Contamination of Pet Food and Treats Must Not Be an Afterthought for Owners, Veterinarians
Featured at 2014 ACVIM Forum, June 4-7 Nashville, Tennessee

(Denver, Colo.) While pet food and treat manufacturing practices can play a major role in pathogen control, these are rarely considered by veterinarians and owners, says Scott Weese, DVM, DACVIM, of the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

Weese, a veterinary internist and microbiologist, notes that while it is reasonable to assume that animal-based products pose a greater risk than other products in pet food, numerous large fruit and vegetable foodborne disease outbreaks in humans “clearly indicate that the risk is not only with meat products.”

Contaminants in pet food and treats can be introduced, he says, by palatability enhancers added after the product is cooked, and via manufacturing equipment and post-manufacture storage.

A variety of preventive measures by manufacturers can prevent contamination, Weese says. But the key to keeping these products safe falls on pet owners, too. “While consumers do not have a direct influence on food safety practices in products they purchase, increasing literacy in food preparation and food safety and questioning manufacturers may help increase transparency and drive change if manufacturers realize that consumers will make purchase decisions based on perceptions of food safety,” Weese emphasizes.

But the contamination threat isn’t totally in the manufacturing phase, either. Owners must be vigilant about pet food storage within the home, making certain that the dry food container lid is tightly fitted at all times, adds the veterinarian.

On Thursday, June 5, Dr. Weese will address veterinarians and the media on “Pathogen Contamination of Pet Food and Treats” and “Consequences of Pathogen Contamination of Pet Food & Treats,” at the 2014 ACVIM Forum located at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville.

Media Note: Accredited members of the media may attend the 2014 ACVIM Forum at no charge. However, you are required to register with the ACVIM. For media registration, please fill out a registration form or contact Laurie Nelson at Laurie@ACVIM.org or 303.231.9933.

On-site Press Room
Location: Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center
Hours:
Wednesday June 4, 2:00–5:00 pm
Thursday June 5, 8:00 am–5:00 pm
Friday June 6, 12:00–5:00 pm
Saturday June 7, 8:00 am–12:00 pm

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The ACVIM hosts the ACVIM Forum, an annual continuing education meeting where cutting-edge information, technology and research abstracts are showcased for the veterinary community. More than 3,000 veterinary specialists, veterinarians, technicians and students attend.

The ACVIM is the certifying organization for veterinary specialists in cardiology, large animal internal medicine, neurology, oncology and small animal internal medicine.

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