

# Illness, death in hundreds of dogs spurs FDA action against dog food maker

18 August 2021



An initial inspection of Midwestern's Chickasha, Okla., plant was triggered by reports of illness or death in dogs that had eaten the company's SPORTMiX brand dry dog [food](#).

Samples of SPORTMiX were found to contain levels of aflatoxin as high as 558 parts per billion (ppb). The FDA considers pet food to be contaminated if it contains more than 20 ppb of aflatoxin.

Aflatoxins are toxins produced by the mold *Aspergillus flavus*, which can grow on corn and other grains used as ingredients in pet food. At high levels, aflatoxins can cause illness and death in pets.

This is not the first time Midwestern Pet Foods has struggled with product contamination: In March, samples of pet food made at the company's plant in Monmouth, Ill., tested positive for salmonella.

Midwestern has recalled a range of pet foods and the FDA has conducted inspections of the company's three other manufacturing plants. Those inspections uncovered significant violations of a number of federal regulations.

"The FDA is dedicated to taking all steps possible to help pet owners have confidence that the food they buy for their animal companions is safe and wholesome," said Steven Solomon, director of the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine. "It is imperative that manufacturers and distributors of pet foods understand their responsibility to comply with all requirements of federal law and FDA regulations and, when applicable, to implement a robust hazard analysis and risk-based preventive controls program."

**More information:** Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for more on the [warning letter](#).

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday that it has sent a warning letter to a pet food company linked to contaminated food that may have caused illness or death in hundreds of dogs.

The letter was issued after inspections of Midwestern Pet Foods Inc.'s manufacturing sites found violations of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, the agency said in a [news release](#).

The FDA told the company it has 15 working days to show specific steps it's taken to correct any violations. Failure to adequately correct any violations could result in [legal action](#), including product seizure and/or injunction, the agency said.

As of Aug. 9, the FDA was aware of more than 130 pet deaths and more than 220 pet illnesses that may be linked to eating [pet food](#) made by Midwestern, but the agency said the actual numbers may be higher.

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