

UPDATED MARCH 10, 2009

ORIJEN CAT FOOD | AUSTRALIA: UPDATE MAR. 10 2009

THE CHAMPION PETFOODS COMPASSION FUND

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 is a result of the high level of gamma irradiation (61kGy) that was applied to ORIJEN cat foods upon entry into Australia.
- As the Australian regulations provide no alternative option but to irradiate our products, we stopped all ORIJEN sales in Australia, and cancelled our Australian distribution in November of 2008.
- No other countries or markets are affected by the Australian recall.

Judging the irradiation process to be unsafe for our foods, Champion Petfoods pledges not to distribute or sell our products anywhere that requires irradiation.

All of us here at Champion deeply regret the effect irradiated ORIJEN foods have had on those families whose cats were affected, and we are committed to providing support in the following areas.

- 1 MARCH 2009 - COMPASSION FUND UPDATE**
- 2 CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN CAT COMMUNITY**
- 3 ONGOING RESEARCH INTO IRRADIATION OF DRY CAT FOODS**

THE COMPASSION FUND OBJECTIVE

- For over than 25 years, Champion Petfoods has dedicated itself to providing companion cats and dogs around the world with the safest and most nutritious food available.
- It is with our own cats and dogs in mind that we extend our deepest empathy to those families affected in Australia, for whom we have established a COMPASSION FUND. Through the COMPASSION FUND, our goal is to reach out to the cat community in Australia and provide assistance to families of affected cats by providing financial assistance for veterinary medical expenses accrued from this syndrome.
- We invite all eligible people to apply to Champion Petfoods for reimbursement of medical expenses from this fund. The following 'Questions and Answers' are intended to give application instructions to those people who think they may be eligible.

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1 MARCH 2009 – COMPASSION FUND UPDATE

- **Update - PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY.**

Since the Compassion Fund inception, Champion has learned that those people incurring on-going medical expenses due to continued treatment are reluctant to submit expenses until treatment is complete and all expenses are incurred.

In order to improve fund access, we have extended the number of applications that can be made by any individual from one application to two. In other words, expenses can be submitted for medical treatment costs incurred up to now, and then again for medical treatment costs incurred in the future (up until May 31, 2009, when the fund will be re-evaluated).

NOTE – THE FUND LIMIT REMAINS CONSTANT AT \$2,000.

- **Update - SIGN-OFF NO LONGER NEEDED**

The Compassion Fund is intended to provide 'no-strings' support to those Australian families affected by irradiated foods. A sign-off is not required by Champion prior to releasing funds.

- **Update - COSTS ABOVE THE \$2000 LIMIT TO BE CONSIDERED CASE-BY-CASE AT THE END OF MAY.**

The Compassion Fund is intended to offset medical costs incurred as a result of treating cats that were fed irradiated foods.

While the majority of fund applications received are well under \$2,000 limit, some individuals have incurred additional medical expenses. For this reason, the fund will be reviewed in June of 2009 at which time legitimate medical expenses above the \$2,000 limit will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2 A CONTRIBUTION TO THE AUSTRALIAN CAT COMMUNITY

- Champion pledged to donate \$10,000 to organizations in Australia whose mandate is to support disadvantaged cats. We have selected the Feline Health Research Fund as a worthy candidate.
- The Feline Health Research Fund's mandate is to "SUPPORT THE ADVANCE OF FELINE HEALTH SO THAT NO KITTEN OR CAT SUFFERS FROM A PREVENTABLE SICKNESS AND TO ENSURE FIRST RATE TREATMENTS ARE DEVELOPED TO KEEP CATS WELL." We feel the FHRF mandate is particularly appropriate to the circumstances surrounding irradiated cat foods.
- The FHRF directs financial support to areas of feline research affecting the well being of cats in Australia. Research funded by the FHRF covers scientific and clinical work to study the causes, prevention and cures of diseases in cats, and will be performed at eligible Australian Universities and Research Institutes.
- Equally important is that research will be conducted under strict ethical guidelines ensuring the welfare of cats.
- For more information on the Feline Health Research Fund, please visit their website at WWW.FHRF.ORG.AU.

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3 ONGOING RESEARCH INTO IRRADIATION OF DRY CAT FOODS

- Although Champion Petfoods has permanently withdrawn from the Australian market, we remain committed to on-going research which we hope will bring added clarity to the effect of high irradiation on dry cat foods.
- Through extensive test results, experts confirm ORIJEN Cat foods meet and exceed all nutritional standards that are set by AAFCO, NRC, and other various research on cat foods.
- Our research team – including international nutritional experts and veterinary toxicologists – has reviewed all data and test results concerning ORIJEN cat food in Australia, including research on existing scientific journal articles and available research data.
- With the exception of the pathway of increased oxidation and reduced vitamin availability resulting from the high (61kGy) irradiation dosage applied in Australia, all known causes for the Leukoencephalomyelopathy in cats have been eliminated. As Champion Petfoods Ltd. does not endorse testing on animals, we will not physically test this hypothesis in a laboratory, and believe there is sufficient evidence from previous published scientific studies to conclude that irradiation is the cause of disease in Australia.

WHAT CHAMPION KNEW ABOUT IRRADIATION IN AUSTRALIA

- 1 The error made by Champion was** in not realizing our foods would be irradiated upon entry into Australia. The health certificates issued for pet food export to Australia make no reference for irradiation upon arrival and while some reference is made to potential irradiation in background documents, this was not noticed as a concern within our company.
- 2 A “permit to import”** which does make a clear reference to the irradiation requirements, is sent only to the importer, and not to the manufacturer. It is not stated on this document that irradiation poses a potential risk to the pet food, and we cannot find any reference to the potential danger of irradiation on any subsequent document in our files of export and import requirements for Australia.
- 3 Once we discovered our foods were irradiated,** we began to investigate why and whether the process was safe. We engaged the Canadian Consulate in Sydney to discuss with AQIS the reasons why our foods were irradiated and to ask whether there were possibilities to avoid the irradiation process. AQIS advised our consulate that:

“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.”

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- 4 When early reports began to emerge** from Australia concerning cats fed ORIJEN, we immediately re-tested retained samples and found them to be completely normal. As more reports emerged, we began to suspect environmental factors specific to Australia, including potential contaminated water supplies, poisonous insects, other foods fed in conjunction with ORIJEN, and irradiation.
- 5 We contacted the company contracted** to perform gamma irradiation in Australia and received assurances that the irradiation process was safe for our foods.
- 6 At this time very little research** on the effect of irradiation on dry cat foods was available. We were assured by irradiation experts in Australia that the process was safe.
- 7 While Champion Petfoods no longer exports to Australia**, we believe that the tradition of irradiating dry cat foods entering Australia continues which, we assume, reflects the belief at AQIS that the process is safe.

None of the above detracts from the very strong feeling all of us have at Champion - that we should have known more about exporting to Australia prior to making the first shipment. Rather, this information is provided to explain the sequence of events.

Of the more than 50 countries to which we export ORIJEN products, none require irradiation as part of the import process.



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