

RESOLUTION 2—2013
Regular Winter Session

[Submitted by Petition](#)

JERKY PET TREATS

RESOLVED, that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) adopt the following position on the pet food commonly known as “jerky pet treats.”

Jerky pet treats are not necessary for adequate nutrition. Adulterants have been found in jerky pet treats, and to mitigate the risk that pets may become sick and potentially die from ingesting them, the AVMA discourages the feeding of jerky pet treats until further information on their safety is available. Veterinarians are encouraged to report suspected jerky pet treat-related illnesses to the FDA, and to prominently utilize a display and notification summary similar to the requirements reflected in Section 211 of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act.

Statement about the Resolution

Background: Since 2007, an increasing number of illnesses in pets associated with the consumption of jerky pet treats have been reported to the Food and Drug Administration and the Veterinary Information Network. In 2007, a manufacturer’s voluntary recall was implemented that removed most of the jerky treats from the shelves for approximately one year. This expired and treats were sold again. As of September 24, 2013, FDA has received approximately 3000 reports of pet illnesses which may be related to consumption of the jerky treats. Most of the reports involve jerky products sourced from China. The reports involve more than 3600 dogs, 10 cats and include more than 580 deaths. This is likely a small fraction of affected animals.

There does not appear to be a geographic pattern to the case reports though the initial reports centered on the east coast. About 60 percent of the reports are for gastrointestinal illness (with or without elevated liver enzymes) and about 30 percent relate to kidney or urinary signs, with an odd hallmark Fanconi syndrome in many cases. The remaining 10% of cases involve a variety of other signs, including convulsions, tremors, hives, and skin irritation.¹ A recent report in the Australian Veterinary Journal documented almost identical conditions in 108 dogs having consumed chicken jerky treats produced in the same facilities in China.²

Where we are today: The 2013 voluntary manufacturer’s recall of numerous brands of chicken jerky treats, due to adulterants found by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets food safety laboratory, is over. It should be noted that the FDA has issued warnings against consumption but never issued a government enforced recall of these products. Therefore, there is no process in place to prevent further sale of these products at this time. These products are currently labeled “USDA inspected,” “wholesome,” “all natural,” and in some instances “organic,” which may be misleading to the lay public. The public places a great deal of trust in the accuracy of labeling and in organizations such as the FDA and AVMA to safeguard the public health of all consumers.

Veterinarians widely recommend refraining from feeding dogs jerky while the studies continue. As this is an ongoing problem facing our clientele as well as ourselves, we are asking for an official position addressing this issue by our professional organization to protect the health of our companion animals and public health in general.

1. [http://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/safetyhealth/productsafetyinformation/ucm295445.htm#What is the issue](http://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/safetyhealth/productsafetyinformation/ucm295445.htm#What_is_the_issue)
2. Thompson, M., Fleeman, L., Kessell, A., Steenhard, L. and Foster, S. (2013), Acquired proximal renal tubulopathy in dogs exposed to a common dried chicken treat: retrospective study of 108 cases (2007–2009). Australian Veterinary Journal, 91: 368–373

Financial Impact: None

	RECOMMEND APPROVAL	RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL	RECOMMEND REFERRAL TO ...*	NO RECOMMENDATION
<i>Executive Board</i>		X		
<i>House Advisory Committee</i>				X
<i>Reference Committee #7</i>			X-EB	#####
The House approved referring Resolution 2 to the Executive Board with the following recommendation— That rather than developing a policy, the AVMA encourage its members to provide input to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on incidents and conditions, which could be associated with pet food and treats; and continue to work with FDA to enhance efforts in safeguarding a healthy pet population through quality control of pet food and treats.				

	APPROVED	DISAPPROVED	REFERRED TO ...*
HOD ACTION			X-EB