

## The Pet Food Recall: Shared Stories

BY CARRIE ALLAN

**W**hen the news of pet-food-related fatalities broke this spring, animal lovers everywhere went into a panic.

Each day seemed to bring new reports that a different brand—in some cases a brand that had been declared safe just a day before—was potentially contaminated with melamine and other toxic substances.

But while those who care for two or three cats and dogs worried about the safety of their own furry family members, what was going on with the folks who care for whole shelters full of animals? How did the pet food recall affect them?

The Animal Sheltering Issues staff at The Humane Society of the United States reported few recall-related questions from local organizations, but a listserv query from *Animal Sheltering* elicited a mixed bag of responses.

Nancy Clemmons, shelter manager for the Wake County Animal Care, Control, & Adoption Center in Raleigh, N.C., wrote that her staff had worked hard to keep bad foods out of the facility. “Hours of labor went into reviewing all bags of pet foods on hand and referencing the Web if the serial numbers were part of the recall,” Clemmons reported. “This went on for nearly one week to audit all on-hand foods. All foods that were on the recall list were disposed of. Any food not in the original packaging was disposed of. All food that was in the shelter in the food-dispensing bins (we did not save the origi-

nal bags) was disposed of. To date we are reviewing all incoming pet foods and holding them to the same standards.”

Bobbie Thompson, president of the Animal Rescue Foundation in Milledgeville, Ga., wrote that it wasn’t the shelter’s feeding program that caused her worries: “We haven’t had a problem with the pet food recall—we have the Science Diet contract,” Thompson wrote. “Our concern has been the animals being turned in—what have they been fed? This was one of the things we didn’t think about until a senior cat who came in had kidney problems and had to be euthanized because he was in a lot of pain and going into kidney failure. We are in the process of changing our relinquishment form to ask people what they have been feeding the cat/dog.”

As far away as the West Indies, the recall created strange ripples. “The pet food recall has affected us in Jamaica given that the distributors here have stopped ordering from the U.S. and are now ordering from South America,” wrote Maureen Sheridan of the Animal House, a shelter in Ocho Rios. “[It’s] definitely inferior quality, and the irony is that the pet food that is available in Jamaica was not at all affected by the recall.”

Did your shelter deal with problems due to the recall? Share your own experiences with us at [asm@humanesociety.org](mailto:asm@humanesociety.org). For recall updates, visit The HSUS’s Pet Food Safety Center at [humanesociety.org/petfoodsafety](http://humanesociety.org/petfoodsafety). AS



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