

February 2008

Petfood WATT Industry

www.petfoodindustry.com

**PREVIEW: Petfood
Forum 2008 and
Focus on Safety, p. 36**

A functional petfood future

Recall update—regulatory changes

Natural Balance rebounds: 3 keys



**PETFOOD INDUSTRY
GLOBAL**

Private label power

Erik Bras of Provimi, p. 20

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On the cover: Erik Bras of Provimi Pet Food Europe with Wantok. Photo by AssiéFotografie-Henk Ganzeboom.

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Dead dogs don't eat

Euthanasia is a leading cause of death for dogs. Often pet owners opt for euthanasia due to their dog's behavior problems. Add to that poor training that results in dogs being hit by cars or otherwise killed and it's clear that improper training is a major killer of dogs. Thus, it is in the petfood industry's best interests to promote good dog (and cat) training. Effective training yields a positive bond and a longer life for dogs.

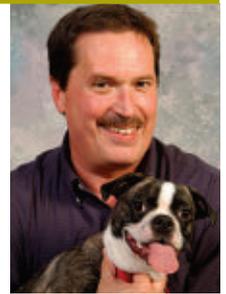


Jon Katz writes a column about dogs for the online magazine *Slate*. He lives on Bedlam Farm in upstate New York, USA.

Which brings me to Jon Katz. A friend loaned me the book *A Dog Year* by Katz—after that I was hooked on Katz books. I'm now reading *Katz on Dogs*. The cool thing about Katz is his honesty and philosophy based on his experiences training dogs.

Effective training yields a positive bond and a longer life for dogs.

— Tim Phillips



What's the best advice?

Katz makes it clear that he hasn't always been an expert: It was after living with many dogs and especially after adopting Devon, "a demented Border Collie," that he was forced to either learn how to train the frenzied Devon or get rid of him. What Katz stresses is that every dog is different, due to many factors such as breeding, environment and temperament, and therefore, every human-dog relationship varies.

There's plenty of advice about training out there. Use food. Never use food. Use shock collars. Never shock your dog; it's cruel. Be positive, all the time. No, show the dog who's boss. Use clickers and whistles. Use your hands and body. Use a happy, chirpy voice for training. No, whisper. Study the dog's tail and ear positions for clues to its thinking. Tug and jerk. Never tug.

The Katz training approach is an amalgam of ideas and methods, tailored to fit his work, environment and dogs. It asks that we understand ourselves, as well as our dogs. It can incorporate elements of any other theory that works.

Find the right fit

Katz believes that both people and dogs are unique—a Chow differs from a Lab just as a city dweller differs from a farmer—and he points out that such individuality isn't addressed by even the best and most popular training methods. Not every training theory is for everyone, notes Katz, but almost anyone can train a dog and live with it comfortably.

Jon Katz has written 14 books—six novels and eight works of nonfiction. A member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, he writes a column about dogs for the online magazine *Slate*. Katz lives on Bedlam Farm in upstate New York, USA (www.bedlamfarm.com).

Dr. Phillips is the editor of Petfood Industry magazine. He can be reached at Tel: +1.815.734.5644, E-mail: tphillips@wattnet.net.

Tell us what you think!

Send letters to the editor to editor@petfoodindustry.com or post your comments online at www.petfoodindustry.com

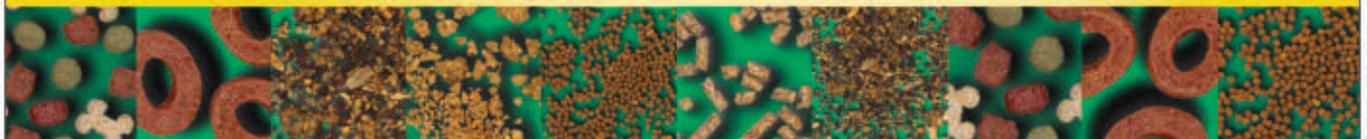
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Quick hits

- ▶ Alcan Packaging Food Americas has received the 2007 Right Workplace Award from the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and Right Management Consultants.
- ▶ William E. Brown is now the chief executive officer of Central Garden & Pet Co., following the resignation of Glenn Novotny.
- ▶ Eli Lilly and Co. has announced that Dr. Aaron H. Katcher will serve as the 2008 lecturer for the Lilly Lecture-ship series.
- ▶ The Wellness brand of Natural Food and Treats for Pets and Old Mother Hubbard have moved their headquarters to 200 Ames Pond Drive, Tewksbury, Massachusetts, USA 01876.
- ▶ Penford Food Ingredients Co. has launched a redesigned and updated company website at www.penfordfoods.com.



Chinese and American officials from their respective food-related administrations.

US-China safety agreement announced

Chinese petfood exporters will implement higher quality control standards in the wake of a new deal signed between China and the US in December.

A summary of the agreement provided by the Department of Health and Human Services said the deal would initially address preserved foods; petfood and pet treats; raw materials used in making food, such as wheat and rice protein; and farm-raised fish, such as shrimp and catfish.

Chinese exporters to the US will register with the Chinese government and agree to annual inspections by China's office of General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine. The agreement also calls for the US and China to notify each other within 48 hours of learn-

ing of "the emergence of significant risk to public health in relation to product safety, recalls and other situations."

"The new regulations will force local producers, including us, to improve our quality control standards," said Jichen Gao, general manager at Qingdao, China-based Beibeile Pet Food Company. The regulations are in the long-term interest of the Chinese petfood industry, he added.

Haiping Zhu, manager of the international trading department of Shanghai, China-based petfood manufacturer Nory Pet Company Ltd., said the new regulations would not impact its exports in the future because the company can meet the regulatory demands. But he said exports may be affected by other factors, such

as inflation.

The deal also requires regular cooperation among the two countries' regulators, designed to eliminate differences in standards. This cooperation may include assistance with supervision, training programs and joint research projects.

From the US perspective, the agreement was initially hailed by Bush administration negotiators as a major step toward addressing the safety of imported goods.

But critics, while praising the intent behind the agreement, said it fails to provide enough safeguards to prevent further imports of petfood ingredients blended with adulterants. "I would say it's not a strong enough signal to the Chinese," said Jean Halloran, director of food policy initiatives at Consumers Union.

Take the *Petfood Industry* survey!

Are functional ingredients like prebiotics and probiotics the future of petfood? Tell us what you think about that and the articles in this issue. Go to www.petfoodindustry.com/monthlysurvey.aspx.

Tyson and Kemin in petfood partnership

Meat processing company Tyson Foods Inc. has partnered with Kemin Industries Inc. to develop, manufacture and sell flavor enhancers to the North American petfood market. Both



Kemin and Tyson will be involved in the research and development of the flavor enhancers, also known as palatants. Financial terms were not disclosed.



Under the terms of the deal, Tyson will manufacture the products from raw materials supplied by the company's chicken, beef and pork plants. Kemin will market the products under the Palasurance and Topnotes brands to major petfood companies.

The alliance, which took effect Jan. 1, 2008, includes an option to expand outside of the US, Canada and Mexico in the future.



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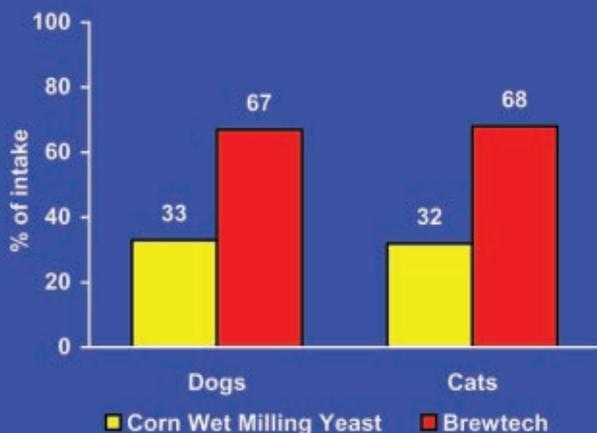
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PETFOOD INDUSTRY
G L O B A L

Almo Nature lands in Canada.

After expanding throughout Western Europe, the Italian petfood manufacturer Almo Nature lands in the North American market with a new branch in Quebec, Canada. The company foresees that this new opening will bring its 2008 turnover to 50 million Euro (US\$ 73.5 million) with an export share of 40%. After Italy, Almo Nature's first market is Germany, which represents 70% of the European turnover, followed by Switzerland, France, UK, the Netherlands, Belgium and Scandinavia. The launch of products for the Canadian market is scheduled for March.

SANYpet growing in exports.

The Italian company based in Monselice (Padova), which specializes in hypoallergenic and nutraceutical dry and wet food for dogs and cats under the umbrella name Forza10, announced it grew 85% in export sales from 2006 to 2007. SANYpet is currently present in several countries such as France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and Russia, and plans to increase its efforts to develop new markets in 2008. Distribution to the Netherlands and Belgium begins this month and will soon be expanded to more countries in Northern Europe.

Nordenia Deutschland gets certified by DQS.

The German Association for the Certification of Quality Management Systems (DQS) has certified Nordenia Deutschland Halle GmbH in accordance with the prEN 15593 standard, making it the first company worldwide to earn the certification, according to Nordenia. The new guideline sets standards that apply to hygiene management during the production of food and petfood packaging. The standards, along with the ISO 9001 standard, formed the basis for the development of the prEN 15593 standard. The objective is to create a universal, internationally applicable standard for food packaging manufacturers.



Petfood Forum Asia

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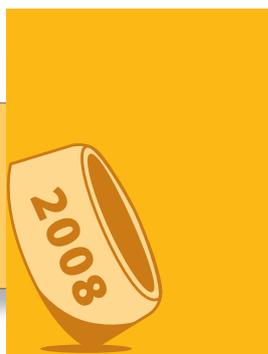
- Global and Asian petfood sales trends.
- Petfood safety and traceability.
- Update on nutrition.
- New and functional ingredients.
- Advances in palatability.
- Hot product trends.
- And more!

