

# SPECIAL REPORT

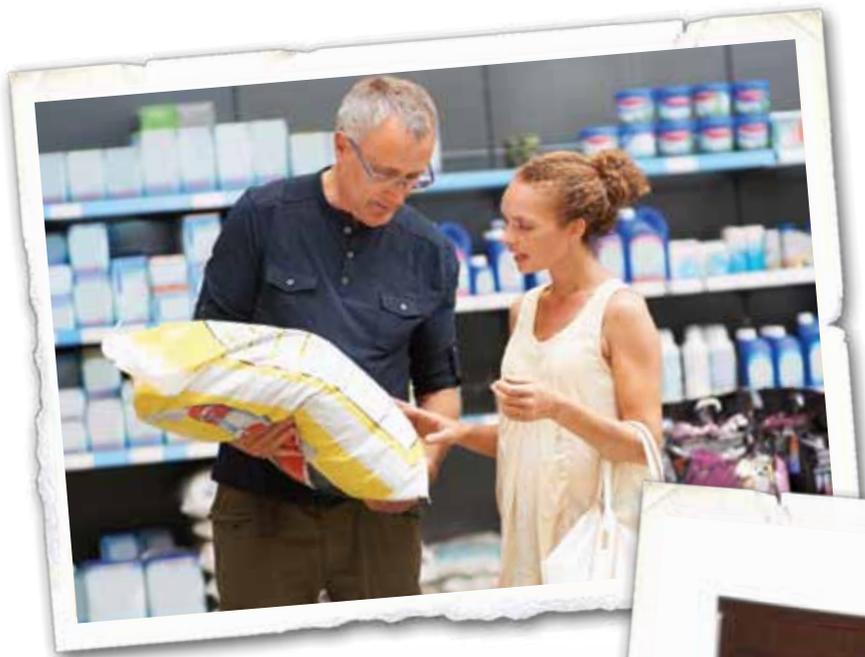
## The State of Dog Food Today

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# THE DOGINGTON POST

THE INTERNET NEWSPAPER: ALL ABOUT DOGS



# Why?

We consider our dogs to be part of our family, and we treat them as such. In recent years, major events within the dog food industry have sickened or killed tens of thousands of loving dogs and deeply impacted pet parents.

The Dogington Post went on a mission to find out what the dog food industry is doing to change, and to meet the growing demands for higher standards.



*Some things we learned will shock you.*

## Who are the Big Players in the Pet Food Industry?

Many consumers don't realize that most pet food brands are an extension of human food and agriculture brands. Simply put, they are a convenient way for these companies to use materials that are "unfit for human consumption" that they would otherwise have to throw away, including hooves, intestines, heads, and - in many cases - diseased, dying, and cancerous animal parts.

A few large companies dominate the pet food market. You'll recognize most of these names because they are better known for their role in the human food and personal care market:

Company	Why do I know that name?	Their Pet Food Brand Names
<b>Nestlé-Purina</b>	chocolate	Alpo, Mighty Dog, Dog Chow, Puppy Chow, Beneful, One, ProPlan, Canyon Creek Ranch
<b>Colgate-Palmolive</b>	toothpaste, dish soap	Hill's Science Diet, Hill's Prescription Diet
<b>Proctor &amp; Gamble</b>	personal care & cleaning supplies	Eukanuba, Iams, Natura (Evo, California Natural, HealthWise, Mother Nature)
<b>Del Monte Foods</b>	pineapple	Kibbles n' Bits, Milk Bone, Snausages, Nature's Recipe, Gravy Train, Milo's Kitchen
<b>Mars</b>	candy bars & gum	Royal Canin, Pedigree, Cesar, Nutro, Goodlife Recipe, Greenies



## Private Labelers and co-packers are also major players in the pet food industry:

**Simmons** (*acquired Menu Foods in 2010*) Private Labelers and co-packers of canned food for dozens of store brands and big brands including:

- Blue Buffalo
- Canidae
- Life's Abundance
- Nature's Logic
- Ol'Roy
- Dogswell
- Evolve
- Petcurean
- Nature's Variety
- ...and more

### **Diamond**

Private Labelers and co-packers of dry food for dozens of brands including:

