

TRAINING PRESENTATION

special REPORT

Pet food recall: company plays integral role in cracking the case

By Marie Rosenthal, MS
Executive Editor

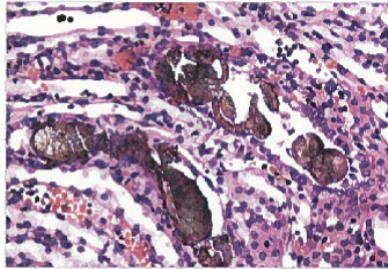
On March 16, 2007, a little-known company called Menu Foods made veterinary history when it recalled tainted pet foods that were made at its facilities and linked to renal failure. By the time the recall was over, more than 60 million cans and pouches of pet foods would be recalled, nearly 100 brands would be implicated, congressional hearings would be held, more than 160 lavason lavasins would be filed, indictments would be handed down and more than 19,000 reports would be made about dogs, and was believed to be affected by the tainted food. (To this day, however, no one knows how many animals became sick or died as a result of the tainted food.)

P&G Pet Care collaborated closely with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Although there were many players and horses to emerge during the pet food recall, P&G Pet Care played an integral role in the discovery that melamine and cyanuric acid were causing the problem in the tainted food, according to Stephen Sandoff, DVM, PhD, who was director of the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) at that time.

Sandoff, who has since become the director of the FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, spoke in VETERINARY PRACTICE about the recall and the role that P&G Pet Care played in finding the cause. "The [P&G] were very helpful in detecting melamine. Both the FDA and P&G laboratories were working on it," he said, "but I think P&G probably got there first."

*They had one very sharp scientist

who predicted that in addition to melamine, cyanuric acid must be there. Then they figured out a way to analyze for it and found it. I give those folks a lot of credit for figuring out what it must be before they had the chemical method for doing it, developing the method and actually finding it," Sandoff said.



Histomicrograph of kidney section from a rat treated with melamine and cyanuric acid. Renal tubules are dilated and contain brown crystalline precipitates that cause obstructive nephropathy. (400x magnification, hematoxylin and eosin stain)

On March 13, 2007, 3 days before Menu Foods announced the recall, Amy Dicke, DVM, who is a technical relations adviser at P&G Pet Care, received a call from the consumer relations department about a woman reporting that six of her seven housecats were hospitalized. Dicke immediately called the woman and her veterinarian to discuss the case. The veterinarian said Dicke that they had work on two of the hospitalized cats confirmed acute renal failure. Blood tests for the other four were pending, but all the cats had similar clinical signs.

"We found that all of these cats were eating one of our wet food canned formulas," Dicke said. That food was being manufactured by Menu Foods for P&G Pet Care. P&G makes dry foods at its own plants and contracted out the wet food manufacturing. There were no problems with P&G's dry dog or cat foods or any pet

food products made by P&G itself. Dicke searched the extensive P&G Pet Care database for similar complaints about any food with the same product and code date. She found one call. The first consumer had provided a sample of the food, which had been tested at Menu Foods for various substances. All the tests had been negative.

While Dicke was discussing the reports with Menu Foods, she was told that Menu Foods had conducted a recent palatability test with a non-P&G product and that many of the animals were vomiting (continues on page 54)

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PET FOOD MAKER RECALLS 'MILLIONS'

CONTAINERS REMOVED FROM SHELVES AFTER DEATHS OF SOME CATS, DOGS



Lessons in Leadership for Crisis Management

This presentation shares key experiential learnings from management of the 2007 pet food recall. This was the largest consumer packaged goods product recall in history affecting over 100 brands globally. Procter & Gamble (P&G) Pet Care was the first premium pet food company to detect the pet health issue, initiate a voluntary recall of the affected wet pet foods, discover the cause of the problem (contamination with melamine-cyanuric acid), and work with the FDA to develop a plan for resolution of the issue. This presentation is rich in learnings about the crisis management process, government interactions, and management of communications with media, pet health care professionals, pet owners, and employees. Dr. Kurt Weingand was the global crisis team leader for P&G Pet Care during this product recall.

You Will Learn to . . .

- Think and communicate globally to prevent misinterpretation and inaccurate communication of information in regions of the world not affected by the issue
- Communicate details about specific products affected in a recall to prevent inaccurate association with non-affected products in a brand portfolio
- Leverage expert thought-leaders and stakeholder organizations for media communications
- Make a bad situation . . . less bad and survive the business crisis