Petfood Forum Asia
March 5, 2008
10:00 to 17:00
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Convention Center
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Registration includes a light breakfast, generous buffet lunch and coffee

Registration fee:
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For updates on the program, bookmark www.petfoodindustry.com/petfoodforum.aspx.



Register now! Turn the page or visit www.petfoodindustry.com/petfoodforum.aspx.

Or contact Nancy Grossnickle at ngrossnickle@wattnet.net or
Tel: +1.815.734.5674.

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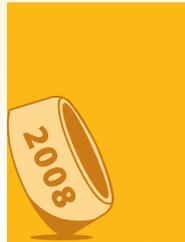
Victam Asia 2008 brings together exhibitors, conference delegates and visitors from the animal feed, aquafeed, petfood and grain processing industries. The show also features conferences presented by the Thai Department of Livestock Development and Aquafeed.com USA. For more information, visit www.victam.com.

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Or register online at www.petfoodindustry.com/petfoodforum.aspx



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March 5, 2008

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For more information, please contact Nancy Grossnickle at ngrossnickle@wattnet.net or Tel: +1.815.734.5674

Petfood Forum Asia 2008 is held in conjunction with Victam Asia 2008. Registration to Victam Asia is free if made online at www.victam.com prior to March 5, 2008. For information on hotels and travel packages, please visit www.victam.com.



INDUSTRY CALENDAR

March

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

India International Pet Trade Fair, February 29-March 2, 2008, National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) Expo Complex, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi, India. Contact: Binoy Sahee, Tel: +91.989.101.3797, www.iipf.com.

Petfood Forum Asia, March 5, 2008, Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand. Contact: Nancy Grossnickle, Watt Publishing Co., Tel: +1.815.

734.5674, ngrossnickle@wattnet.net, www.petfoodindustry.com.

Victam Asia, March 5-7, 2008, Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand. Contact: Henk van de Bunt, Victam International, Tel: +31.33.246.4404, Fax: +31.33.246.4706, expo@victam.com, www.victam.com.

AFIA Purchasing & Ingredient Suppliers Conference, March 5-7, 2008, Flamingo Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. Contact: Judy Pilgrim, Tel: +1.703.524.0810, afia@afia.org, www.afia.org.

Aquafeed Horizons Asia, March 6, 2008, Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand. Contact: Suzi Fraser Dominy, Tel: +1.808.732.7499, conferences@aquafeed.com, www.aquafeed.info.

April

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			

UK Pet Care Forum 2008, April 13, 2008, The Belfry, Wishaw, Sutton Coldfield, United Kingdom. Contact: Marie Petsis, Pet Care Trust, Tel: +01.234.273933, Fax: +01.234.273550, petevents@petcare.org.uk, www.petcare.org.uk.

Petfood Forum, April 14-16, 2008, Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois, USA. Contact: Nancy Grossnickle, Watt Publishing Co., Tel:

+1.815.734.5674, ngrossnickle@wattnet.net, www.petfoodindustry.com.

Petfood Focus on Safety, April 16-17, 2008, Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois, USA. Contact: Nancy Grossnickle, Watt Publishing Co., Tel: +1.815.734.5674, ngrossnickle@wattnet.net, www.petfoodindustry.com.

Alltech Feed Industry Symposium, April 20-23, 2008, Lexington, Kentucky, USA. Contact: Alltech, symposium@alltech.com, www.alltech.com.

The 4th International ZooVet-Expo, April 22-24, 2008, International Exhibition Center, 15 Brovarskiy Ave., Kyiv, Ukraine. Tel: +38.044.258.2732, info@troyan.kiev.ua, www.troyan.kiev.ua/en/exhibition/zoovet.

A complete listing of 2008 events is available at www.petfoodindustry.com



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Jan Hall, *Logistics Coordinator*

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THIS MONTH ON PetfoodIndustry.com

Make sure you check out this month's Online Extras, plus all the regular content on www.petfoodindustry.com:

- Listen to a conversation with Natural Balance's president Joey Herrick and VP of marketing Frank Koch. Go to www.petfoodindustry.com/nb.aspx.
- In September, the Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act (FDAAA) was passed, requiring new petfood safety systems and measures. For a thorough discussion on this topic, see Dave Dzanis' December "Petfood Insights" column at www.petfoodindustry.com/FDAAA.aspx.
- Read the entire library of Dr. Dzanis' columns at www.petfoodindustry.com/insights.
- The white paper *Water Activity: The Key to Pet Food Quality & Safety* from Decagon Devices is available at www.petfoodindustry.com/decagon.aspx.

FDA wants your input

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is announcing its intention to hold a public meeting early in 2008 to obtain input from stakeholder groups for the development of:

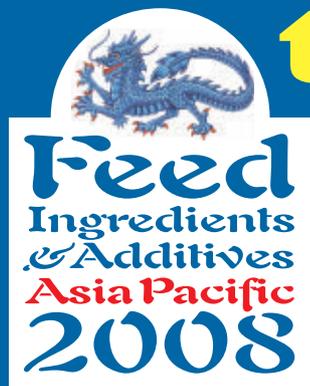
- Ingredient;
- Processing; and
- Labeling standards to ensure the safety of petfood.

These standards were mandated by the FDA Amendments Act of 2007. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, petfood manufacturers, the Association of American Feed Control Officials, veterinary medical associations and animal health organizations.

The date, time and location for the 2008 public meeting will be announced in a subsequent notice that will be published in the Federal Register. Check www.petfoodindustry.com for updates.

A docket has been opened at FDA to receive any comments in advance of the public meeting. Submit written comments to the Division of Dockets Management (HFA-3051, Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, room 1061, Rockville, MD 20852. Submit electronic comments to <http://www.fda.gov/dockets/ecomments> or www.regulations.gov.

The events you need to visit



EXHIBITIONS & CONFERENCES

5 – 7 March 2008 • Queen Sirikit National Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand

Bringing together the world's premier suppliers of ingredients and processing technology to the animal feed, petfood, aquafeed, rice & grain processing industries with compounders, integrators, co-operatives, hatcheries, large farmers & grain processors from throughout the Asia Pacific markets.

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The FIAAP Conference 'The ingredients for success!' Contact: www.feedconferences.com

Aquafeed Horizons Contact: www.aquafeed.com

Petfood Forum Asia 2008 Contact: gstadel@wattnet.net or www.petfoodindustry.com

The Thai Feed Conference Contact: chirawak@dld.go.th

For further information or to visit the exhibitions FREE of charge register online at:

www.victam.com or www.fiaap.com or email: expo@victam.com or info@fiaap.com

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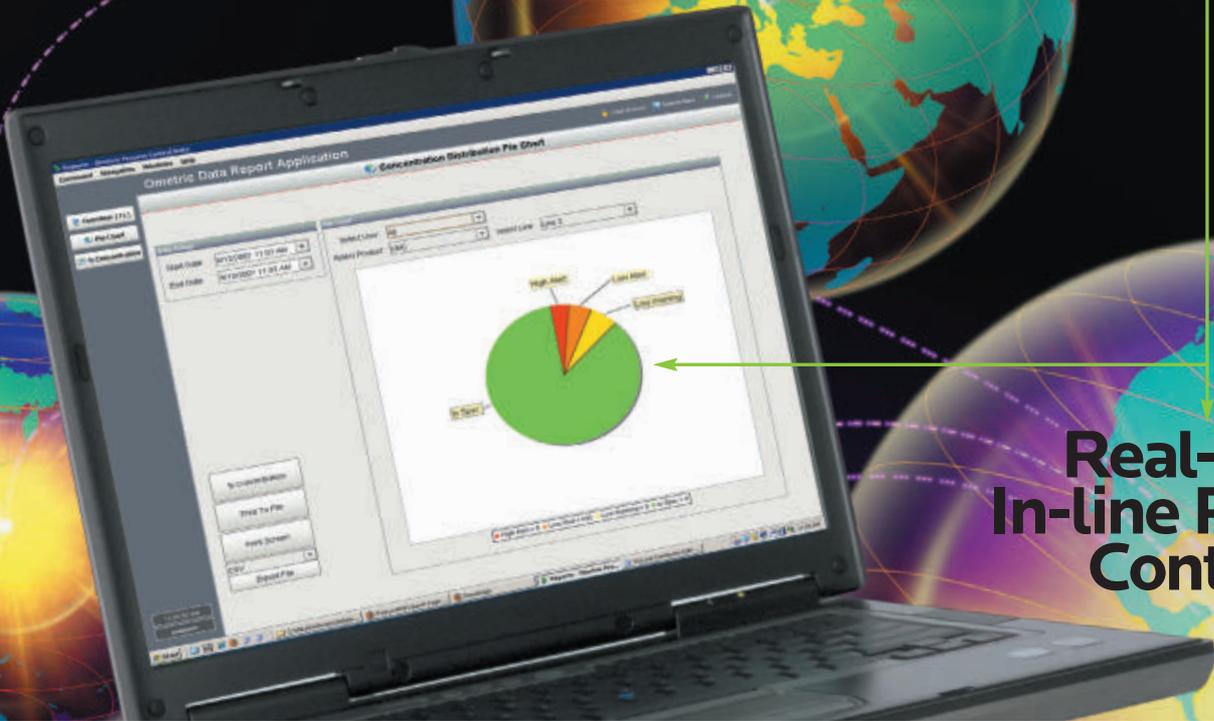
Colorado, 2:37 MST



Illinois, 3:37 CST

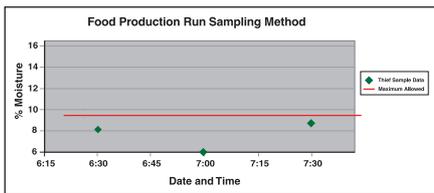


Georgia, 4:37 EST

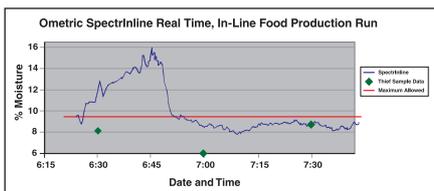


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« Organic goes to the dogs, cats too