- 4Health
- Apex
- Candiae
- Chicken Soup
- Country Value
- Diamond
- Kirkland
- Natural Balance
- Nature's Domain
- Premium Edge
- Professional
- Solid Gold
- Taste of the Wild
- Wellness (one variety)

*(note: this information can change quickly and without notice. It's important for us as consumers to be aware of where our pet food is manufactured!)*



*Do you know who really makes my food?*



## The 2007 “Melamine” Pet Food Recalls

The infamous 2007 pet food recalls were originally initiated in March after several pets became sick from eating certain brands of pet food. These foods were recalled, and the source of the contaminant was thought to be wheat gluten imported from a Chinese company. However, even after the products containing Chinese wheat gluten were recalled, reports of kidney failure and sickness continued to pour in. This went on for weeks before more companies started recalling their pet foods due to animal sickness. A different Chinese company that produced rice gluten was also identified as a cause of sickness seen in the affected pets. This, combined with the discovery of contaminated corn gluten, sparked a massive recall of pet food that occurred worldwide.



**It was discovered that the industrial chemical, melamine, used to make plastic and fertilizer, had been purposely added to the pet food ingredient in order to fake a higher protein content and make it appear to be of a higher quality.** This allowed Chinese wholesalers to charge a higher price for it. It is speculated that this was practiced for years, and the common theory is that by 2007 Chinese wholesalers had increased the melamine concentration in their grains to the point at which it was enough to cause a lethal effect in the animals who ate the food.



**More than 3,600 pets died and tens of thousands got sick from pet food in 2007.**

It's been estimated that over 3,600 pets died and tens of thousands more became ill but a confirmed number is impossible to determine.

**More than 5,300 pet food products were recalled in 2007 - more than 60 million cans of food from Menu alone.**

*Why so many?* Well, Menu Foods manufactured a large majority of the recalled foods. You'll recall from the list

of the “big players” above, Menu Foods was a co-packer for dozens of big brands and store brands. Although many of these brands had different proprietary recipes, if that recipe included gluten, it was sourced from the same Chinese wholesaler and manufactured in the same plant.

The 2007 recalls were devastating to Menu Foods. Though they survived the ordeal, the company lost a lot of business and, in 2010, was acquired by Simmons Pet Food, Inc., another private-labeler and contract manufacturer for many different brands of canned pet food.



## The 2012 Diamond Pet Food Recalls

2012 has been another huge year for pet food recalls. In this case, Salmonella was the biggest culprit and the contamination spread in our own United States manufacturing plants.

Diamond Pet Foods, another of the co-packer's listed in our "big players" above, issued a voluntary recall of their own Diamond and Diamond Naturals brand foods and quickly began recalling 14 of the other brands they manufactured as reports of pet - *and human* - salmonella infection were reported.

While the 2007 Melamine recalls were the result of profit-driven foreign importers, the 2012 Diamond recalls were due to filthy conditions and horrific standards in the manufacturing plant.

An FDA Inspection Report of Diamond's Gaston, South Carolina manufacturing facility from April 2012 reads like a description of the food industry before health and safety regulations were put into place:

### FDA INSPECTION REPORT

Diamond Pet Foods • Gaston, SC • April 2012

#### OBSERVATION 1

All reasonable precautions are not taken to ensure that production procedures do not contribute contamination from any source.

*Specifically, no microbiological analysis is conducted or there is no assurance that incoming animal fat will not introduce pathogens into their production and cause contamination of finished product. Also, the firm's current sampling procedure for animal digest does (sic) preclude potential for adulteration after sampling and during storage in warehouse. On 4/13/12, an employee was observed touching in-line fat filter and oil with bare hands.*

#### OBSERVATION 2

Failure to provide hand washing and hand sanitizing facilities at each location in the plant where needed.

*Specifically, there are no facilities for hand washing or hand sanitizing in the production areas where there is direct contact with exposed finished feed/food.*

#### OBSERVATION 3

Failure to maintain equipment, containers and utensils used to convey, hold, and store food in a manner that protects against contamination.

*Specifically, paddles in conveyor (South or Middle conveyor leading to the screeners going to packaging) were observed to have gouges and cuts, which exhibited feed residues. The damage to the paddles may allow for harborage areas for microorganisms and are difficult to clean and sanitize.*

#### OBSERVATION 4

Failure to maintain equipment so as to facilitate cleaning of the equipment.

