

Our Commitment to Quality and Ingredient Integrity

On May 3rd, Menu Foods expanded their product recall to include additional canned pet foods. Please be assured that no Nature's Variety products have been included in this or any previous recall. Our products do not contain any of the contaminated ingredients, such as wheat gluten, corn gluten meal, or rice protein concentrate. Nature's Variety products continue to be healthy and safe for your special dog or cat.

Importantly, our nutritious products are formulated to provide protein from animal sources, such as meat, poultry, or fish. We do not use lower cost vegetable or grain glutens/concentrates, such as those named in the recalls. By providing authentic nutrition for your precious pets, we have avoided involvement in the recall and protected your beloved animal companions.

For added assurance, we took an additional safety measure and tested random samples of our canned diet formulations. There was absolutely no melamine detected. Because we understand that you want to be 100% confident in the safety of your pet's diet, we have also submitted our kibble products for testing, even though there is no reason to even remotely suspect any issues.

Our track record continues to speak to our product integrity. Feel confident about feeding Nature's Variety, knowing that none of our products have been involved in the recall, and all of our products have tested melamine free. Since the beginning of the recall situation, Nature's Variety has assured you that our products are safe – this is still the case today. We remain committed to quality and ingredient integrity. We have and will continue to use only superior ingredients in our healthy, nutritious products. Thank you for your continued trust in Nature's Variety. Your pet's health and happiness is our first priority.

In its recent press release, Menu Foods indicates that the latest recall expansion was due to the discovery of melamine cross contamination in products that do not have wheat gluten in the formulation. With two specific exceptions* those were all cuts and gravy products.

The levels of melamine contamination found in the cross-contaminated products involved in the May 3rd recall were in the 15-20 ppm range, as contrasted with up to 1,000 ppm in the products formulated with the contaminated wheat gluten, which had 20,000 ppm (2%) melamine in it. We understand that the FDA has established a level of concern at 40 ppm, but continues to enforce a zero-tolerance policy.

Menu is being extremely aggressive in this recall expansion as they do not want to have to do this again. Consequently, they decided that they would recall ALL cuts and gravy products produced during the time that they had ChemNutra wheat gluten in the ingredients room, regardless of whether the products were or were not formulated with wheat gluten.

Certainly, the entire industry is now focused on this issue and adjusting procedures and protocols to prevent anything like this from happening again. Some of the highest quality pet food manufacturers whose facilities and procedures have been inspected multiple times by various government agencies, customers and third-party auditors were victimized by the suppliers of the contaminated ingredients. Our eyes are now open to this kind of adulteration and we are adjusting procedures to detect it.

We understand, however, that trust in our industry needs to be re-earned. This is especially the case since the American Nutrition recall announced on April 27th involving certain can formulations that were made with rice protein concentrate. According to the companies whose products were affected, American Nutrition included rice protein concentrate even though it was not specified in the formulation. Although American Nutrition believes that it was in compliance with regulations when it included the rice protein concentrate in formulations that included rice, this substitution is disturbing.

Nature's Variety makes no compromises when it comes to our ingredients. Based on ongoing reviews with our manufacturers, and clear discussions of procedures with them, Nature's Variety has no reason to believe that there has been any substitution in any of our can or kibble formulations. (We manufacture raw diets in our own facility in Lincoln, Nebraska, so absolutely no compromises are made.) We have reinforced these specifications with our manufacturers and have stepped up our internal procedures to audit their compliance even more closely.

What is Cyanuric Acid and How Does It Relate to the Recent Recalls?

Cyanuric acid is a chemical related to melamine and to a chemical also used in swimming pool water conditioning. Cyanuric acid has been found in some samples of contaminated pet food. Scientists at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, have reported that they have reproduced the crystals found in cat urine of animals that ate contaminated food by mixing melamine, cyanuric acid, and cat urine in the lab. The resulting crystals were identical chemically to those found in the cats. It appears that this combination is responsible for the renal failure in cats and dogs, which would seem to explain a mystery as to how melamine alone could cause such problems at levels well below those at which melamine crystals formed in rats and mice in previous studies.

*The exceptions are two formulas of Natural Life, loaf-style products. On April 17, Natural Life Vegetarian formula, loaf-style product became the only loaf-style product involved in the Menu recall. As a vegetarian formulation it had wheat gluten as a protein source. When some incidents of cross contamination in the cuts and gravy products were reported recently, Menu reviewed their production records to determine which products were run immediately after the Natural Life Vegetarian formulas during the time when ChemNutra wheat gluten was in the plant, as they would be the only ones subject to cross contamination. Those formulas were Natural Life Lamaderm and Puppy formulas. Again, those are the only loaf-style products that had any risk of cross contamination. No Nature's Variety products were manufactured on the same day as the Natural Life Vegetarian formulas.