Castor & Pollux Pet Works has introduced the Go Organic Kit, an all-in-one organic diet kit available for cats and dogs. The Go Organic Kit features food and treats from the company's Organix line, the first certified organic food products launched for dogs and cats after the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) was introduced in 2000, according to Castor & Pollux. Inside the reusable container are both dry and wet foods, treats, coupons and information on the benefits of eating organic. www.castorpolluxpet.com

Fishin' Chips for cats »

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, containing no preservatives, yeast, soy, salt, sugar or grains. www.auntjeni.com



« Unique treats from Australia

Zeus and Co. Inc. has partnered with Australian Pet Foods to introduce nine new pet-food products to the US market. Products include Kangaroo Femur Large, Kangaroo Femur Small, Kangaroo Hind Leg Bone, Kangaroo Tail Large, Kangaroo Tail Twin Pack, Kangaroo Wing Dings, Emu Bone Small, Emu Femur Large and Lamb Femur Bone. According to both companies, the strictest and most humane standards are practiced in the sourcing of the products from Australian Government licensed production facilities, which use only legally culled species under the government monitored quota system. www.zeusandco.com

Organic, frozen yogurt for dogs »

Yöghund is a certified organic frozen yogurt treat for dogs that comes in a Peanut Butter & Banana flavor, available in a single-pack of four or a party-pack of 20. According to the company, Yöghund is made of organic yogurt, organic bananas, organic peanuts and spring water, and has no additives or fillers. The paper packaging used for the product is biodegradable and minimizes the risks of accidental ingestion by a pet, also according to TBD Brands. www.yoghund.com



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Provimi's new strategy centralizes its petfood business as Provimi Pet Food Europe, located within two main offices, including one in Rotterdam, the Netherlands (top). The business is headed by CEO Erik Bras (center) and encompasses 11 production facilities in seven European countries, including this plant in Hungary (bottom). All plants undergo regular internal quality audits.

Private label power

After several years of acquisitions, Provimi centralizes and focuses on its core business

BY STEFANIA PES

From its beginnings, Provimi has characterized itself as a strongly international company, including the petfood part of its business. This identity has held true as Provimi Holding (the parent organization) has acquired other petfood manufacturers and established a network of factories worldwide.

While the holding group has always maintained a coordinating function, previously it gave a great deal of autonomy to the local facilities. A new

strategic direction is now capitalizing on the advantages of a more centralized organization and Provimi's core private label petfood business.

The company is in the process of integrating all its petfood units into one new profit center called Provimi Pet Food Europe. The main purpose is to improve capacity to comply with the needs and requests of its priority customers such as hypermarket and supermarket chains.

Acquiring for growth

Provimi was founded near Rotterdam, the Netherlands, in 1927, with core activities focusing on premixes, special-

"I'm sure retailers would be sensitive to exploring new products instead of just following the market's key players."

ties and feed. After many years of solid growth, the company entered the petfood business as part of a diversification strategy aimed at additional growth in higher margin segments.

The first acquisitions of petfood companies date to 2000, when pre-existing dry food facilities in the Netherlands, Czech Republic and Italy were purchased. Soon after, between 2001 and 2005, Provimi expanded further in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary, also becoming active in wet petfood through additional acquisitions in the Netherlands and Central/Eastern Europe.

Business basics

Headquarters: Budapest, Hungary (Provimi Pet Food Europe)

Annual sales: 225 million Euros—about 12% of total turnover of the holding group

Officers: Erik Bras, CEO, petfood business

Facilities: 11 production facilities in seven European countries, including a new petfood production plant near Moscow, Russia, built in 2007 to support the fast growth of the petfood segment in Eastern Europe; plus facilities in Brazil and Argentina

Employees: 900 (Provimi Pet Food Europe)

Websites: www.provimi.com, www.provimipetfood.nl

The individual acquisitions have typically been driven by the holding group's long-term development policy of investing in companies that are well established in their local markets. The aim was to ensure a nice growth potential and allow further consolidation of Provimi's position in the global market.

Where already present, established product lines and strong local brands were retained, says Erik Bras, CEO of the petfood business. Examples include Propesko and Brasa in the Czech Republic and Dax in Hungary, distributed across Central Europe in garden centers and agricultural retail outlets that carry petfood products.

However, Provimi is predominantly a private label producer and does not intend to create or launch branded products. Instead, it's reinforcing the strategic focus on its business with pan-European retail customers.

Integrating the network

"At the beginning of the acquisitions process until 2005 to 2006," says Bras, "each factory, although part of the group, continued to be run mainly as a local independent business unit." Since then the new integration strategy has started to be implemented.

To date, almost all acquired factories have shed their old names. In countries with more than one plant, the facilities first merged under the name of Provimi Pet Food, plus the name of the country. For example, the last 2006 acquisition—the assets of the large French private label company SESA—went under the name of Provimi Pet Food France.

Since the beginning of 2007, all European operations have started to be integrated under the Provimi Pet Food Europe name. The new structure is designed to combine the benefits and synergies offered by the large scale organization with the faster action and decision-making support of local units for customers in their respective markets. Provimi executives believe retail customers are looking for partners able to provide the right, consistently high-quality products in large volumes while offering quick service.

Optimizing petfood activities

Erik Bras, CEO of Provimi's petfood business, explains the three main objectives of the company's new strategy toward integration and centralization:

1. Better serve European customers in an increasingly customer oriented marketplace;
2. Optimize synergies between local and centralized purchase of raw materials;
3. Raise the overall value of Provimi, thanks to continuous exchange of expertise among managers from the different companies of the holding group and related learning about local markets and operations.

To this last point, executive management holds meetings of all country general managers on a regular basis to strengthen the mutual connections and ensure the operational control of the group. Also, meetings with the specialized managers of different functions such as sales and marketing, R&D and quality assurance are organized to increase knowledge sharing, synergies and interdependency.

Besides the strategic decisions taken at board level, the management of all day-to-day petfood activities in Europe is now coordinated through Provimi Pet Food's two main office locations:

- Budapest, Hungary—serving Central/Eastern Europe;
- Rotterdam, Netherlands—serving Western Europe.

Quality and safety

Part of the daily operations revolve around quality and ingredient safety. Bras points out that these are possibly even more important for a private label producer than for companies manufacturing their own petfood brands. In fact, a potential crisis like the 2007 US recalls has a doubly serious implication,

he believes.

First, such a recall involves multiple brands from several clients. Plus, it can badly affect a retailer's overall brand name, spreading the seed of doubt about the quality of all products in its stores, even non-petfood products. This can jeopardize the trust of both the retail

customer toward its supplier and the final consumer toward the retailer.

To prevent such a crisis, Provimi has developed an intensive global supplier auditing system, based on precise specifications and ranges of tolerance for several parameters. In addition to this focus on controlled qualitative selection of

“We want quality and production to be a little bit like cat and mouse.”

suppliers, Provimi has set up an internal auditing program of its many production facilities. The program includes the company's own standards and specifications, plus other industry quality standards such as ISO 9001 and HACCP.

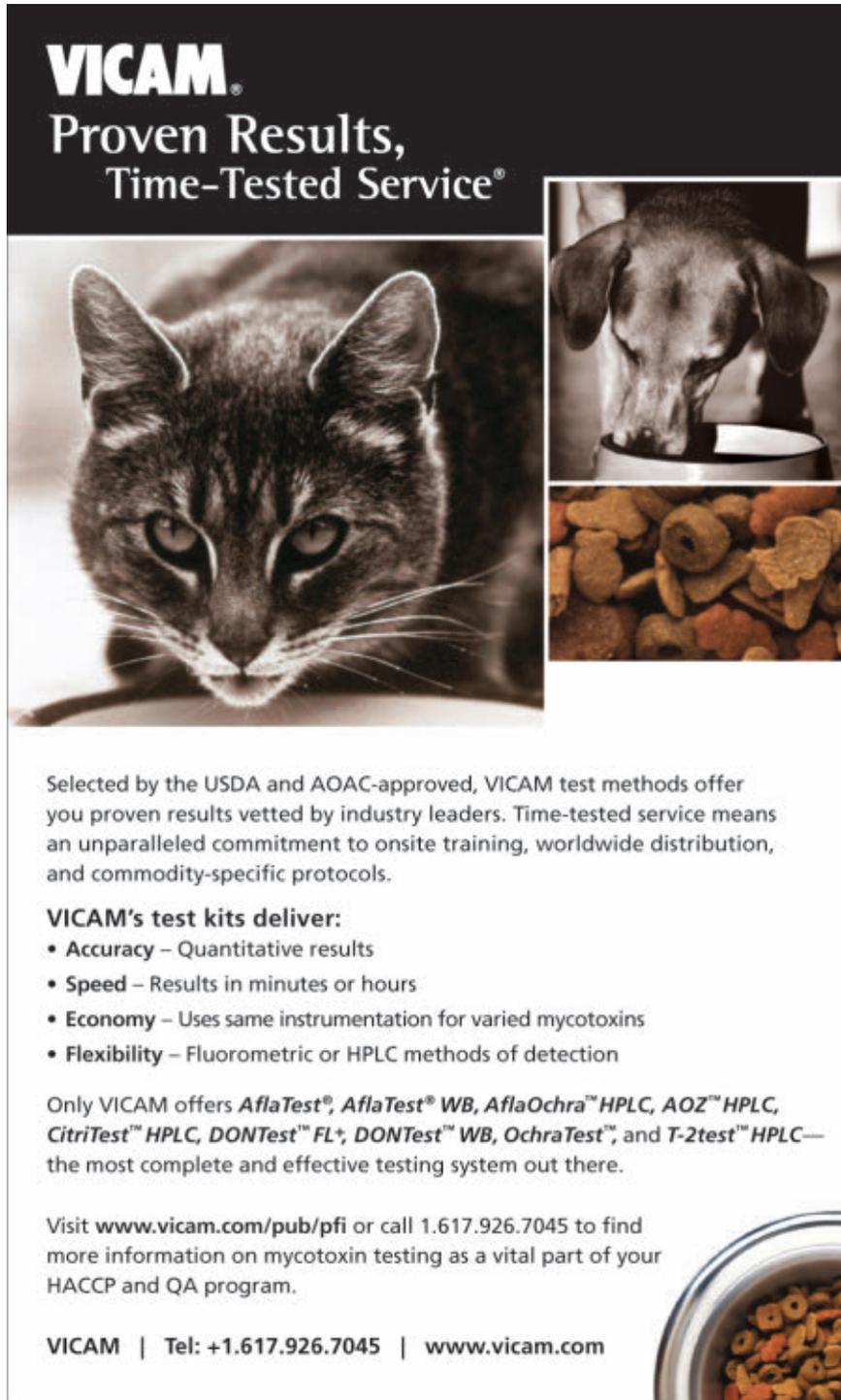
“We want quality and production to be a little bit like cat and mouse,” Bras says. He explains the quality department does not report to the individual plants; rather, the plants undergo regular quality audits by centralized staff.

