

# DERMATOLOGY PEARLS

*Dermatology Clinic for Animals*

[www.dermvettacoma.com](http://www.dermvettacoma.com)

[www.dermvetolympia.com](http://www.dermvetolympia.com)

## FDA Study of Raw Food Risks

Some pet owners I talk to about starting a hypoallergenic diet trial are interested in providing raw diets to their pets. In a recent two-year study, the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) screened over 1,000 samples of pet food for bacteria that can cause foodborne illnesses. The study showed that, compared to other types of pet food tested, raw pet food was more likely to be contaminated with disease-causing bacteria.

Raw pet food was not included in the first year of the study. In the second year spanning from October 2011 through July 2012, CVM expanded the study to include 196 samples of commercially available raw dog and cat food. The center bought a variety of raw pet food online from different manufacturers and had the products shipped directly to six participating laboratories. The raw pet food products were usually frozen in tube-like packages and made from ground meat or sausage.

The participating laboratories analyzed the raw pet food for harmful bacteria, including *Salmonella* and *Listeria monocytogenes*. Of the 196 raw pet food samples analyzed, 15 were positive for *Salmonella* and 32 were positive for *L. monocytogenes* (see Table 1).

Type of Pet Food Sample	No. samples tested	No. positive for <i>Salmonella</i>	No. positive for <i>L. monocytogenes</i>
Raw pet food	196	15	32
Dry exotic pet food <sup>a</sup>	190	0	0
Jerky-type treats <sup>b</sup>	190	0	0
Semi-moist dog food <sup>c</sup>	120	0	0
Semi-moist cat food <sup>c</sup>	120	0	0
Dry dog food <sup>d</sup>	120	0	0
Dry cat food <sup>d</sup>	120	1	0

<sup>a</sup> Non-cat and non-dog food, such as dry pellets for hamsters, gerbils, rabbits, amphibians, and birds.  
<sup>b</sup> Included chicken jerky and pig ear-type products.  
<sup>c</sup> Typically packaged in pouches for retail sale, such as (1) pouched dog and cat food; and (2) food treats shaped like bacon, fish, pork chops, and burgers.  
<sup>d</sup> Included pellet- or kibble-type food typically packaged in bags for retail sale.

*Note:* CVM did not collect or test canned and wet pet food samples in this study.

**Due to risk of food borne illnesses with raw diets, I encourage owners who are interested in home preparing their pets' foods to cook the food, and to use a balanced recipe formulated by a veterinary nutritionist (such as [Balanceit.com](http://Balanceit.com); recipes are free when clients purchase the vitamin/mineral supplement to mix with the diet).**

More information can be found on the FDA website:

[http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/ResourcesforYou/AnimalHealthLiteracy/ucm373757.htm#The\\_Pet\\_Food\\_Study?utm\\_source=VNN+Media+Insider+11-9-13&utm\\_campaign=Nov+9th%2C+2013&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/ResourcesforYou/AnimalHealthLiteracy/ucm373757.htm#The_Pet_Food_Study?utm_source=VNN+Media+Insider+11-9-13&utm_campaign=Nov+9th%2C+2013&utm_medium=email)