*Specifically, firm utilizes cardboard, duct tape, and other non cleanable surfaces on equipment. These materials were observed to have residues adhering. The foam gaskets around access doors to the bucket elevators were observed in deteriorating condition and exhibited an accumulation of feed residues and dust.*



## Other Recalls

2012 also saw several recalls due to mold contamination in pet foods, and many treats were impacted when peanuts and peanut butter were recalled.

See the FDA's list of all pet foods & treats recalled since 2007 on their website:

<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/newpetfoodrecalls/PetFoodRecallProductsList2009.pdf>

The vast majority of those on the list are from the 2007 melamine recall, but you may be surprised to see a brand you feed on this list. Everyone should familiarize themselves with the recall list and research why their manufacturer of choice issued a recall. It is our responsibility as pet consumers to be fully aware of what we buy and feed our pets.

## Chinese Chicken Jerky - Why No Recalls?

Reports of illnesses in dogs that have been given chicken jerky treats have spiked dramatically in recent years. The FDA has issued several warning statements, but since the exact source of the illnesses has yet to be defined, no products have been recalled. The common element in all of these cases, however, is that the dogs were fed jerky treats imported from China.

**More than 600 dogs have been reported sick or dead as a result of eating chicken jerky imported from China.**

The FDA has issued 3 separate warnings to the public, but have not halted this import or demanded answers from the largest suppliers of chicken jerky treats in our country.

Among the top offenders are two brands manufactured by Nestle Purina PetCare Co. - Waggin' Train and Canyon Creek Ranch jerky tenders - and one manufactured by Del Monte, branded Milo's Kitchen. Whether these treats stand above other brands as being worse for your dog, or more tainted, remains unknown.



The FDA is issuing warnings about these treats. It's clear they are making dogs sick. So, why aren't they being recalled? **According the Food and Drug Administration:**

*There is nothing preventing a company from conducting a voluntary recall. It is important to understand that unless a contaminant is detected and we have evidence that a product is adulterated, we are limited in what regulatory actions we can take. The regulations don't allow for products to be removed based on complaints alone. This is an ongoing investigation and FDA will notify the public if a recall is initiated. Currently, FDA continues to urge pet owners to use caution with regard to chicken jerky products.*



It's clear the FDA isn't going to enforce a recall of the dangerous chicken jerky and the manufacturers aren't going to stop importing them, but why haven't any major retailers removed these deadly treats from their shelves?

It's up to us – the pet consumers - to ask Walmart to remove these treats by contacting them via their corporate website here:

<https://corporate.walmart.com/contact-us/store-corporate-feedback>

Then ask Petsmart to do the same here:

<http://www.petsmart.com/helpdesk/index.jsp?display=store&subdisplay=contact&stillHaveQuestion=yes>

And contact Petco here:

<http://www.petco.com/content/contactsubtopic.aspx?PC=contactproducts#top>



## The China Syndrome

Unbelievable volumes of pet food ingredients are imported to the United States from China each year. According to Petfood Industry, a trade magazine, in February 2011 over **\$21 million of pet food ingredients were imported from China.**

Shocking, isn't it?

Many of these ingredients are in the form of vitamins and minerals. Did you know, Chinese manufacturers hold 90% of the U.S. market for Vitamin C? In fact, it's nearly impossible to find a U.S. manufacturer of every essential vitamin and mineral for humans or pets. So, even when a pet food company has the noble goal of using completely domestic ingredients, that goal can be difficult to attain.

*We source all ingredients from US suppliers if ingredients are available, grown or produced in the US. All ingredients in Earthborn Holistic dry pet food are grown or produced in the US except for lamb meal which comes from Australia or New Zealand and flaxseed which comes from Canada. Our vitamin premixes are formulated, sourced and blended in the United States by a US company in a human grade facility. Certain subparts of the vitamin premixes are only available overseas. Our US supplier assures us that they make every effort to source from reputable non-Chinese vendors. All these ingredients are thoroughly tested and undergo many quality checks to insure safety and that specifications are met. But even with these checks in place, it is difficult if not impossible to say that some subpart of some vitamin ingredient may originate in China. We feel that it is unethical to claim, like some manufacturers do, that even though our vitamins and minerals are formulated, sourced and blended by a US company in the United States that there could not be a trace or subpart of a vitamin that comes from China. We at Earthborn Pet Foods strive to provide correct, truthful information.*



## But the label says “Made in the U.S.A.”



Don't be misled by the labels! Regulations only require that the product be “made” in the U.S.A. to use that label – not that its ingredients or individual components that make up the product are sourced in the United States.