Next up: more innovation

For the next year, the big challenge and effort for Provimi, according to Bras, will be to successfully complete the operational integration. This will allow the company to share in the expected increased market opportunities and emphasize aspects like innovation.

“When given more inputs from reliable suppliers,” Bras says, “I’m sure retailers would be sensitive and available to exploring new products instead of just following the market’s key players.” He adds he is confident the project will succeed and expects full benefits by the end of this year.

Stefania Pes is a consultant and writer for Mediatic (www.mediatic.it), a communications and marketing agency based in Italy serving the petfood and pet supplies industry.



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Natural Balance rebounds: 3 keys

After the recalls,
the company's high-tech
testing plan is working

BY TIM PHILLIPS, DVM

“We’ll be doing this until we die,” says Natural Balance’s president Joey Herrick about himself and his executive VP Frank Koch. He’s referring to providing a way for their customers to see the laboratory test results for all Natural Balance Pet Foods products.

Herrick points out that throughout the recalls of spring 2007, pet owners kept saying, “We don’t know what’s safe.” After a lot of work and expense finding the best testing methods for melamine and cyanuric acid, Herrick was confident Natural Balance had a system that would “allow us to sleep at nights.” But, he thought, how would their customers know the products are safe? That’s when Herrick decided to post test results on the Natural Balance website. Customers can now log on to see that the product batch they’re feeding has passed certain laboratory tests. The procedure is:

1. Log onto www.naturalbalanceinc.com.
2. Click on the “Buy with Confidence” banner.

3. Choose a dog or cat formula, for example, “Duck and Green Pea Formula Canned Cat Food-6 oz.”
4. Enter the product’s date code, for example, “10/10/2010.”

The results of the tests performed on that batch will then be displayed. The company will not ship any product until the batch has been “signed off on” as passing the required tests.

An unexpected bullet

After the recalls in March 2007, Natural Balance thought it had dodged

3 key factors

Natural Balance sales slowed after the recalls, but have since rebounded. The company attributes the recovery to three key factors:

- How it handled the recalls;
- Its sales force; and
- Its “Buy with Confidence” program.



Natural Balance customers can go online to see the test results for a particular batch of product.

a bullet because it did not use wheat gluten. Still, the company began setting up Natural Balance Laboratories (NB Labs) to screen for melamine and cyanuric acid. In mid-April, the company was stunned to find two Natural Balance products had been contaminated via rice protein laced with melamine and cyanuric acid. Fortunately the date codes affected represented only a truckload and a half. Nevertheless, Herrick decided to recall all date codes of the two affected SKUs so no contaminated products would remain on the shelves by mis-



Online extra!

Listen to a conversation with Natural Balance's president Joey Herrick and VP of marketing Frank Koch. Go to www.petfoodindustry.com/nb.aspx.

take. The company's sales force also kept their customers in the loop.

In dealing with problems stemming from Natural Balance products, the company's insurance policy allowed for coverage of either the purchase

price of the affected pet or the veterinary expenses involved—whichever is lowest. Often, the insurance company opted to pay for the value of the pet. Natural Balance dealt with these situations by giving their customers enough money to cover the veterinary expenses.

Taking the high-tech road

When the mystery of the 2007 pet-food recalls was apparently solved, Herrick looked for kits to test for melamine

Left: Natural Balance uses an integrated liquid chromatograph-mass spectrometer from Applied Biosystems.

Right: The company will not ship any product until the batch has been "signed off on" as passing the required tests.

and cyanuric acid. None were available. Happily by May 2007, Midwest Laboratories in Omaha, Nebraska, USA, had a way to test for these contaminants.

Around the same time, Natural



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We went flat and that lasted until September.

Balance hired research biochemist Ali Haghghi, PhD, to create the protocols at NB Labs for melamine and cyanuric acid testing, as well as oversee all lab testing procedures. The company also hired a quality control chemist to implement the testing procedures. By mid-August 2007, NB Labs was up and running.

NB Labs and Midwest Laboratories, their independent lab, use ELISA tests for aflatoxin and vomitoxin screening. To test for melamine and cyanuric acid, Midwest uses two different methods. One is liquid chromatography mass spectrometry and the second is a gas chromatograph fitted with a nitrogen-phosphorus detector.

NB Labs uses an integrated liquid chromatograph-mass spectrometer from Applied Biosystems (www.appliedbiosystems.com). Accuracy is ensured by periodic, independent verification by an outside laboratory. More details about the testing methods can be found by going to the test results page as previously described and clicking “Learn more about our testing.”

A big bounce

How did the recalls affect Natural Balance’s business? “We went flat and that lasted until September,” says Herrick. “Then we saw a strong rebound in growth.” He attributes the recovery to three key factors:

- How the company handled the recalls;
- Its sales force; and
- Its “Buy with Confidence” program.

The result? October and November 2007 were the best months in the history of the company. ●



NB Labs and Midwest use ELISA tests for mycotoxin screening.

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A functional petfood future

Exploring the imminent roles prebiotics and probiotics will play in the market

BY JESSICA TAYLOR BOND

Prebiotics and probiotics are viewed as a more natural, holistic way to ensure gastrointestinal health.

Consumer awareness of probiotics in human foods is currently high, with active culture dairy products the fastest growing food segment in the US. According to Simmons Market Research Bureau, nearly half (48%) of the dog- or cat-owning households in the US seek out natural or eco-friendly products for a total population of 25.1 million pet-owning households. As the natural, holistic and organic segments of petfood gain momentum, probiotics, prebiotics and synbiotics are becoming buzz words in our industry. But just how will they make petfood products function better?

It's all about immunity

Probiotics, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), are living organisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit. The “friendly bacteria” are typically non-GMO and are listed as Association of American Feed Control Officials approved as direct-fed microbials. Probiotics have three possible modes of action (Dolfe, 2000):

1. Generating immuno-stimulants;

2. Producing antimicrobial compounds;
3. Competitively excluding other bacteria.

Recent research suggests probiotic bacteria counter disease-causing bacteria in several ways, including

Strains of these bacteria selected as probiotics need to be evaluated for safety.

preventing pathogen colonization in the intestines by blocking binding sites, producing antimicrobials and organic acids and stimulating the immune response and enzyme activity. The process of “competitive exclusion”—when probiotic bacteria block binding sites—is one of the most consistent health claims associated with probiotic

bacteria observed in many animal species (Danielson, *et al.*, 1989; Newman and Jacques, 1995; Isolauri, 2001; Saavedra, 2001).

A strong immune system in animals starts with good gastrointestinal health since most of the immune system is located in the digestive tract. In turn, the immune system is affected by the natural intestinal bacterial microflora. Benefits of probiotics in general may include controlling enteritis in dogs, stimulating immune function in puppies, improved oral and fecal odor and overall skin and coat health.

MLF Biotech has developed Liv-Pro, an all-natural, multi-strain blend of live probiotics, to promote gastrointestinal health. Liv-Pro offers a blend of beneficial bacteria that colonizes different segments of the GI tract, according to the company. The supplement has been developed for dogs and cats and is a multi-strain blend of probiotics enhanced with functional ingredients.

Not just yummy in the tummy

Prebiotics that provide a stable complex carbohydrate for altering the gastrointestinal environment and enhancing immunity may soon offer so-

lutions to petfood processing systems. Prebiotics are defined as non-digestible food ingredients that beneficially affect the host by selectively stimulating the growth and/or activity of one or a limited number of bacteria in the colon, and thus improve host health. There are a number of trials that have examined the effects of prebiotics that increase the concentrations of lactic acid bacteria such as *Lactobacilli* or *Bifidobacteria*

company claims inulin and its long chained fractions are less soluble and ferment more slowly, allowing them to escape fermentation in the small intestine and make their way in to the animal's colon.

According to Orafti, depending on the nutritional focus and the physiological differences between dogs and cats, there may be a preference for either inulin or oligofructose or a combination

Focus on safety

To aid in the evaluation of safety of probiotics for humans, a working group of the FAO/WHO has provided a guidance report (Joint FAO/WHO Working Group Report, 2002). The safety assurance tests suggested by this report include, depending upon the species being tested:

- Determining antibiotic resistance patterns;
- Assessing certain metabolic activities;
- Assessing potential side-effects;
- Toxin production testing; and
- Determining potential hemolytic activity.

Examples of common direct-fed microbials are *Lactobacillae*, *Saccharomyces* sp., *Bifidobacterium* as well as the *Bacillus* sp. Strains of these bacteria selected as probiotics need to be evaluated for safety in each target species.

