



## Q&A Regarding DCM (Dilated Cardiomyopathy) July 15, 2019

1. What is Dilated Cardiomyopathy?
  - Dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) is a disease in which the heart becomes enlarged and is not able to pump blood effectively.
  - Symptoms of DCM include exercise intolerance, pale gums, coughing, difficulty breathing, intermittent weakness or even sudden death.
  - Particular breeds are predisposed to DCM including Golden Retrievers, Doberman Pinschers, Great Danes, Boxers and Cocker Spaniels, though any breed can be affected.
  - Taurine deficiency is a known cause of DCM, though not all pets diagnosed with DCM have low taurine levels.
  - Diagnosis of DCM can only be made by echocardiography as this diagnostic is able to measure the heart chambers and pump functionality of the heart.
2. What has the FDA shared regarding cases of Dilated Cardiomyopathy that have been reported to them prior to June 27, 2019?
  - In July 2018 the FDA issued an alert that they were investigating DCM in atypical dog breeds that ate certain grain-free pet foods containing peas, lentils and other legumes or potatoes. They followed this report with an update and Q&A document regarding this issue. In this update, the FDA stated "At this time, we are not advising dietary changes based solely on the information we have gathered so far".
  - In February 2019 the FDA provided another update, which reported that 90% of the diets named in the reports they had received were grain-free, though 10% did contain grains.
3. The FDA released a new report on June 27, 2019. What was shared in this report?
  - On June 27, 2019 the FDA released an update regarding their investigation into reports of DCM in dogs eating "certain pet foods containing a high proportion of peas, lentils, other legume seeds (pulses), and/or potatoes in various forms (whole, flour, protein, etc.) as main ingredients".
  - In this report, the FDA states that it has not established causation between any particular diet and the development of DCM in some dogs.
  - The FDA also recommends before making any diet changes, pet owners should work with their veterinarian to determine the most appropriate diet for their pets' specific needs.
  - The FDA also released the case information for the complaints the FDA has received related to this issue from January 1, 2014 to April 30, 2019 – that report can be found [here](#).



- This release includes all 524 case reports of DCM (560 individual dogs and 14 individual cats). The FDA is focused only on the dog reports at this time.
  - The three brands overrepresented in the case reports received by the FDA include Acana, Zignature and Taste of the Wild. Many other brands, including all major pet food manufacturers, were named in the cases reported to the FDA.
  - Of the reported cases, 91% were fed grain-free diets, and 93% contained peas and/or lentils. The most common animal protein in the diets reported to the FDA included chicken and lamb. The FDA states that nearly all of the grain-free products had adequate levels of methionine-cystine (above the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) minimum nutritional requirement of 0.65% for adult dogs) and that they are still gathering information to understand “if (and how) taurine metabolism may have a role in these reports”.
4. Are all dogs eating grain-free diets at risk for developing DCM?
- No! Grain-free pet foods have been growing in popularity since the early 1980s.
  - Currently, there are approximately 18 million dogs eating grain-free diets in the United States.
5. Is Blue Buffalo listed in any of the reports shared by the FDA?
- Yes, Blue Buffalo diets (being fed as the sole diet or in conjunction with other diets) were named in 31 of the canine case reports shared by the FDA on 6/27/19. At this time, it is uncertain how many of the 31 cases had a confirmed diagnosis of DCM.
  - No BLUE Natural Veterinary Diet formulas were listed in the reports.
6. What does Blue Buffalo do to ensure our formulas are safe?
- Blue Buffalo employs animal nutritionists, scientists, and veterinarians with decades of experience in the pet food industry. These professionals ensure that we utilize the most advanced formulation and manufacturing strategies possible.
  - Blue Buffalo diets undergo a robust formulation, manufacturing and testing process to ensure their safety, efficacy and compliance with all nutrient requirements.
  - All Blue Buffalo formulas have adequate taurine levels:
    - Blue Buffalo formulas are meat first (meat is an excellent source of taurine) and have added ingredients that supply approximately 0.08% taurine (on as-fed basis).
    - In addition, all canine diets are supplemented with methionine, which can be converted to taurine in the dog’s body. The methionine + cystine minimum in all Blue Buffalo canine formulas is 0.75% (on as-fed basis), which is well above the AAFCO minimum.



- Large Breed & Senior formulas are supplemented with an additional 0.1% taurine.
  - All Blue Buffalo formulas undergo feeding studies, including digestibility and nutrient analyses, to help ensure their safety and efficacy.
  - The Pet Food Institute, which represents 98% of U.S. pet food and treats, has formed a subcommittee to determine what, if any, role diet plays in canine DCM. Scientists and other experts have come together with other pet food manufacturers to help further our understanding of this issue. Any new learnings from this endeavor will be applied to Blue Buffalo formulations as appropriate.
  - Blue Buffalo is evaluating the data shared by the FDA and will be utilizing this data in our own research regarding canine DCM.
7. Does Blue Buffalo manufacture to be compliant with WSAVA guidelines?
- Blue Buffalo formulates and manufactures to meet the criteria of evaluating commercial pet foods as outlined by the WSAVA (World Small Animal Veterinary Association) Global Nutrition Committee.\*

\* - [https://www.wsava.org/WSAVA/media/Images/Association%20logos/WSAVA-Nutrition-Assessment-Guidelines-\(2011\)\\_JSAP.pdf](https://www.wsava.org/WSAVA/media/Images/Association%20logos/WSAVA-Nutrition-Assessment-Guidelines-(2011)_JSAP.pdf)