

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRIGHTPET NUTRITION GROUP ADDRESSES CONCERNS SURROUNDING GRAIN-FREE PET FOOD DIETS

Lisbon, Ohio (July 10, 2019) – As a leading developer and contract producer of premium and super-premium pet foods for U.S. and international markets, BrightPet Nutrition Group remains committed to manufacturing high quality pet foods and treats. We understand many pet parents and pet lovers are concerned about recent news surrounding a potential link between certain dog recipes and dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). To remain transparent and educate, we have prepared the following information regarding DCM and BrightPet's relationship to recent FDA announcements.

Understanding Canine DCM (Dilated Cardiomyopathy)

DCM is a rare, but serious disease, affecting less than 1% of dogs in the United States. The condition jeopardizes a dog's heart muscle and results in an enlarged heart. As the heart and its chambers become dilated, it becomes harder for the heart to pump. This process can lead to a buildup of fluids in the chest and abdomen known as congestive heart failure. Currently, there is not enough data to identify the official cause of DCM, however recent studies imply that some grain-free diets containing specific carbohydrates may potentially lead to this condition in some dogs. While this is still an active investigation, there is limited data providing evidence that grain-free foods are linked to DCM. Diet itself is estimated to influence only 0.000007% (or less than 1 in 14 million dogs) of all known cases. Recent reports suggest a theory that certain carbohydrates found in grain-free recipes may lead to a potential deficiency of the amino acid known as taurine. Insufficient taurine in the body has been linked to DCM in several species of animals, including dogs. The list of carbohydrates cited in these reports cover a broad category of ingredients classified as legumes.

How Certain Ingredients May Link to DCM

Millions of pets suffer from gluten allergies, requiring them to consume a healthy grain-free diet. With more than 40 years of experience working with select ingredients, we understand legumes (such as chickpeas and lentils), grains, and potatoes are complex carbohydrates. If a formula is made up of too many complex carbohydrates, then certain health conditions may appear due to issues with digestibility. Vegetable proteins also lack the quantity of taurine, which is needed to aid in proper digestion, stabilize membranes around the nerves, and assist in cardiovascular function. Animal proteins, however, are proven to have a greater source of taurine. In order to have an increased risk of DCM from feeding a grain-free diet, the diet must have a higher percentage of protein sourced from vegetables than from meats. Our company ensures our recipes are formulated with more than 60% meat proteins. The governing body that sets nutritional standards for pet food sold in the United States, The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), currently does not enforce a minimum taurine level in dog formulations. This is primarily because dogs naturally synthesize taurine. AAFCO does require a .10% minimum taurine level for cat foods, and our inclusion rates surpass this requirement.

BrightPet's Grain-Free Formulas

Our expert formulation team works tirelessly to ensure a proper balance of ingredients to offer premium and super-premium recipes for pets. Until more research and information is available, BrightPet will not introduce any formulas with high levels of legumes and continue to have all diets reviewed and approved by accredited animal nutrition experts. This will further our long history of delivering formulations that exceed current nutritional standards and allow BrightPet to continue to ensure pets are safe, healthier and happier.

Quick Facts Surrounding the Recent FDA Report on DCM:

- The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) issued its third status report on June 27, 2019, regarding its investigation into a potential connection between certain diets and Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) in dogs.
- The American Veterinary Medical Association estimates that there are 77 million pet dogs in the United States. DCM impacts **less than one percent of U.S. dogs**. Only 0.1% of reported cases of DCM in dogs is suggested to be caused from the dog's diet.
- The FDA continues to investigate a potential association between a grain-free diet and DCM, and recognizes it is a complex scientific issue that may involve multiple factors. There is no conclusive evidence a grain-free diet will lead to dilated cardiomyopathy in dogs.
- Among all the cases reported to the FDA, the overwhelming majority of impacted dogs belonged to breeds genetically predisposed to DCM. Large breed dogs tend to be at greater risk.
- The majority of DCM cases reported to the FDA were fed grain-free diets; however, diets with grains were also included in reported DCM cases.
- The FDA issued the June 27th update in an effort to solicit additional reports from pet owners and veterinarians to help further the investigation. While the release names specific brands and formulations, it does not definitively link those brands or formulas to DCM.

We will continually follow this investigation and work with the FDA and industry leaders to collect factual, scientific data surrounding the nutritional health needs of pets today. BrightPet Nutrition Group will share any updates regarding our brands and additional information as it develops.