More advances to come

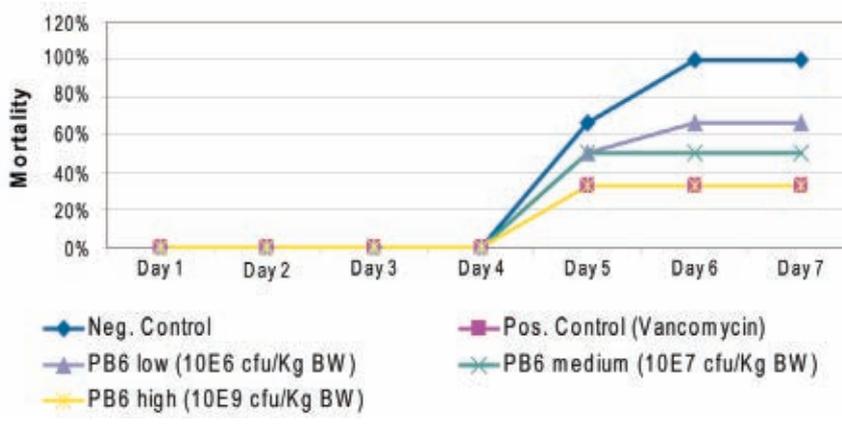
The number of studies demonstrating the benefits of probiotics and prebiotics in human and animal diets is continuously growing. The body of evidence showing direct beneficial effects in pets is also on the rise. Lines of direct fed microbials developed for premium and holistic petfoods are already being produced.

VDF FutureCeuticals recently introduced its LactiCeuticals line of probiotics, prebiotics and synbiotics. The LactiCeuticals line is based on strains of lactic-acid producing bacteria, alone or in combination with other functional ingredients. FutureCeuticals is a manufacturer of probiotic products and offers a variety of strains in different concentrations for all probiotic applications.

For functional food supplements to

Figure 1:
Certain probiotics have potent anti-*Clostridial* activity

A high therapeutic dose of *Bacillus subtilis* is as effective in controlling *Clostridium difficile* associated diarrhea (CDAD) as the antibiotic Vancomycin in hamsters with clindamycin induced CDAD (Peys, et al., 2005). Courtesy of Kemin Industries Inc.



(fructooligosaccharides—FOS) or inhibit pathogens, alter GI tract microbes and modulate immunity (mannan oligosaccharide—MOS).

FOS studies in cats have demonstrated concurrent increases in the beneficial bacteria and decreased concentrations of *E. coli* and *Clostridium perfringens* (Sparkes et al., 1998). Studies examining MOS in dog diets revealed improved digestibility, alterations in GI bacterial populations and improved immune parameters (Swanson et al., 2002; Zentek et al., 2002).

Orafti Animal Nutrition specializes in manufacturing functional prebiotic ingredients. Beneo is the brand name developed by Orafti to describe a range of inulin and oligofructose ingredients extracted from the chicory root. The

of both. Both products are available in high purity (neutral taste) and semi-refined (overall palatability whether sweet or bitter) forms.

Gourmetceuticals also offers prebiotic products meant to be utilized in animal feed and petfood. GLPH-1 is a polysaccharide extract from botanical yeast, *Candida utilis*, that has been shown in more than 20 clinical trials to boost immune function as a prebiotic/anti-inflammatory and stimulate white blood cells, according to the company. It has also been shown through clinical trials to reduce muscle degradation in both animal and human athletes. Prebiotic products like GLPH-1, when used with sport animals, can help reduce the muscle breakdown caused by strenuous exercise and activity.

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Products like GLPH-1 from Gourmetcueticals, when used with sport animals, can help reduce the muscle breakdown caused by strenuous exercise and activity.

really flourish, the process of petfood making may have to change. Because probiotics are living organisms, their stability through processing is an issue that needs to be addressed as extrusion/expansion processing will inactivate these biological products.

Kemin Industries Inc. offers a direct fed microbial for the petfood industry developed to withstand certain conditions associated with manufacturing

of pet treats and products. “Depending upon the process, Kemin’s proprietary strain of *Bacillus subtilis* has high survivability during manufacturing and while the product is on the shelf,” says Charlotte Jacobs, senior vice president of global marketing for Kemin petfood ingredients. “This probiotic is a spore forming bacteria that can withstand tableting in the manufacturing stage. It does not lose its potency while on the

shelf, and does not become active until it reaches the dog’s gut.”

Kemin’s proprietary strain of *Bacillus subtilis* has been demonstrated to support a healthy gut in monogastrics. [Adapted from Vandekerckhove, *et al.* (2006) Kemin Technical Publication BB-06-0093]. Kemin’s proprietary strain of *Bacillus subtilis* has also been shown to produce antibacterial agents surfactin A and surfactin B. Controlled tests on hamsters showed the proprietary strain to be as effective in controlling *Clostridium difficile* associated diarrhea (CDAD) as the antibiotic Vancomycin (see Figure 1, p.33).

Because probiotics are living organisms, their stability through processing is an issue that needs to be addressed.

“The benefits of direct fed microbials like Kemin’s proprietary *Bacillus subtilis* strain, are potentially unlimited,” says Giuseppe Abrate, president of the Kemin petfood ingredient business.

Further studies are needed, but many of the initial studies demonstrating the benefits of direct fed microbials in companion animals are promising. Probiotics that are all-natural and non-GMO have great potential to serve as gastrointestinal health aids that are consistent with the current demand for natural and holistic petfoods. ●



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Scheduled for April 14-16 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare near Chicago, Illinois, USA, Petfood Forum provides face-to-face contact with your industry peers and suppliers, along with experts on petfood marketing, production, regulatory issues and nutrition. Last year, the three general sessions proved to be

Registration link

To register online for Petfood Forum 2008 and Petfood Focus on Safety, go to www.petfoodindustry.com/petfoodforum.aspx

popular, so on Wednesday, April 16, three panel discussions will provide exclusive insights from:

- ▶ Petfood company executives;
- ▶ Pet retailing decision-makers; and
- ▶ New product development experts.

Petfood Forum 2008 is immediately followed on April 16-17 by Petfood Focus on Safety, a comprehensive, in-depth educational program on one of the greatest challenges our industry faces.

List of exhibitors

For a list of Petfood Forum 2008 exhibitors, go to www.petfoodindustry.com/exhibit.aspx

Here is the most accurate and up-to-date scheduling, topic and speaker information available at press time. More information will appear in the March issue. For regular updates, bookmark www.petfoodindustry.com/petfoodforum/aspx. If you have specific questions, contact Nancy Grossnickle (attendees) at E-mail: ngrossnickle@wattnet.net; Tel: +1.815.734.5674 or Ginny Stadel (exhibitors) at E-mail: gstadel@wattnet.net; Tel: +1.815.734.5691.

Sessions in the same time slot are concurrent. ●

Petfood Forum 2008



Monday, April 14

1:00-7:30 pm Registration

5:30-7:30 pm Reception

Tuesday, April 15

7:00-8:00 am Breakfast

8:00-8:40 am

Complementary technologies: Professor Jean Bouvier, on behalf of Clextral, examines the advantages and disadvantages of both single and twin screw extruders.

Inulin and weight loss: John Lowe, PhD, Tuttons Hill Nutrition, explains the role of inulin, a prebiotic dietary fiber, in achieving weight loss. He will also touch on other benefits.

8:45-9:25 am

Fallout from the recalls: David Lummis of Packaged Facts examines changes in the industry stemming from the spring 2007 recalls—in particular the surge in natural and organic petfoods.

Custodial care of ingredients: Ed Mareth of 3D Corporate Solutions covers how to source

Petfood Focus on Safety



Wednesday, April 16

1:00-3:00 pm Registration

3:00-3:40 pm

Good purchasing practices: Dr. David Rosenblatt, PDCA Training Solutions, covers what it takes to

wholesome, high-quality ingredients for the finest petfoods and treats.

9:00 am-7:30 pm
Exhibits open

9:30-10:10 am Break

10:15-10:55 am

New product launches: A market research specialist will highlight some of the most interesting new petfood product launches in 2007.

US regulatory report: Dave Syverson, chair of the Pet Food Committee for the Association of American Feed Control Officials, will explain recent regulatory progress and look at the year ahead.

11:00-11:40 am

The natural and organic markets: Brian Connolly, pack leader at Castor & Pollux Pet Works, will discuss the company's nominations for various Petco awards and its explosive growth.

Nutritional management of canine hip dysplasia: Gail K. Smith, VMD, PhD, professor of orthopedic surgery at the University of Pennsylvania, shares his insights on the prevention and treatment of canine hip dysplasia.

11:45 am-1:00 pm Lunch

1:00-1:40 pm

Preventing brand theft: Peter Gabriele, Armark Authentication Technologies, covers petfood defense steps, including anti-counterfeit tags and detection devices.

Treat palatability: Aurelie de Ratuld, PhD, SPF's R&D manager for wet petfood and treats, examines use of palatability enhancers and testing protocols for different kinds of treats.

1:45-2:25 pm

Sustainability and carbon footprints: Colin Mair, Cormal Technology, explains that for regulatory and financial reasons, sustainability is a concept petfood manufacturers cannot afford to ignore.

Can raw petfoods prevent cancer?: Dr. Ian Billinghurst, founder of BARF Australia, presents his theory on what drives neoplasia in companion animals, along with possible solutions for preventing it.

2:30-3:10 pm Break

3:15-3:55 pm

Private label petfoods—a global status report: Lee Linthicum of Euromonitor International highlights the importance of private label petfoods in regions of the world.

EU regulatory update: Thomas Meyer, secretary general of the European petfood trade association (FEDIAF), updates what's happening on the European regulatory scene.

4:00-4:40 pm

Petfood safety systems: Dr. David Rosenblatt, PDCA Training Solutions, will explore how to implement state-of-the-art petfood safety and quality management systems.

Emerging ingredient trends: Euromonitor's Lee Linthicum looks at the petfood ingredients that are rising in popularity, including organic, reliably safe, specialized and functional ingredients.

