

Local answer to recent pet food recalls

Tainted pet foods have islanders searching for a safe alternative that they can count on to feed their four-legged family members. The Islands Marketplace is pleased to provide an answer...

Story by Tyson Mielke.
Photos by Tyson Mielke
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"Belly rubs, 'walkies', fresh water and healthy food. That's all Shaggy asks of me," says island dog lover, Rachael Beckley, "In return, I get the unconditional love of a happy, healthy puppy-dog; he's a very special part of our family."

It is hard to comprehend the immense sadness following the recent major pet food recall. Thousands of cats and dogs succumbed to kidney failure and other related illnesses after eating pet food tainted with melamine—a substance generally used for industrial purposes in products such as flame retardant and fertilizer. Somehow, the melamine ended up in a shipment of wheat gluten—used in certain pet foods as binder and gravy thickener—from a supplier in China. What's even harder to swallow is the fact that this tragedy could have been avoided.

"The pet food industry has been a ticking 'time bomb'", relates Ron DeNoble, owner of Victoria based Happy Paws Holistic Pet Food, "it was only a matter of time before this health disaster for our pets would come to pass."

Remarkably, there are no federal guidelines or mandatory inspections for pet food in all of North America. Without strict regulations, Ron feels there is a real temptation for these huge processing plants to cut corners on ingredients and testing, all in the name of saving money and improving the bottom line. "Surely," states Ron, "this massive recall with the ensuing aftermath, will lead to changes needed within the entire North American pet food industry!"

A gross example of the need for tighter regulations is the requirements for exporting pet food into the United States. Canadian companies are expected to follow the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) ingredient guidelines. It sounds impressive, but all it means is that the ingredients need to be listed on the product label. In turn, companies are entitled to use the disclaimer: Ingredients follow the AAFCO Nutrient Profiles. The US Department of Agriculture will test the food, but only if the manufacturing company asks to have an inspection conducted.

One thing for sure, nothing needs to change at Ron's company. The Chilliwack, BC facility producing Happy Paws is recognized as a Category 3—the same rating given to facilities processing food for human consumption. Because of this designation, officials from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regularly inspect the plant.

Happy Paws Holistic Pet Food is also accredited by the Canadian Veterinarian Medical Association (CVMA); the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); and the European Union, which is very stringent on any food products—including those for pets.

The most scrutinized inspection, however, comes from the owner himself, who routinely conducts his own taste tests. "I would not feed anything to our extended family," boasts Ron, "that I would not feel safe



Proud pet owner, Rachael Beckley, feels good knowing that Shaggy's food is safe & healthy.

in consuming myself!"

No doubt those samples are rather tasty. Happy Paws contains only the best quality ingredients including: New Zealand Lamb, BC Chicken, and organic grains from the prairies—all government inspected to the highest standards. In fact, the company is so committed to quality, it pre-tests its raw products before coming into the plant, and the finished product is tested again before it hits the market.

Ron was not surprised at all by the extent of the recall. "In fact," he states, it could have been a lot worse and even more widespread, with the large companies producing so many brands out of the same plant!"

"Everyday, there were more and more brands added to the recall list," Rachael recalls, "I threw out a bag of Science Diet and bought a bag of Happy Paws. I just wanted to be safe rather than sorry."

Shaggy didn't seem to mind. "He loves it," says Rachael, "he'll bring a couple of morsels out to the living room, do a little dance around them, then go back and finish off the bowl."



Kai, a 6 year old Alaskan Malamute/Wolf cross loves the taste of Happy Paws.

Visit these stores for Happy Paws Holistic Pet Food

Ladysmith:

- 49th Parallel Store
- 49th Cedar Store
- Little Rascals Pets

Duncan:

- Bruce's Grocery
- Buckerfields
- Shar Kare

Chemainus:

- 49th Chemainus
- Bone-A-Fide Doggie Bakery

Saltspring:

- Foxglove
- Thrifty Foods

Gabriola:

- Raven Feed & Supply
- Village Food Market

Nanaimo:

- Thrifty Foods
- Shar Kare
- Buckerfields



Holistic Pet Foods

"Give your pet the taste test challenge. Let them choose!"

A Proud B.C. Company

- Tasty - Only Quality Human Grade Ingredients - Made in BC
- Safe - Inspected by Canadian Food Agency (CFIA) & Others!
- High Density - More Meat
- More Fish - More Organic Grain
- New Zealand Lamb for Canines
- BC Chicken for Felines
- All Breeds
- All Life Stages

"Thank you so much for producing such a healthy and well balanced food. Joe and Annie would surely thank you if they could! Not to mention, Raymond, my 5 year old kitty, who doesn't want any other food but yours!"
~ Laura Camp, Salt Spring Island

Visit our website:

www.happypaws.ca

or email us at info@happypaws.ca for info