject to the recall were manufactured by Royal Canin South Africa in its Johannesburg plant between March 8th, and April 11th, 2007 and were sold exclusively in South Africa and Namibia. The date of manufacture can be determined by the BATCH number which is printed directly below the expiry date and can be identified by the word "BATCH" followed by a date sequence e.g. 08/03/2007. All other Vets Choice and Royal Canin products (including products made in South Africa before March 8 2007 and products made outside South Africa) are not affected and can be safely fed to pets.

How long did it take you to react?

We reacted very quickly. On Tuesday the 10th of April, our Call Centre received an unusual amount of calls (7) from veterinarians and pet owners concerning dogs that were showing similar symptoms, who were all fed on Vets Choice products. Within 24 hours, on Wednesday 11th of April, based on these calls we took immediate action and, as a precautionary measure, voluntarily suspended all sales of Vets Choice countrywide.

Why do vets sell your products?

It is our firm belief that nutrition plays an integral role in the health of animals. Veterinarians offer clients a complete service ranging from consultation and surgery through to dispensing of medicines and dietary advice. Having them stock our food ensures that our products are sold to the right people for the right reasons and often form a large part of an animals' ongoing treatment program. A healthy diet contributes to a healthy pet.

We recommend that you speak to your veterinarian should you need any further advice or in any way be concerned about the health of your pet.

For further information or questions that you might have, please contact us on (011) 801 5000 or email info@royal-canin.co.za or visit www.vetschoice.co.za

We appreciate your continuing support.