5:00-7:00 pm Reception

Wednesday, April 16

7:00-8:00 am Breakfast

7:30-10:30 am
Exhibits open
General sessions

8:00-9:30 am

Executive roundtable: Decision makers from four petfood companies share their insights on the petfood industry today and tomorrow.

9:30-10:10 am Break

10:15-10:55 am

Pet retailers speak: Executives representing various petfood retailers discuss consumer wants and needs from the pet retailing perspective.

11:00-11:40 am

New product development ideas: A diverse group of experts analyze what it takes to make new product development successful.

11:45 am-2:00 pm Luncheon

make wise and safe petfood ingredient purchases.

3:40-4:20 pm

Introducing ISO 22000: Mark Ames, member of the American Society for Quality, details ISO 22000, the world's most advanced food safety management system.

4:20-4:50 pm Break

4:50-5:30 pm

Adverse event reporting and preferred vendors: Bill Bookout, president of the National Animal Supplement Council, discusses ideas

his group has implemented aimed at preventing disaster.

5:30-6:30 pm Reception

Thursday, April 19

7:00-8:00 am Breakfast

8:00-8:40 am

Crisis contingency planning: Bill Thornton, a lawyer and quality expert, talks about the best ways to prepare for a crisis—practice.

8:40-9:20 am

Case study—Natural Balance: How this petfood company handled

its recalls and instituted a "buy with confidence" program.

9:20-10:00 am Break

10:00-10:30 am

Finding the right insurance: What will your insurance policy cover? The answer may be less than you expect.

10:30-11:30 am

Consumer connections roundtable: Petfood safety perspectives from a veterinarian, a blogger, a petfood retailer and a pet owner.

Recall update: regulatory changes

Recent US activity focuses on ingredient and manufacturing safety

BY DAVID A. DZANIS, DVM, PhD, DACVN



David Dzanis,
DVM, PhD, DACVN

The events surrounding the contamination of petfoods and subsequent animal deaths in spring 2007 have focused public attention on how these products are regulated in the US. Clearly, the bulk of the regulatory activity

in 2007 focused on manufacturing and ingredient safety rather than labeling matters, a pattern likely to be continued this year. While most of these projects were in the works prior to the massive recall, they are timely in regard to the situation.

FDA addresses gap

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been working for the past five years on its Animal Feed Safety System (AFSS), described as a comprehensive, risked-based approach to helping ensure the safety of animal feeds and petfoods to protect animal and public health (www.fda.gov/cvm/afss.htm). I have discussed aspects of AFSS in past "Petfood Insights" columns (see November 2006 and August 2007).

In its AFSS draft framework docu-

ment, FDA has identified a number of gaps in protection under current feed safety programs. Recently, a major step has been taken to address at least one of these gaps: namely, the inability of FDA to formally recognize a list of acceptable feed ingredients beyond its relatively short compilation of codified food additives and GRAS (generally recognized as safe) substances.

A memorandum of understanding between FDA and the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) gives FDA more direct control of the AAFCO Feed Ingredient Definition process (see www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/98fr/fda225-07-7001-mou0001.pdf). This means FDA

has the final say on most animal feed and petfood ingredient issues, which reportedly will allow the agency to formally recognize the AAFCO list and take enforcement actions against products containing non-compliant ingredients on that basis. (For an in-depth report, see my January 2008 column.)

Response to recalls

In response to last year's recalls, the US Congress enacted the Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007 (FDAAA). Only a small part of the act deals with petfood issues, and the bulk of that pertains to safety (see www.fda.gov/oc/initiatives/hr3580.pdf).

The new law requires FDA to im-



From late 2007 and into this year, several regulatory changes are addressing safety in petfood manufacturing.

prove its capabilities in dealing with a contamination incident, including how it cooperates with state regulators and how it communicates details of the incident to the public. The petfood industry also bears increased responsibility: Under the new law, companies will have to be part of a reportable food registry, in which they must rapidly investigate and report to FDA on contamination incidents stemming from their facilities.

Under the new FDAAA, the petfood industry also bears increased responsibility.

FDAAA also requires FDA to consult with AAFCO and other stakeholders to develop new ingredient, processing and labeling standards for petfoods. Historically, federal regulations have covered only basic labeling requirements, with many aspects (nutritional adequacy, nutrient content) left to AAFCO and state regulatory agencies. This may change, but it will take some time (FDA has until September 2009 to comply with the law).

With respect to ingredient standards, perhaps the memorandum of understanding between FDA and AAFCO regarding the Feed Ingredient Definition process will be sufficient. Regarding processing standards, establishment of federal good manufacturing practices—for all feeds and petfoods,

Find it online

This article takes the place of Dr. Dzanis' regular column, "Petfood Insights," for this issue. You can read the entire library of his columns at www.petfoodindustry.com/insights.

not just medicated feeds and low-acid canned foods—may be on the horizon. (For more information on FDAAA, see my December 2007 column.)

AAFCO weighs in

Within AAFCO, most of the activity concerning petfood takes place

within the Pet Food Committee. Perhaps the most controversial labeling issue currently before the committee is the proposed changes to PF9, which would require, among other things, mandatory calorie content statements on all dog and cat food labels.

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of Veterinary Nutrition, I submitted the proposal in 2005, and it has generated lively discussion over the past few committee meetings. At press time, the committee is awaiting a consensus recommendation from the Calorie Statement Working Group (comprised of three regulators and three non-voting

advisors, including me) before taking further action.

Other items of consequence before the Pet Food Committee deal with labeling education rather than changes to the labeling regulations themselves. The committee has recently drafted an update to its *AAFCO Pet Food and*

More scrutiny from and for state officials?

It is just a personal impression, but it appears a number of state feed control officials are reviewing petfood labels with renewed enthusiasm and rigor. In particular, ingredient declarations that do not wholly conform to AAFCO terminology seem to be called into question with increased regularity. Apparently this is at least in part due to the 2007 petfood recalls.

Personal communications with some feed control officials reveal that they are themselves under heightened scrutiny from the public. As designated protectors of consumers and their animals, the regulators do not want to appear overly permissive to industry.

Recent objections from states have included issues resolved by implicit consensus years ago—for example, “no by-products” claims as well as, grouping of vitamins and minerals in ingredient lists. The result is that it may prove more difficult to register products in some states this year than has been the case in recent history.

Specialty Pet Food Labeling Guide, which should be released soon (check www.aafco.org). This publication, sold separately from the AAFCO Official Publication, helps explain and interpret the Model Pet Food and Specialty Pet Food Regulations for both regulators and the industry. The committee is also planning a Pet Food Regulatory Workshop to be held in conjunction with the AAFCO annual meeting this August.

Finally, the Pet Food Committee has charged an expert panel with revising the AAFCO Dog and Cat Food Nutrient Profiles and feeding trial protocols to reflect new information, particularly from the National Research Council's 2006 publication *Nutrient Requirements of Dogs and Cats*. While the panel has not announced any significant progress to date, hopefully it will make some recommendations this year.

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Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel
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More updates from AAFCO committees

Other committees have also addressed petfood matters:

- After many years of discussion with the Pet Food Committee, the Model Bill & Regulations Committee (MBRC) has finally approved and forwarded Policy Statement 29. This would allow for educational label statements on nutrient content of ingredients without prompting the need for supporting guarantees. It will soon be voted on by the AAFCO board of directors and membership.
- The MBRC has also recently revised the net quantity statement regulations to better reflect the requirements under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act.
- The MBRC's primary focus of late has been on safety issues—such as drafting of the Non-Commercial Model Bill—and “housecleaning” matters, such as gender neutralization of the Model Bill.
- The Feed Labeling Committee is making progress on al-

A new agreement with AAFCO means FDA has the final say on most animal feed and petfood ingredient issues.

lowing for carbohydrate-related label claims, including acceptance of new definitions for certain listed ingredients: starch, sugars and fructans. This action should eventually allow for claims such as “less ___” and “low ___.”

- The Feed Manufacturing Committee has finished its work on the AAFCO Model Good Manufacturing Regulations for Feed and Feed Ingredients. It now goes to the MBRC for further deliberation. If passed, this initiative will allow regulators increased ability to look at process control in determining potential adulteration versus just looking at the final product for evidence of adulteration.

Redefining wheat gluten and rice protein?

Finally, the Ingredient Definitions Committee will be discussing common petfood ingredients such as wheat gluten and rice protein concentrate. Neither is presently defined by AAFCO, but rather derived from a combination of a common or usual name and AAFCO-defined feed terms. Since both ingredients were implicated in last year's recalls, the prudence of allowing this type of constructed name is being questioned. ●

Dr. Dzanis is a writer and independent consultant for the petfood and animal feed industries on nutrition, labeling and regulation. Contact him at Tel: +1.661.251.3543, Fax: +1.661.251.3203, E-mail: dzanis@aol.com.

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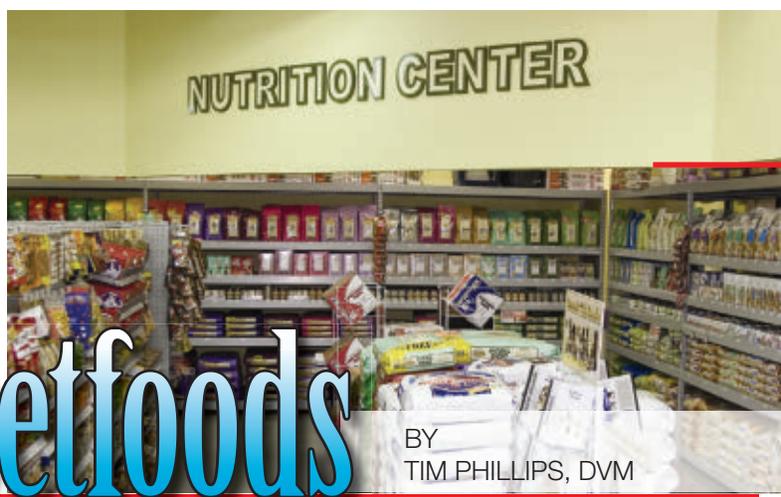
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Petland on petfoods

BY
TIM PHILLIPS, DVM

Executives predict the future and talk recalls

Sales of pets are half of Petland's total business. The franchise chain places over 50,000 puppies per year. But recently Petland has been focusing on increasing sales of petfoods and other consumable products. Petfood sales account for about 12% of Petland's total sales, while at Petsmart and Petco, petfood sales are 50% of the total.