Even if a company reports that they manufacture a dog food completely in their U.S. plant, don't assume that also means they got all of their ingredients from local sources.

Yes, it is possible that your dog's food is free of Chinese ingredients, but the vast majorities are not.

Country of origin labeling is not required of pet food manufacturers. Again, it's our responsibility as pet consumers to do our homework when seeking out the best for our four-legged family members. This means contacting the pet food company and requesting additional information on where their ingredients – all of them – are sourced.

## How is the Pet Food Industry Changing?

While the pet food industry is far from perfect, we noticed a trend among many of the companies we spoke to.

Greg Shearson, CEO of Merrick Pet Care told Dogington Post:



*We're focused on doing everything we can every single day, knowing how much faith and trust people put in the brands they partner with to take as high a quality care for their pet family members as they can and we try to come to work every day, you know, really sharing that obligation to do the very best job we absolutely can. I think the whole industry, when you look at the amount of natural products and the growth in raw, and the growth in refrigerated and frozen, the growth in high-end, the growth in organic, it's clear that people care more today than they ever have before and people are looking for brands that can truly distance themselves in providing promises and holding up their end of that promise every day to take the absolute, utmost care you possibly can for feeding your pet. One of the things that separates us most versus everyone in the industry, and something that we're really proud and committed to, is that we make all of our own food in our own facilities, right next to the family farmhouse that got the whole business started and we have taken great pride in really advancing the care and quality of our program over the past year and a half to take it to the highest level that we possibly can in the industry.*



## Sourcing Local Ingredients



The melamine recalls of 2007 and the chicken jerky scare that continues today have brought attention to the lower standards of safety and quality that exist outside of the United States, especially in China. For that reason, consumers are asking for food that is not only manufactured in the U.S., but with ingredients that are sourced here, too.

Country of origin labeling is not required, but some pet food companies that source locally are making this information readily available to consumers on their websites.

Natura Pet Products, makers of Evo, Innova, and California Natural recently launched <http://www.SeeBeyondTheBag.com>. On this website, consumers can select the type of dry or canned Natura brand of food they buy and see where each ingredient is sourced from.

Regarding sourcing locally, Greg Shearson of Merrick told us:

*Well, first, you know we're committed to local growers so we know who we're sourcing every one of our ingredients from and have taken great pride in selecting those farmer partners, ranch partners. We're using real whole foods in our product; there's no by-products, no artificial, no corn, no wheat, no soy, no gluten in our grain-free recipes. You know, we've taken great pride in taking all ingredients from China out of our product and we did that well in advance of anyone else in the industry. We just made it a point to say we wanted to know where every single one of the ingredients in our product was coming from and we could work together with those suppliers in a true spirit of partnership and we felt like the move to go away from any ingredients from China was prudent at this time and so we've made that step at great expense. And honestly, also a ton of hard work in order to make that happen.*

David Yaskulka, VP Marketing Communications for HALO Pets told Dogington Post:

*Halo is entirely made in the USA. All of our proteins – our chicken, our salmon - our beef is grown on US ranches. We get our lamb from New Zealand and we get our pea protein from Canada, but other than that our ingredients are from the US and all of our products are made in the US.*



## Using Higher Quality Ingredients

More from David Yaskulka, VP Marketing Communications for HALO Pets:

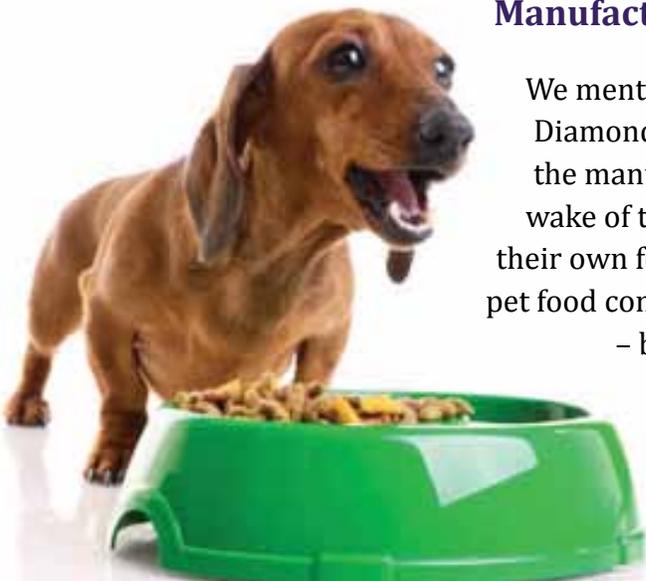
*The single most important focus is on the ingredients themselves. Of course there are hundreds and hundreds of things we do to maintain quality and safety along the way but you can sum it all up by reading the ingredients and understanding the ingredients. When you look at that ingredients list for Halo Spot's Stew, again it reads like your farmer's market shopping list. So importantly, every single one of those ingredients is an ingredient that can be sent to a human plant and especially once you go over and look at the dry food and you don't find any chicken meal or other rendered animal parts in our dry food or any of our foods, Halo really distinguishes itself as the leading brand that will only use fresh fish, fresh meat, fresh poultry and will not use ingredients like chicken meal or other rendered animal parts and I think you will eventually see this trend towards humanization and higher quality ingredients in pet food. I think this will be one of the last frontiers that we see. You know, chicken meal is certainly a high quality protein in pet food including most of the best natural pet foods but it is legally not fit for human consumption. It legally may contain 4-D products which are the diseased, dead, dying or disabled animals which you can never put in human food but is extremely common in pet food even among the best brands*

Additionally, Hill's Science Diet just announced that it was reformulating its pet foods to add more natural ingredients, because *"some consumers were making product choices based primarily on a set criteria for ingredients, rather than the overall promise of nutrition and clinical research."*

Dogington Post believes Science Diet still has a lot of improving to do before it meets the quality standards of some of its competition, but we do like to see them focusing on the the needs of the consumer.

### Manufacturing in Their Own Facilities

We mentioned briefly that the reason the 2007 Menu Foods and 2012 Diamond recalls were so broad was because those companies handled the manufacture of dozens of different popular brands of pet food. In the wake of those recalls, consumers turned to companies who manufacture their own food, in their own facilities. Surprisingly, there are very few pet food companies who handle the manufacture of all of their own food – both dry, canned, and treats. Some companies outsource the manufacture of all their recipes, while others make their own dry food and outsource the manufacture of their canned foods.



Merrick Pet Care, however, is one of the rare companies that does all of its own manufacturing.

“ Well, it's from our kitchen to yours. We make it ourselves. All these formulas have been developed in our own test kitchen. We have an R&D facility that's right next door, manufacturing facilities and we're there every day. Our canned products, for example, are made one recipe at a time. It's a labor of love to kind of make the formulas that we make.

When asked about the Merrick kitchens and the standards they use, CEO Greg Shearson told us:

“ We've just recently, as of this past week, been certified in all those facilities to be an organic manufacturer as well. So, again, even higher standards of maintaining ingredients supply; the processes we use to clean and take care of our facility between different shifts and different production runs of different sources of product. The care that we need to go through to select all of our sourcing ingredient suppliers; etc. We are the only one, at least to our knowledge, now certified organic dry and wet food manufacturer in the United States. And we're very proud of all that work and all the audits that went along with that.

Champion Pet Foods out of Alberta, Canada, who owns the Orijen and Acana brands of pet food also manufacture out of their own facilities.

Canidae, a brand of dog food that was affected by the Diamond pet food recall, recently began manufacturing out of their own plant, Ethos, in Texas. It is not known at this time if they will move all of their production to Ethos and completely away from Diamond.



Photo Credit:  
CANIDAE Pet Foods / Facebook



## Redesigned, Consumer-Friendly Packaging

One major trend we're seeing this year is redesigned pet food packaging. Brands from Science Diet, Innova, Merrick and Blackwood are rolling out new, user-friendly packaging that addresses the demands of the pet consumer.

