

Food and Jerky Treat Recalls, What to Believe?

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The newspapers, television and especially the Internet have been bombarding us with information regarding the recalls of certain products. Being informed of anything regarding our pets safety is great, but sometimes less-legitimate websites feed us false information and produce hysteria.

The current chaos over Jerky Treats made in China is a perfect example. The FDA asked for help from consumers and veterinarians in reporting illnesses in dogs who have eaten these treats so that they can try to determine a cause for the illnesses. No specific brands (as of today) or ingredients have been identified yet as being the cause, therefore, these treats have NOT been formally recalled.

This is an excerpt from the FDA:

Food and Drug Administration is asking pet owners and veterinarians to help solve a mystery: Why have jerky treats coming mostly from China sickened more than 3,600 dogs and cats and killed at least 580 of them since 2007?

The number of illnesses and deaths — the vast majority of which have affected dogs — has risen since January.

The agency is not issuing a recall or naming brands of jerky treats. It says most have been made in China, but notes that manufacturers are not required to list the country of origin. "Americans value their pets as family members," says KC Theisen, director of pet care issues for the Humane Society of the United States. "An obvious answer is not jumping off the page. The FDA needs more data and more information, so they are turning to the public."

So what is causing all the panic? Websites you really should not go to for information because they are NOT legit. Two examples are [FDA.COM](#). The real FDA website is [FDA.GOV](#). Another is [ConsumerAffairs.com](#). This one will give you a virus that is hard to shake. If you have a doubt about a treat you have already purchased, your best bet is the website of that particular company.

Sadly, as this false information makes the Internet rounds, more panic ensues. I have even gotten notifications from local veterinarians that are passing along the info (with pictures of products falsely named as being recalled) from the FDA.COM website. Although their intent is good, anyone passing this info around is not checking their facts, which is not only scaring pet owners, but hurting ethical retailers and treat manufacturers.

One example of an ethical manufacturer is Dogswell, who make treats in both the USA and China, and we have never had any problems with their treats. Here is an excerpt from their website:

You may have heard that the FDA has been conducting an ongoing investigation over the past few years into claims that certain jerky treats may have caused injury to pets. During that time, they have tested over 1,200 samples and have not discovered anything that they believe would cause a pet harm. On October 22nd, 2013, the FDA posted an update on this matter and requested help from veterinarians who encountered dogs that had health issues that might somehow have been connected to jerky treats. Numerous news outlets ran stories related to this recent FDA posting despite the fact that the investigation has been going on for years without any conclusion.

We have received many calls from worried pet owners over the safety of our products and we would like to confirm that our jerky treats remain safe to feed to pets as directed. How do we know this? There are a few reasons that you should feel comfortable to continue feeding Dogswell jerky treats:

1. Our manufacturing facilities are highly regarded and are held to strict quality assurance standards
2. Dogswell has a rigorous testing program for both raw materials and final products in order to ensure the safety and quality of our treats.
3. Third party auditors ensure that all food safety controls and procedures are followed

While our treats remain safe to feed according to our feeding guidelines, it is important to always monitor pets as they consume treats, provide plenty of water and exercise, and ensure that treats are not used in place of a healthy, balanced diet.

Dogswell is a company made up of pet lovers and owners. As such, the quality and safety of our treats are of the utmost importance to us. We remain committed to only producing high-quality treats that meet or exceed FDA guidelines.

If you still have questions about Dogswell jerky treats, please feel free to contact us at info@dogswell.com or at 888-559-8833.

Legitimate recalls of foods and treats have been happening a lot since 2007, mostly because of stricter quality control in the manufacturing plants. For instance, if salmonella is found *anywhere* in manufacturing, it is common for everything made in that plant during a certain time frame to be voluntarily recalled. It doesn't mean any illness or death has happened, it just means that precautions are taken when needed.

In the case of the current jerky treat issue, no recalls have happened (yet) because no one knows what the problem is. The data of nearly 600 dog deaths has been compiled since 2007, and there has to be a margin of error for pets that had underlying health issues regardless of what they ate.

If and when there is a recall of any pet product, the manufacturer notifies the distributors, who in turn notify us, the retailer. We then immediately pull any affected products off from our shelves and out of the retail area. Usually, this all happens before news of the recall even hits the media. If you are in our Rewards program and we have your E-Mail address, we can do a search on who may have purchased an affected product and notify you immediately. Latest, up-to-date information can also be seen easily on our Facebook page.

Would I feed my dogs jerky made in China? Well, my first choice is some of the USA made treats that we have, but I also feed some made in other countries by manufacturers that we have had a long and trusting history with.

What would I never, EVER feed my pets? Anything purchased at a grocery store, department store like Target or Shopko, and especially not Costco or Sam's Club. These types of stores only carry cheap pet products to encourage a quick impulse purchase from their customers. Often, they buy discontinued or damaged merchandise at a huge discount to inflate the profit margins even higher. A good sign of that is 'what they have one week, they don't have the next'.

At The Feed Bag, we care about your pets health just as much as you do. We will continue to keep you informed as much as we possibly can regarding any food, treat or product issues that may affect you and your pets.

Thank you,

**Connie Roller, Manager
The Feed Bag Pet Supply**