I recently visited Petland's corporate headquarters in Chillicothe, Ohio, USA, where I had a chance to talk with some of the executives there, and then follow up with more questions. Here's some of what they had to say.

Petfood predictions

Tony Neff, Petland's director of merchandising services, predicts the petfood industry will continue to see growth equal to the increase in the household popularity of dogs and cats. "That growth," he says, "will trend toward natural, holistic and organic formulas as knowledgeable consumers spare no expense in providing the very best nutrition for their beloved pets."

Neff sees one of Petland's biggest challenges as growing sales in its Nutrition Centers by consistently educating and training their pet counselors, and subsequently customers. "Since we cannot compete with the chain retailers on price," he says, "our market advantage is consumer influence and interaction at the point of sale. Our value equation for the consumer is our knowledge of nutrition and our ability to impart that knowledge effectively everyday."

Joe Watson, vice president of retail operations, sees Petland's in-store Nutrition Centers as a major accomplishment. He says they are "committed to delivering a strategic mix of high-quality dog and cat foods in a footprint smaller and more compact than our competitors." He points out that their new-mix Nutrition Centers feature life stage, breed-specific and solution-based products that complement one another in uniqueness. "We do not compete on depth, breadth and price," says Watson. "Our specialty is to exceed customers' expectations through education and the one-on-one interface."

Reactions to recalls

The cultural curve toward the humanization of pets is a phenomenon that started with superpremium foods in the 1980s,

according to Neff. "Today, the word superpremium still stands for better-than-before," he notes, "but the end products are far more sophisticated."

"The recalls stunned the superpremium petfood buyer who has traditionally paid more to receive a higher level of nutrition

The Disneyland of pet stores

"I saw what Walt Disney did for the crummy amusement park scene," says Ed Kunzleman, Petland's founder. "I wanted to do the same for the pet store scene, and that's why we called it Petland, like Disneyland." That's the way it was 40 years ago when Disneyland inspired Kunzleman to reinvent the pet store.

The first Petland store opened in 1967 in Chillicothe, Ohio, USA. Now there are over 200 locations striving to be bright and sparkling-clean—and the provider of pets, pet supplies and pet education throughout the world.

Following are people I communicated with at Petland and some of what they had to say.



"The recalls stunned the superpremium petfood buyer."—Tony Neff, director of merchandising services.



"More weight has been placed on Petland stores getting involved with local communities."—Julie Washburn, public relations and community service coordinator.



"Petland stores enjoy a market advantage based upon three key differentiators."—Joe Watson, vice president of retail operations.



"We attract consumers because we are fun. We are fun because we have pets."—Frank Difatta, president of Petland.

Top left: Petland in Bradenton, Florida, USA, is one of more than 200 Petland locations across the United States, Canada, Japan, Chile and South Africa.

Top right: In-store Nutrition Centers at Petland give pet lovers a unique mix of high-quality dog and cat foods to choose from.

for their pet,” says Neff. He notes that many were disappointed to learn about ingredient sourcing problems. They wondered why they “paid more and got less sophistication.” He says it was a wake-up call that now causes consumers to read more labels, ask more questions and seek more natural, home-grown ingredients—and yes, to pay even more to offer the very best to their pets.

“The negative impact of the recalls on sales, store traffic and image was brief and minimal,” asserts Julie Washburn, Petland’s public relations and community service coordinator. “More often than not, the educated consumer seeks only the truth. Reassurance and trust are easy when you have the current answers and the alternative brands,” says Washburn. “Petfood sales today have never been stronger at Petland.”

Petland’s advantages

“Petland stores enjoy a market advantage based upon three key differentiators: our pets, our pet counselors and our store presentation,” according to Watson.

Petland’s president, Frank Difatta, thinks the future for Petland is bright because of its differentiation from the generally “pet-less” chain store concept. “While other pet specialty formats strive to look, act and price alike,” says Difatta, “Petland stores stand alone as exciting destinations for both browsers and buyers. We attract consumers because we are fun. We are fun because we have pets.

“Petland’s mission everyday,” says Difatta, “is to match the right pet with the right customer and meet the needs of both. We are dedicated to enhancing our customers’ knowledge and enjoyment of the human-animal bond.” ●

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Rice bran: filler or functional fiber?

A common claim in marketing petfoods has been the statement “no fillers.” The connotation of the filler has been that of chaff and other inert fractions that occur during the milling process; fractions such as bran, middlings and hulls were figuratively and often literally swept up into one bucket. The challenge, as we learn more about the beneficial effects of various fiber fractions, is that some of these so-called fillers may actually be positive additions to pet diets.

Producing rice bran

In the multi-step milling process to produce polished rice (table rice), the fibrous silica containing hull is first removed from rough rice, leaving brown rice. The color designation merely describes the bran layer, which is not insignificant: about 8-10% of the rice.

The next step is polishing, where the bran is removed from the rice kernel by grinding and sifting. The result is polished rice and rice bran. The rice bran contains 13-17% protein, 9.5-13% crude fiber, 9-11.5% ash and a whopping 17-23% fat. Additional processing is required to keep the rice bran from deteriorating, due in part to this exceptional level and the type of fat.

Deterioration by lipase (enzymes that degrade fat) begins once the seed coat is breached. Lipase hydrolyzes or cleaves individual fatty acids from the

Some so-called fillers may actually be positive additions to pet diets.

— Greg Aldrich



triglycerides, a process known as hydrolytic rancidity. This proliferation of free fatty acids increases the potential for rapid oxidation, which is further exaggerated by the high proportion of polyunsaturated fatty acids found in the rice bran. The net outcome is decreased palatability and feeding value. At the extreme, the oxidation can even lead to fire hazards due to spontaneous combustion. Thus, rice bran must be stabilized to make it commercially viable.

How to stabilize

Since the offending lipase is a protein, methods to stabilize rice bran depend on a chemical or thermal process to denature the enzyme and eliminate its hydrolytic activity. Several processes have been developed:

- The production of parboiled rice bran (PRB) exposes brown rice to a specialized steam cooking method, followed by separation of the bran from the kernel in milling.
- With stabilized rice bran (SRB), immediately following removal from the kernel, the bran is rapidly cooked in an expeller or extruder to inactivate the lipase. Some applications may also add acids or processing aids to help destroy the enzymes and stabi-

lize the fat. The composition of the resulting material is much the same as the starting material, with a fat content around 20% and protein about 14%.

- To process extracted rice bran (ERB), an organic solvent like hexane removes the non-polar lipids from the bran, resulting in a crude oil and defatted rice bran. Due to the lower fat content and the chemical-thermal denaturation of the lipase enzymes, ERB is more stable. The removal of the fat (to about 1-2%) results in a bran with a protein content of about 16%.

Nutrient considerations

On a protein basis, the amino acid composition of rice bran is well balanced. Methionine-cysteine and tryptophan are likely the first or second limiting amino acids for the cat and dog. Polyunsaturated fatty acids comprise more than one-third of the fat, nearly all from linoleic acid and a pinch from linolenic acid (~1.0%). The remainder is predominately monounsaturated oleic acid.

Total dietary fiber ranges from 25-35%, which is about half that of beet pulp. The soluble fiber fraction has been reported in the range of 2-14%.

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This compares well with other fermentable fibers. Extruding diets containing rice bran is similar to that for other types of fiber; however, it has been reported that harsh extremes in extrusion processing can decrease the soluble fiber component.

Rice bran is rich in phosphorus, potassium and manganese. It also carries a fairly high amount of ash (>10%) and magnesium, which can be an issue when formulating cat diets. PRB and SRB especially are known for their high content of tocopherols and tocotrienols, a nutraceutical antioxidant compound known as gamma-oryzanol and phytosterols such as β -sitosterol, campesterol and stigmasterol. The latter have been implicated in preventing cancer and reducing cholesterol in laboratory animals and humans.

But is it tasty?

Producers of rice bran state it has a light nutty flavor, and it has been well accepted in dog and cat palatability testing; however, some differences may exist between rice bran types. Spears *et al.* (2004) reported that at 12% of the diet, the palatability of SRB was preferred >2:1 over ERB by dogs.

A series by Sunvold *et al.* (1995) reported *in vitro* digestibility of rice bran in dog and cat fecal inoculum to be slightly better than that of beet pulp; fermentation was comparable. Other research shows rice bran (10-12% of the diet) does not negatively impact intestinal viscosity or diet digestibility.

Rice bran has a well balanced mix of amino acids and contributes to fatty acid and antioxidant nutrition. Also, there has been a substantial investment in engineering and commercial development to ensure a stable ingredient supply. Rice bran seems to go well beyond the definition of a filler. ●

Dr. Greg Aldrich is president of Pet Food & Ingredient Technology Inc., which facilitates innovations in foods and ingredients for companion animals. Tel: +1.785.271.0238, E-mail: aldrich4@cox.net.

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Research Notes

Effects of CLA and fiber on body fat

Feeding mice conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) reduces body fat. Soluble fiber decreases apparent lipid digestibility. This study examined whether a combination of dietary CLA and soluble fiber would further decrease

the proportion of body fat than a diet with CLA alone.

Researchers fed mice diets with CLA and different amounts of Nutrim, containing 10% soluble fiber. CLA was added to the control diet at the expense of high oleic acid sunflower oil (HOSF) component.

Nutrim was added at the expense of isonenergetic combination of starch, dextrose and cellulose. The diets were fed for 28 days.

