

PFI Response to Cornucopia Report on Pet Food

10/19/15

The Pet Food Institute (PFI) and its member companies who make 98 percent of all dog and cat food produced in the United States are committed to helping pets live long and healthy lives. As such, we take very seriously any assertion made about pet food healthfulness or safety. We are aware of a report released by the Cornucopia Institute on November 19, which made a number of assertions that are misleading and not supported by science.

The report raised unsubstantiated concerns about the quality of pet food ingredients. Many consumers do not realize that pet food products made by PFI member companies undergo rigorous quality assurance review beginning with raw ingredients and ending with testing the finished products found on store shelves.

Moreover, these ingredients and products meet or exceed the standards set by the Association of American Feed Control Association (AAFCO) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). If an ingredient is not defined and accepted by these bodies, it cannot be used in dog or cat food.

It's also helpful to remember that there are no fillers in pet food. Each ingredient serves a function, whether it be to provide nutrients, flavor or texture, or to preserve freshness or help food hold its shape.

In pet food labeled "complete and balanced," all nutrients, including carbohydrates, are required by law to fall within an accepted range in order to meet the nutritional needs of a dog or cat at a given life stage, health condition and size. Claims in the report that the consumption of grain carbohydrates, in line with AAFCO feeding recommendations, are common causes of death or health-related conditions are not unsubstantiated and are not supported by science.

This is also true of assertions in the report that the use of carrageenan in pet food may cause irritation in the gastrointestinal tract of dogs and cats, and that the implications that carrageenan may be carcinogenic to pets, as result of its inflammatory properties. The report failed to mention, however, that there are two types of carrageenan: The un-degraded, form, which is the type that has been used safely around the world in food for more than eighty years as a thickening and stabilizing agent; and the degraded form, which is the type that has raised some concerns.

PFI members rely on the best available science to improve the nutritional value and safety of the pet food they make. If you have any questions, please reach out to us at info@petfoodinstitute.org or call your pet food company.