

UPDATED DECEMBER 20, 2008

## **ORIJEN CAT FOOD | AUSTRALIA: UPDATE 4 - DEC. 20**

This latest information release covers 4 subject areas.

- 1. ONGOING RESEARCH**
- 2. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ORIJEN COMPASSION FUND TO SUPPORT AFFECTED CATS IN AUSTRALIA**
- 3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR AUSTRALIA'S HOMELESS CAT CHARITIES**
- 4. THE AUSTRALIAN IMPORT PROCESS**

### **BACKGROUND**

- On November 20, 2008, Champion Petfoods announced a voluntary recall of its ORIJEN Cat food brand sold in Australia.
- The recall is restricted to AUSTRALIA ONLY and was issued in response to reports from the Australian veterinary community of cats showing symptoms of a neurological syndrome after consuming ORIJEN CAT food. To prevent the risk of cats eating ORIJEN dog foods and becoming ill Champion Petfoods ceased the sale of ORIJEN dog foods in Australia.
- The recall was unique to Australia and did not affect any of the other 50 countries to which ORIJEN is exported. Champion Petfoods believes the Australian cases resulted from the high-level irradiation (exceeding 50kGy) applied to ORIJEN upon entering Australia.
- This high-level irradiation procedure for is unique to Australia and ORIJEN foods are not irradiated in any other market or country.
- Champion Petfoods no longer exports or sells its ORIJEN pet foods in Australia.

### **1. ONGOING RESEARCH**

Two independent scientific publications support Champion Petfoods position regarding the potentially harmful effects of gamma irradiation on dry cat foods in particular.

1. Research findings of a 2007 study published by the **AMERICAN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY PATHOLOGISTS** [WWW.VETPATHOLOGY.ORG/MISC/TERMS.SHTML](http://WWW.VETPATHOLOGY.ORG/MISC/TERMS.SHTML) determined that the feeding of a gamma-irradiated diet of 35-45 kGy was associated with the development of the same conditions as are reported in cats in Australia.
2. **JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR LABORATORY ANIMAL SCIENCES**, vol 47, no. 6, 61-66. November 2008 entitled "**EFFECTS OF GAMMA IRRADIATION AND PASTEURIZATION ON THE NUTRITIVE COMPOSITION OF COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE ANIMAL DIETS**" finds that "*results raise questions regarding the suitability of gamma-irradiated diets for the long-term exclusive feeding of cats in particular, given that such feeding regimes have been associated with the development of leukoencephalomyelopathy in this species*".

Last month's study was released in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR LABORATORY ANIMAL SCIENCES, entitled "EFFECTS OF GAMMA IRRADIATION AND PASTEURIZATION ON THE NUTRITIVE COMPOSITION OF COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE ANIMAL DIETS".

Key study findings are summarized below

- "Irradiation reduces the vitamin content of food, the effect of which may be indirect in that inadequate amounts of antioxidant vitamins (such as c, e, and b-carotene) may be available to counteract the effects of free radicals generated by normal cell metabolism... Furthermore, the irradiation of diets containing fats with high levels of polyunsaturated fatty acids increases the onset of oxidative rancidity due to peroxidation of the contained unsaturated bonds."
- "the irradiation of a variety of commercial dry cat diets at 25 kGy resulted in considerable reductions in vitamin A levels, with up to 93% reduction observed in a diet with a relatively high fat content."
- "concentration of peroxide in the dry cat diet was increased to 11- and 21- fold after the typical [28.9-34.4 kGy] and high-end [38.4-48.7 kGy] irradiation treatments respectively."
- "the results of this study confirm that gamma irradiation, at the doses used, (which were less than those used on ORIJEN foods) has profound effects on the vitamin A (retinol) and peroxide content of the dry cat food analyzed."
- "the fatty acid composition of the fat in the diet and especially the degree of unsaturation of these acids is particularly important."
- "...polyunsaturated fatty acids containing 3 or more double bonds are destroyed readily by irradiation." From hammer ct, wills ed. 1979. The effect of ionizing radiation on the fatty acid composition of natural fats and on lipid peroxide formation. INT J RADIAT BIOL RELAT STUD PHYS CHEM MED 35: 323-332.
- "the formation of peroxide in irradiated fat is dependent on factors such as the chemical composition of the fat, type of radiation used, total dose-rate of the radiation, dispersion of fat in the diet, nature of the medium used for dispersion, and the presence of water."

***"RESULTS RAISE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE SUITABILITY OF GAMMA-IRRADIATED DIETS FOR THE LONG-TERM EXCLUSIVE FEEDING OF CATS IN PARTICULAR, GIVEN THAT SUCH FEEDING REGIMES HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEUKOENCEPHALOMYELOPATHY IN THIS SPECIES."***

***"IN CONCLUSION, THIS STUDY HAS SHOWN THAT GAMMA IRRADIATION, AT THE DOSES USED, HAS PROFOUND AND SELECTIVE EFFECTS ON THE VITAMIN A AND PEROXIDE CONTENTS OF DRY ANIMAL DIETS, PARTICULARLY ON DRY DIETS FORMULATED FOR CATS."***

**Q: IS FURTHER RESEARCH BEING UNDERTAKEN IN THE AUSTRALIAN CASES?**

**A: YES.**

- Four post-mortems performed on cats in Australia have all shown severe Leukoencephalomyelopathy, as referenced in both studies above.
- We also continue to fund our own research into the Australian cases.
- Our nutritionist team is headed by a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine with specialty certifications in toxicology, veterinarian toxicology, wildlife and environmental toxicology. Work commenced earlier this month to review and evaluate all data collected on the Australian cases with the view to add to the body of data cited above.
- We expect a final study summary to be completed by the end of February 2009.

