

Ag And Markets' Food Safety Team: The Best In The Business

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One of the most important duties that we at the Department of Agriculture and Markets have is to ensure a safe food supply, not just for people, but also for the pets that many New Yorkers consider to be part of their families.

About five years ago, in response to growing consumer concerns, the New York State Food Laboratory began testing certain domestic and imported chicken jerky products. For a number of years, testing on these products by the federal government and other states, including New York, was inconclusive. Recently, our Food Laboratory began testing domestic and imported chicken jerky products for antibiotics. They utilized a widely used approach for testing food and feed for antibiotic residue.

This is what the New York State Food Laboratory found: Samples of Waggin' Train and Canyon Creek Ranch (Nestle Purina), Milo's Kitchen (Del Monte) and Cadet (IMS Pet Industries Corp.) brands contained antibiotics not allowed in human or pet food in the United States at any level in food derived from chicken. These antibiotics included Sulfaclozine (sulfachloropyrazine), Tilmicosin, Trimethoprim and Enrofloxacin. The lab also found the drug Sulfaquinoxaline, which is approved for use in U.S. for poultry. However, the tolerance level in food derived from poultry is 100 parts per billion (ppb). Some of the treats sampled had Sulfaquinoxaline levels well over 100 ppb. Every one of these products was imported from China.

The lab also tested five domestic chicken jerky products, including: Blue Buffalo Jolly Joints Chicken Jerky, Tranquility Chicken Jerky, Simply Natural Premium Chicken Jerky, Pet Center Chicken Breast Tenders, and Nudge's Vitamin Essentials Chicken Jerky. None of these domestic products were found to contain the antibiotics listed above.

The New York State Food Laboratory's findings resulted in a recall of the affected chicken jerky products. The Department's Food Safety and Inspection Division staff have been working closely with distributors of these products to initiate Class 2 recalls. This work will continue until the Department is confident that all affected products are removed from

There is no evidence that the antibiotics found in the imported products are making pets sick, nor can we say with certainty that these treats in general are making pets ill. That said, pet owners should exercise an abundance of caution in relation to these products. Pet owners should check to see if they have any of the recalled treats on hand. These treats should not be fed to animals and should be disposed of or returned to the place of purchase immediately.

Some pet owners will be concerned about whether or not their dog should be examined by a veterinarian due to consumption of these treats. We believe that all dogs should receive regular veterinary check-ups. Changes in your dog's appetite or activity level, increased water consumption or quantity or frequency of urination, or other changes in your dog's behavior may all be indications of a potential problem that your vet should check out. Having a good history of your dog's diet, in-

cluding treats, could be very helpful to your veterinarian as she or he examines your dog.

The Department of Agriculture and Markets' Division of Food Safety and Inspection regularly submits human food, pet food and animal feed samples to the Food Laboratory as part of its surveillance inspection program. In 2012 alone, 185 pet food samples were submitted to the laboratory for analysis.

This was a five year effort on the part of the best food safety team anywhere in this country. I couldn't be more proud of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets' staff for their great work in uncovering these findings.