Weight gain after 28 days was less in CLA-fed animals than in HOSF-fed animals. Both CLA and Nutrim increased the body water content. CLA reduced total body fat and epididymal fat but Nutrim did not. No interaction of CLA and fiber was detected. Therefore researchers concluded that under the present experimental conditions dietary CLA and fiber do not interact to reduce body fat deposition.

Source: M. Javadi, *et al.*, 2007. *J Anim. Physiology and Nutr.* 91: 492-497.

Key Concepts

► **Effects of CLA and fiber on body fat**

(Javadi, 2007): Feeding a combination of dietary CLA and soluble fiber did not further decrease the proportion of body fat than did a diet with CLA alone.

► **Effect of packaging on vitamin content**

(Saffert, 2007): Comparing clear to pigmented PET bottles, the vitamin retention in all pigmented bottles was significantly higher.

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Effect of packaging on vitamin content

Pasteurized whole milk (3% fat) was stored under fluorescent light at 8°C in clear one liter polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles and three variants of pigmented PET bottles with different light transmittance. Changes in the vitamin content were monitored over a period of 10 days.

Milk packed in pigmented PET bottles with the lowest light transmittance, which was stored in the dark under the same experimental conditions, served as the control sample. Data were obtained for vitamin A (retinol), vitamin B2 (riboflavin) and vitamin B12 (cobalamin) content. Standard plate counts were determined to ensure an acceptable microbiological status of the pasteurized milk during the sampling period.

More Research Notes available online!

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In clear PET bottles a reduction of 22% of the initial content was observed for vitamin A and 33% for vitamin B2, while the vitamin B12 content remained almost stable. In all pigmented PET bottles the vitamin retention was significantly higher; the losses were 0-6% for vitamin A and 11-20% for vitamin B2, depending on the pigmentation level, compared to 6% for vitamin A and no significant loss for vitamin B2 in the control sample. An impact of the package light transmittance on the vitamin B12 content could not be observed.

Source: A. Saffert, *et al.*, 2007. Tetra Pak GmbH, International Packaging Research Laboratories, Untere Waldplätze 27, 70569 Stuttgart, Germany.

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Product News

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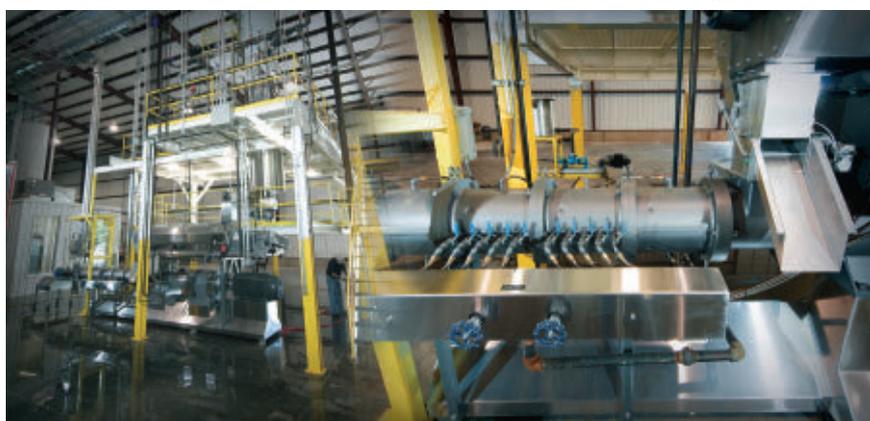
Ropak Packaging's photorealistic

wrap-around-the-corner graphics are now available on Ropak rigid plastic containers in an expanded range of

shapes and sizes for the US and Canadian markets. The In-Mold Label (IML) decorated containers are available in the patented, rectangular EZ Stor line in ¼ gallon, 2 gallon and 3.7 gallon sizes.



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IML decoration will be available for an expanded product range soon. According to the company, the EZ Stor format allows convenient access to products, spotlights branding and functions as a shipping container and a reusable, recyclable storage container.

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Rotary airlock protection

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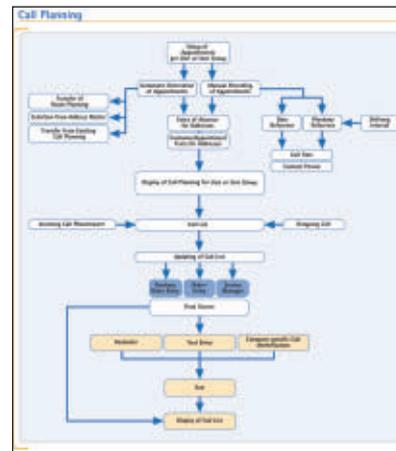
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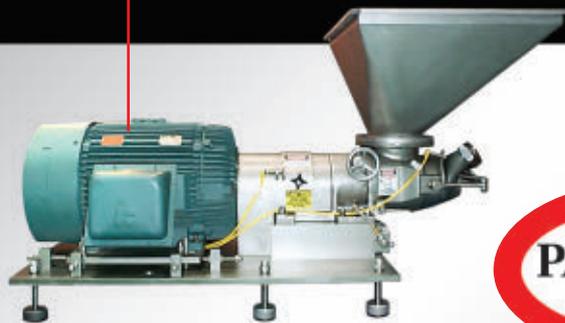
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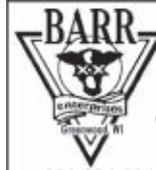


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Bruce Plantz, Vice President, Director of Content
bplantz@wattnet.net

EDITORIAL STAFF

Debbie Phillips-Donaldson, Editor-in-Chief
dphillips@wattnet.net

Tim Phillips, DVM, Editor
tphillips@wattnet.net

Jessica Taylor Bond, Associate Editor
jbond@wattnet.net

Candi Teachman, Art Director

EDITORIAL & SALES OFFICE

PETFOOD INDUSTRY, 303 N. Main St., Ste. 500,
Rockford, Illinois 61101-1018 USA. Tel: +1.815.734.4171,
Fax: 1.815.734.5649 (Editorial), 1.815.968.0941 (Sales).

Steve Akins, Publisher

sakins@wattnet.net
Tel: +1.919.387.7961, Mobile: +1.815.209.6444

USA ADVERTISING SALES

Michelle Adams, Sales Manager
madams@wattnet.net
Tel: +1.815.734.5603

Ginny Stadel, Sales Associate
gstadel@wattnet.net
Tel: +1.815.734.5691

INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING SALES

Tineke van Spanje, European Regional Sales Manager
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Tel: +31.495.526155, Fax: +31.495.525126

Ding Ding Li (CHINA only)
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PUBLISHING SERVICES

James Wessel, Circulation Director
For subscriptions, address changes, past copies—
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Robert Portillo, Production Manager
For advertising material, deadlines and processing—
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SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES/ CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Contact the Circulation Department at 303 N. Main St., Ste.
500, Rockford, Illinois 61101-1018 USA. Tel: +1.815.734.4171;
Fax: +1.815.968.0513; E-mail: jwessel@wattnet.net.

Subscription print edition prices: USA \$84.00/yr, Canada
\$102.00/yr, Outside USA & Canada via Airmail \$144.00/yr;
\$14.00 per copy unless marked. Digital edition sent by email:
\$36.00/yr. Prices in US dollars. Business or occupation
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All eyes on the FDA

After the massive petfood recalls hit the US market last year, many fingers—at least those belonging to members of the US Congress, consumers and the media—were pointed at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Why wasn't the agency inspecting all imported materials before they entered the country? Why weren't all US petfood plants inspected regularly?

Industry professionals know petfood safety is not so simple, nor does the responsibility lie with just one agency. In the US, other organizations—such as the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), state regulators, the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA), among others—play a major role. And of course, the industry itself is largely responsible for its products safety.

But after several other categories of products imported from China, such as seafood and toys, were recalled last year, the focus on the FDA ratcheted up dramatically.

Results to date

As Dr. Stephen Sundlof, then director of the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine, stated last fall, the petfood recall situation morphed into an overall food safety issue and the "China issue." At one point, 13 new federal bills were being considered by the US Congress. President George Bush created a new post, assistant commissioner for food protection (filled by Dr. David Acheson), within the FDA and directed the secretary of Human and Health Services (HHS) to immediately form an import safety task force.

This flurry of activity has already generated several outcomes:

- ▶ In September the Food and Drug

Will all the new laws and initiatives really make a difference?

— Debbie Phillips-Donaldson



Administration Amendments Act (FDAAA) was passed, requiring new petfood safety systems and measures. (For a thorough discussion, see Dave Dzanis' December "Petfood Insights" column at www.petfoodindustry.com/FDAAA.)

- ▶ One segment of the FDAAA calls for new petfood ingredient, processing and labeling standards. Last month the FDA announced it would soon hold a meeting with key stakeholders—such as AAFCO, AFIA, veterinarian associations and petfood manufacturers—to obtain input. (As of press time, no date had been set.)
- ▶ In November HHS secretary Mike Leavitt announced the Food Protection Plan, which proposes the FDA use science and a risk-based approach to ensure the safety of domestic and imported foods (www.hhs.gov/news/press/2007pres/11/pr20071106a.html).
- ▶ In December the US signed a food and drug safety agreement with China to give American inspectors access to Chinese factories (see p. 8 of this issue).

Show me the money

Considering how long it usually takes for new laws and government initiatives to happen, these events are encouraging. But unless the FDA receives more funding, will these or other outcomes really make a difference?

According to *USA Today*, half of the agency's additional 12% in food safety funding for this year will go to annual cost increases like pay raises, while the other half won't be available until July, subject to Congressional approval of a performance plan. (See www.usatoday.com/money/industries/food/2007-12-18-fda-food-safety_n.htm.)

Meanwhile, an advisory group from the food and drug industries reported the inadequate funding, among other factors, was diminishing the FDA's scientific capabilities, according to www.nature.com. Given its additional food safety mandates, its funding needs to be at least doubled, these experts said.

With this being a major election year in the US—and none of the candidates for any office have food safety on their platforms—it's difficult to believe the government will put its money where its mouth is any time soon. ●

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