## **2. THE ORIJEN COMPASSION FUND**

Champion Petfoods sincerely regrets the circumstance surrounding ORIJEN cat foods in Australia and is announcing our ORIJEN COMPASSION FUND to assist affected cats and their families in Australia.

The ORIJEN COMPASSION FUND is intended to provide for the reimbursement of related veterinary and medical expenses up to AUD \$2,000 per affected cat.

All eligible families are encouraged to apply for medical cost reimbursement under the ORIJEN COMPASSION FUND, with submissions to accepted up until May 31, 2009.

### **Q: HOW DO I APPLY TO THE COMPASSION FUND?**

**A: SIMPLY REQUEST AN APPLICATION PACKAGE BY SENDING AN EMAIL TO  
[ORIJENCOMPASSION@CHAMPIONPETFOODS.COM](mailto:ORIJENCOMPASSION@CHAMPIONPETFOODS.COM)**

- The COMPASSION FUND APPLICATION is made up of 2 easy-to-complete forms:
  1. A form completed and signed by you, the cat owner.
  2. A form completed and signed by your veterinarian, which includes a written diagnosis of the syndrome and copies of medical costs related to the treatment of your cat(s).

### **Q: WHO'S ELIGIBLE?**

**A: TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICAL EXPENSES UNDER THE ORIJEN COMPASSION FUND YOU MUST FULFILL THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:**

- You must live in Australia
- Have purchased ORIJEN CAT food within Australia
- Have one or more cats that consumed ORIJEN CAT food and developed the neurological syndrome known as 'hind limb ataxia'
- Provide a diagnosis from a practicing Australian Veterinarian (DVM)

## **3. AN AUD \$10,000 CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN CAT CHARITIES**

While Champion no longer sells ORIJEN foods in the Australian market, we are announcing an AUD \$10,000 donation to Australian charities in support of homeless cats.

Details on the AUD \$10,000 donation will be made in January, 2009.

## 4. THE AUSTRALIAN IMPORT PROCESS

Many questions have been asked about the Australian import process and ORIJEN Cat foods. This Q&A section is intended to answer the most commonly asked questions.

### **Q: ARE ALL IMPORTED PET FOODS IRRADIATED WHEN ENTERING AUSTRALIA?**

**A: No.**

- Only those foods that are not processed at sufficiently high temperatures. According to AQIS, cat foods that are made with a “heat treatment to achieve a minimum core temperature of 100°C for at least 30 minutes or equivalent **do not require gamma irradiation on arrival**”.
- A clause also exists that exempts certain USA manufactured petfoods from irradiation treatment upon arrival in Australia.

### **Q: WHAT LEVELS OF IRRADIATION WERE APPLIED TO ORIJEN FOODS ENTERING AUSTRALIA?**

**A: Between 50 kGy and 61 kGy.**

### **Q: DID CHAMPION PETFOODS HAVE A CHOICE WHETHER OR NOT TO IRRADIATE?**

**A: No.**

### **Q: DID CHAMPION PETFOODS HAVE AN OPTION TO ARRANGE FOR AN AQIS INSPECTION OF OUR MANUFACTURING FACILITY IN ORDER TO WAIVE THE IRRADIATION REQUIREMENT?**

**A: No.**

Acting on Champion Petfoods’ behalf, the Canadian Consulate in Sydney asked AQIS in August of 2009 whether there was any possible action Champion could take to avoid irradiation:

“...In addition, Biosecurity Australia has advised that it is not a position to consider the extrusion process as part of the heat treatment, as independent, peer-reviewed information is not available regarding the thermal inactivation properties of extrusion process.

Generally laboratory results attesting to the microbiological control only cover bacterial contamination such as E. coli and Salmonella and not the viruses and pathogens that are of quarantine concern. As such, this would not be sufficient to address our concerns.

As the products your client exports to Australia have not been subjected to any heat treatment other than those applied during the extrusion and drying process we were unable to consider the processing as being equivalent to a moist heat treatment achieving a minimum core temperature of 100°C for at least 30 minutes. As a result, the only remaining option available was to gamma irradiate the products at 50 kGrays upon arrival in Australia”.

**Q: DID THE IRRADIATION FACILITY WARN CHAMPION PETFOODS ABOUT A POTENTIAL NEGATIVE EFFECT OF IRRADIATION?**

**A: NO.**

- Once we learned irradiation had been performed, Champion contacted the irradiation facility to discuss the levels and safety of irradiation, and to request records of the irradiation levels. At no point was it suggested Champion 'test' a food sample prior to releasing the irradiated pet food for sale in the Australian market.
- We trusted that government sanctioned and mandated treatments would not change our cat food and ultimately cause harm to Australian cats.

Sincerely,



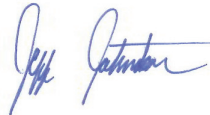
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