



MAR 9 2012

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Brown:

Thank you for your February 6, 2012 letter expressing concern about chicken jerky treats.

FDA has been testing chicken jerky treats since 2007 in response to reports of illness in dogs that may be associated with the treats. FDA continues to actively investigate these reports and conduct analysis for multiple different chemical and microbiological contaminants.

During 2011 and previous years, FDA tested more than 170 samples of chicken jerky products. During the first weeks of 2012, FDA's Veterinary Laboratory Response Network (Vet-LRN) tested 80 samples where we have complete results. The results of 153 tests are still pending. In addition, several animal health diagnostic laboratories in the United States are working with FDA to determine why some of these products are associated with illness in dogs. To date, scientists have not been able to determine a definitive cause for the reported illnesses.

Jerky samples were tested for many different potential contaminants. Some samples were tested for mycotoxins (ochratoxin, vomitoxin and aflatoxin), and the results of these tests were negative. The laboratories also performed screens for drugs, poisons and toxins, and these tests also were negative.

In the case of a few samples, laboratories performed heavy metals and trace elements analysis. No toxic concentrations of metals were discovered in those samples. Many samples were tested for melamine, and the results all were negative. Laboratories also received negative results on tests for formaldehyde, tetracycline breakdown products, and maleic acid.

Propylene Glycol was found at low levels in about half of the samples where laboratories tested for this substance, but the levels were considered to be nontoxic. Propylene Glycol is an allowed feed ingredient in pet foods.

Page 2 – The Honorable Sherrod Brown

FDA is continuing to advise pet owners who choose to feed their dogs chicken jerky products to watch their dogs carefully for any or all of the following signs that may occur within hours to days of feeding the products: decreased appetite, decreased activity, vomiting, diarrhea (sometimes with blood), increased water consumption or increased urination. If the dog shows any of these signs, owners should stop feeding the chicken jerky product. FDA also recommends that pet owners consult their veterinarian if signs are severe or persist for more than 24 hours.

No specific products have been recalled or implicated because the laboratories running tests have not detected a contaminant that could have caused the reported illnesses. FDA continues to actively investigate the problem and its origin. If FDA finds evidence of a contaminant that may be responsible for illness in pets that consume chicken jerky treats, FDA will take appropriate action and notify the public.

Thank you for your concern about the health of pets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick O. McGarey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "M".

Patrick O. McGarey
Assistant Commissioner for Budget