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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Use Extreme Caution Feeding Jerky Treats to Your Pets

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Earlier this month, a major pet store chain announced it will no longer be selling any jerky treats made in China, effective in March. This is following reports to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from owners who reported at least 5,600 dogs becoming ill and more than 1,000 dog deaths after eating such treats. While the majority of reports concern dogs, there are reports of 24 cats getting sick as well. Although the FDA has not established a link between these treats and illness, many veterinarians and pet stores are no longer recommending these jerky treats.

This is not a new concern. Since 2007, the FDA has been receiving complaints of illness in pets after consuming the jerky treats. While no specific brand has been named, all complaints have centered on chicken, beef, or sweet potato jerky treats obtained from China. Lab investigations with more than 1,200 samples have ruled out heavy metals, mycotoxins, Salmonella, antibiotics, pesticides and a variety of other normally problematic substances. Melamine, the toxic chemical involved in the 2007 massive pet food recall, has been ruled out as a cause of these illnesses.

Symptoms of illness from the jerky treats include vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy. Increased water consumption and increased urination are also noted in many cases. It is important to remember that these symptoms can arise with a great many medical conditions, so even if your pet has not consumed a jerky treat, but is exhibiting any of these symptoms, you should contact your veterinarian for advice and treatment. They are your best source for factual information and are well-equipped to help make sure that your pets will receive the highest level of medical care.

Pet owners should report any illnesses associated with the feeding of any sort of jerky treats (or any other suspected pet food) to www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary. For more information, contact your veterinarian or visit the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association at www.vtvets.org.

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The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), founded in 1898, is a professional organization of more than 330 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine. For more information, visit www.vtvets.org or call (802) 878-6888.