Greg Shearson talked to us about Merrick's new packaging:

*We've taken quality of ingredients and quality of manufacturing to the highest standards and highest levels of the industry and we wanted to wrap that in a message to the consumer that made it very clear that this is not just a minor face lift or a cosmetic change but a substantive change about everything that we're doing. And again, we're putting our ingredient label on the front of our bag. We're calling out on the front of our bag what our first five ingredients are and they all start with the de-boned protein source of the number one ingredient. We proudly label what percent is meat, poultry, fish, what percent is fresh produce on the front of the bag. And we're trying to showcase the quality of what those ingredients look like for the consumer, on the front of the bag. And what's also different about us – we have a founder and his name is on the front of the bag and a promise and a guarantee of what's in the bag is on the back of the bag. We're not some faceless corporate entity. We're a family company in our absolute root. And, that family company has made now a level of commitment to do something better than it's ever done before and we think is as good as something that anybody in the industry's doing. And so we're very, very proud of that package because it really communicates what's really inside. And that's really been our focus for the last year and a half.*



Hill's Science Diet will roll out new packaging designs in December, featuring color-coded product groupings designed to make it easier for pet owners to select the right food for their pet.

Natura Pet's holistic brand, Innova, introduced new packaging to coincide with the release of recently upgraded formulas and improved ingredients.

Super Premium pet food company, Blackwood, knew that if they wanted to expand their market, they needed to upgrade their packaging to meet the needs of the pet consumer. They, like Merrick, redesigned their packaging with key nutritional values for each recipe on the front of the bag.

Doug Sapp, VP of Marketing for Blackwood:

*Our new packaging was designed to provide the consumer with a great shopping experience, easy access to key product information and a representation of the true quality of our recipes. Consumers now have direct access to important information such as protein, fat and fiber percentages, the recipe and cooking process, all on the front of the bag – for easy comparison shopping.”*



## What Changes are On the Horizon?

According to *Petfood Industry*, the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), the group that regulates the sale and distribution of pet food, will vote on some key labeling requirements for pet food at their upcoming meeting in January. One of their proposed requirements will require all dog and cat food labels to include the food's calorie content. Until now, calories have only been required to be listed on weight management foods.

We asked David Yaskulka, VP Marketing Communications for HALO Pets what he saw for the future of pet food:



“ Well there is no doubt that there is a need for a wide range of prices for pet food but I do think that the major trend that we are going to see continue is that dogs and cats will be thought of as family members and will be treated as such. That means that the trends we see for humans which is better quality food, a focus on natural, reading the ingredients, understanding the ingredients, in short trying to eat better for better health, that these trends will continue in pet food and more specifically I think the last frontier is just starting to be understood and this is at the very early end of the trend I would say is the idea of only adding ingredients that you could also put in human food. So I think you will see many more formulas that will not use chicken meal or other rendered animal parts. My crystal ball says that Halo will have a lot more competition in that area but I think at the end of the day that will be a very good thing for the pets.



## Plastic-Coated Pet Food?!

While we were preparing this report, news broke about a newly approved patent from Hill's, owned by Colgate-Palmolive, maker's of Science Diet pet foods.

Although Hill's Pet Nutrition recently announced it would be reformulating the Science Diet pet foods to include better ingredients, they were also provided with a patent for "Method for increasing the shelf life of a physically discrete dry pet food composition" by applying a polymer film coating to the food.



The patent is public record. See it for yourself at:

<http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO2&Sect2=HITOFF&p=1&u=%2Fnetacgi%2FPTO%2Fsearch-bool.html&r=1&f=G&l=50&co1=AND&d=PTXT&s1=20090074827&OS=2009074827&RS=20090074827>

Dogington Post contacted Hill's for information about this patent. Though we specifically asked them about their patent and about plans to add a polymer film coating to their food, we were sent the following response:

*Hill's does not and has no plans to add plastic to any of its pet foods. In fact, Hill's performs 60 quality checks on each batch to ensure that all Hill's Science Diet and Hill's Prescription Diet pet foods are safe to feed your pet.*

*We appreciate that you took the time to contact us. If you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to call our Consumer Affairs Department toll free at 1-800-445-5777 or visit our website at HillsPet.com.*

Hill's neglected to answer our questions about the patent and responded, instead, with what appeared to be a form letter about plastic in their foods. We never once mentioned plastic in our letter to Hills. Why did they respond to us with pre-written reply about plastic and not address any of our specific questions?

