

June 27, 2019

## UPDATE ON DILATED CARDIOMYOPATHY

To Champion Petfoods Distributors and Retailers:

From: John Frierott, Interim CEO and COO

Dear Trusted Partner,

I am writing today to provide you with an update on the important issue of Dilated Cardiomyopathy, or DCM, in dogs. On June 27, 2019 the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) posted an update on DCM which included reports it has received regarding pets with DCM. The update listed Champion Petfoods' brands, along with many other pet food companies' brands, as foods that some pets who were diagnosed with DCM had eaten.

The FDA's announcement says it is "continuing to investigate and gather more information in an effort to identify whether there is a specific dietary link to development of DCM." More specifically, its announcement today provides no causative scientific link between DCM and our products, ingredients or grain-free diets as a whole. We think it is misleading for the FDA to post the names of brands, while at the same time fully stating that they have no scientific evidence linking diet to DCM.

We anticipate that this unfortunate decision by the FDA will only serve to further confuse Pet Lovers, which will in turn create challenges for you. It's important that you know that Champion is not sitting idly as Pet Lovers struggle to understand this issue. Therefore, we are providing you with the attached document to inform you of the actions we are taking relative to DCM. Additionally, we will be responding to social media and other public commentary with stronger, more direct messaging, and will be working with Pet Lover publications to educate consumers with the facts.

We recognize that the DCM issue is disruptive to your business, but we want you to know that we have the right people and knowledge at Champion, and we assure you that our foods are safe. I also want to thank you for your understanding and continued support as we, along with the rest of our industry, work to address this frustrating situation.

If you have any questions about this new FDA announcement or how Champion is handling it, please contact your Customer Engagement representative or our Customer Care team.

Thank you for your continued trust in Champion. We don't take that trust lightly and will continue our work in providing the World's Best Petfood.

Sincerely,

John Frierott

June 27, 2019

## TRUST & DCM CONCERNS

Pet Lovers have always trusted Champion Petfoods' ORIJEN and ACANA as the pet food brands they can feed their pets with absolute confidence. We at Champion understand that Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) may be a concern for some pet lovers, and we are providing the information below to help them navigate this important discussion.

DCM is a rare but serious condition. Of note, of the 77 million dogs in the U.S., 0.5% to 1% have DCM, and of those dogs with DCM, approximately 0.1% are speculated to have DCM related to diet, although that is not scientifically proven. It is more prevalent in certain breeds, especially many larger dogs. While the cause of DCM is unknown, it has recently been speculated by some that grain-free foods containing certain carbohydrates could potentially lead to a deficiency of the amino acid taurine in some dogs. Insufficient taurine in the body has been linked to DCM in several species of animals, including dogs. The carbohydrates cited in those reports cover a broad category of ingredients classified as legumes, which includes peas and lentils. In the recipes Champion makes, we emphasize fresh and raw meat with total animal-derived ingredients ranging from 60 to 85 percent of the finished product. Legumes are not a significant feature in Champion's recipes, and never have been.

Upon being informed of these new questions about DCM, the FDA issued a report stating that further scientific research needs to be done to determine if there is a connection between diet and DCM. That research will take some time to complete. As Pet Lovers ourselves, we care deeply about any issue that affects the health and wellness of pets. Champion carries out exhaustive research internally and with independent labs and works with industry leaders to support the research in pet nutrition, including DCM. While we continue to focus on this essential work, it is important to again note that no connection between DCM and diet has been proven.

### **Champion's Work on DCM:**

- We held two long-term feeding trials with enhanced DCM protocols on two different breeds of dogs - Beagles and Labs. We do these trials regularly on all of our diets, but we enhanced these trials to measure taurine levels in blood to see how diet impacted taurine levels over time. Not only did the dogs appear to enjoy the diet, there were no signs of DCM or precursors to DCM after our trials.
- We completed studies on starch, fiber, and amino acid in all our diets and found no concerns.
- We performed digestibility and bioavailability studies of amino acids on different diets, with positive results.
- We are actively working internally and with other industry leaders to research and learn more about DCM.

- Champion has a senior nutrition scientist working with a committee of nutrition experts from other pet food companies who meet regularly to review any DCM developments, research data, and evaluate ideas to continue to study and understand this topic.
- We continuously evaluate all nutrients in our dog foods with the goal of constant improvement and evolution of Champion's recipes. In September 2018, we reformulated and launched our ACANA Singles foods, adding more meat and taurine supplementation to exceed a Champion established minimum.
- Our Biologically Appropriate foods mission is based on the best available research at any one time, including research into DCM. As more facts become known and accepted, Champion adjusts its foods accordingly with the ultimate goal of creating an ideal or optimal nutrient range for dog foods.
- We created the Champion Transparency Council, opening our doors to established independent veterinarians and to Pet Lovers in the spirit of true openness.

There is still much to be learned about DCM. Of the 77 million dogs in the U.S., 0.5% to 1% have DCM, and of those dogs with DCM, approximately 0.1% are speculated to have DCM related to diet, although that is not scientifically proven. There is no causative scientific data drawing conclusions or providing any evidence that links our foods, or any grain-free foods, to DCM.

### **Trusted by Pet Lovers**

While we and the industry work to learn more about DCM, you can trust that Champion foods are safe for your pets. From our company's founding, we have worked to source the highest quality ingredients and to source them whenever possible from local suppliers. We have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to build the most sanitary, most state-of-the-art pet food facilities in the world; in fact, our operations surpass most human food production facilities. We make the food ourselves, we don't use contract producers, so you can trust that ACANA and ORIJEN are made in strict accordance to our own recipes from high quality ingredients. And we employ food scientists and nutritionists who hold numerous PhD's, MSc's and who, along with our in-house veterinarian, test and research our foods every day. So, if you want to know if you can trust Champion, we ask that you judge us by our actions, not by unproven theories or by what others may say about us. Champion's goal has always been to make the World's Best Petfood, and to earn the trust of Pet Lovers everywhere.