**Needless to say, Hill's sent us a disappointing and, in our opinion, purposefully misleading response.**



## Our Responsibility as Pet Consumers

The pet food industry is extremely competitive. Americans spend an estimated \$19 Billion dollars each year on pet food! It's no wonder companies are trying to convince us that their product is the best. **Many claims these companies make are true, many are meant to deceive, and some are outright lies.** It's up to us – the pet consumers – to determine the accuracy of what we are told.

**Here are some tips to help you choose a pet food company you'll be comfortable with:**

### Familiarize yourself with the company.

- How long have they been in business?
- Is pet food their main industry?
- Are they dedicated to their brand?
- Are they easily accessible?
- If you contact them, how do they respond?
- How do these people treat their own animals?

We had the opportunity to meet with many dog food companies at a recent industry trade show. Some companies, like Merrick, Natura, Stella & Chewy's, FreeHand, Blackwood, Nature's Variety, Earthborn, and Halo greeted us with friendly, open honesty.

*Others were not so forthcoming.*

In fact, representatives from Iams and Eukanuba told us they were "not authorized to speak to us." We've tried contacting Iams for comments and have been unable to get a response.



### Research the Company's Safety Standards

The FDA does not have the resources to inspect pet food plants every year. Nor do the laws require pet food manufacturing plants to meet the same standards as those plants that make food for human consumption. Look for pet food companies that set higher standards for themselves, including those who are certified under human food or even organic guidelines.

### Meet the dogs behind the dog food!



Bert & Maya, adopted from Adopt-A-Boxer Rescue, owned by David Yaskulka, VP Marketing Communications for Halo Pets



Teddy & Winnie joined Greg Shearson, CEO of Merrick Pet Care in his office while he spoke with Dogington Post!



## Research Recall History

Recalls can happen to even the most responsible companies. However, pay attention to recalls. Notice why the foods are recalled – Were there poor factory conditions? Mold? Salmonella? Chinese ingredients? Make notice of recurring trends and repeat offenders.

David Yaskulka, VP Marketing Communications for HALO Pets told us:



*Well first I want to say that even a very high quality and responsible pet food company can have a recall and a recall is often the most responsible thing to do. With that said, in 26 years of producing pet food and treats, Halo has never had a single recall and we are very proud of that safety record.*

## Read the ingredients and find out where they came from.

- Is your dog food made from something you would eat yourself?
- Was it farmed locally?
- Was the food cooked in a kitchen using standards you would trust?

Greg Shearson, CEO of Merrick, told us about the Merrick family kitchen:



*...When you guys mentioned the kitchen, you know we have a true family commercial test kitchen in the former Merrick home, which literally sits about 500 feet from our main manufacturing facility in Hereford, Texas, and we use that kitchen to not only develop new recipes and formulas but also show our customers what we're doing and how we're doing it and do cuttings and tastings for key customers as they come visit us in our facilities in Texas.*

## Don't be misled by photography and creative marketing.

It's our responsibility as pet parents to look beyond the pictures of fresh meat and juicy vegetables printed on the bags of food. Question the often misleading information and nutritional statements some manufacturers make. **Contact companies directly if you need to.** Make decisions based on facts and information you gather.

Learn how to read labels. Know what each ingredient *really* is. Some of the ingredients that legally make it into many pet foods will shock you!



## Yes, the pet food industry is changing.

In many ways, it's changing for the better.

We think Greg Shearson of Merrick hit the nail on the head when he told us:



*I'm less concerned about the race and more concerned about just the promise we're making to pet parents. Others obviously, are doing some nice things too. It's a very competitive industry. You know, honestly, if you started out by commenting around what's not right, there's a lot that is right. There's a lot of improvement that's come to this industry. There's a lot of folks doing things that are better than ever before in this industry. And hopefully there are small guys like us that are showing people that you've got to continue to move forward; you've got to do a better job. Because people demand it.*

## Keep Demanding More for your Dogs!

As long as you – the pet consumers – continue to demand better quality, higher safety standards, locally sourced ingredients, and good customer service, pet food companies that aren't already meeting your needs will have no choice but to comply.

Stay informed of the latest dog food recalls by visiting [www.DogingtonPost.com](http://www.DogingtonPost.com).



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