

**Diamond Pet Foods/Taste of the Wild
Company Statement and FAQs
DCM/FDA
REVISED 6.28.19**

Like the FDA and pet owners like you, we are concerned about the reported cases of dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) in dogs that are not genetically predisposed to the condition. The FDA announced on June 27 that they have received 515 reported cases of DCM in dogs as they continue to study potential connections between DCM and all types of diets, including diets without grain (grain-free). Fifty-three dogs were fed a Taste of the Wild food.

To date, the FDA still has not found any science-based causes to link grain-free diets — including Taste of the Wild — to DCM. As they note, it is a complex issue with numerous factors to consider, such as breeds that have a genetic predisposition for developing DCM. We continue to monitor this issue closely and support ongoing research efforts.

Since the FDA's initial DCM report was released in 2018, more than 14 million bags of Taste of the Wild dog food were produced and sold in the United States. While 53 is a small number of incidences in comparison to the number of dogs eating Taste of the Wild, we do not want to minimize what the affected dogs and their pet parents have experienced. Our top priority is, and always will be, to provide pets with quality, safe food that meets all federal and state regulatory guidelines.

We encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns. In the meantime, because our pets mean a lot to us and no definitive cause has yet been identified, there is high confusion and concern, resulting in incorrect information in the media and social media. We, like the FDA, are focusing on science-based findings and information, and we encourage you to do so as well.

FAQs

General DCM

Q. What is DCM, and is it life-threatening?

A. Canine DCM is a condition that results in an enlarged heart. As the heart and its chambers become dilated, it becomes harder for the heart to pump, and heart valves may leak, leading to a buildup of fluids in the chest and abdomen. DCM will lead to congestive heart failure if left untreated. In some dogs, heart function may improve with appropriate veterinary treatment and dietary modification, if caught early.

Additional facts about DCM are listed below.

- DCM is much more common in large dogs (greater than 50 pounds) than small dogs. However, cocker spaniels are prone to a certain form of DCM typically associated with taurine deficiency.

- According to Dr. John Rush, a veterinary cardiologist, certain breeds such as Great Danes, German shepherds, Irish wolfhounds, Newfoundlands and St. Bernards are at risk, while boxers and Doberman pinschers are predisposed to the disease. In addition to the above breeds, cocker spaniels and Portuguese water dogs may also develop forms of the disease.
- According to Tufts University's Petfoodology blog, 10 to 15% of dogs will develop some form of heart disease in their lives. Dr. Rush has indicated DCM as the second most common cause of congestive heart failure in dogs.

Q. Does your food cause DCM?

A. To date, the FDA still has not found any science-based causes to link grain-free diets — including Taste of the Wild — to DCM. As they note, it is a complex issue with numerous factors to consider, such as breeds that have a genetic predisposition for developing DCM. We continue to monitor this issue closely and support ongoing research efforts, because our top priority is, and always will be, to provide pets with quality, safe food that meets all federal and state regulatory guidelines.

Q. Will you remove peas, legumes, lentils and potatoes from your formulas as they may be linked to DCM?

A. Our pet nutrition and veterinary experts select all of our ingredients with the health and well-being of pets in mind. Peas, legumes, lentils and potatoes are included because they are a great source of protein, fiber and antioxidants, and they help to make our recipes complete and balanced. To date, the FDA still has not found any science-based causes to link grain-free diets, peas, legumes, lentils and potatoes to DCM, therefore we are not planning to remove these ingredients until a science-based link is discovered.

Q. What formula should I switch to if I am concerned about grain-free food?

A. We recommend consulting with your veterinarian if you have concerns about your dog's health and diet. We have a variety of recipes with and without grains for you to choose from, and all of our recipes meet both the FDA and the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) guidelines and are complete and balanced. While the FDA is studying potential connections between grain-free diets and DCM, no science-based links have been made. Based on the information the FDA has collected, they are not recommending dietary changes.

Q. Is my dog going to get DCM? They are on a grain-free diet.

A. To date, the FDA still has not found any science-based causes to link grain-free diets — including Taste of the Wild — to DCM. As they note, it is a complex issue with numerous factors to consider, such as breeds that have a genetic predisposition for developing DCM. We continue to monitor this issue closely and support ongoing research efforts. If you have any concerns, we encourage you to consult directly with your veterinarian.

Q. Should I add anything to your formula to make sure my dog doesn't get DCM?

A. All of our recipes are complete and balanced and meet both the FDA and the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) guidelines. Additionally, starting last summer we

began adding taurine to recipes without grains because some dogs with DCM have been found to have low taurine levels. It's not necessary to supplement your pet's food. If you have any questions about your pet's specific nutritional needs, it is best to talk with your veterinarian.

Investigation/Research Questions

Q. The FDA has reported that your food has caused 53 cases of DCM. Why haven't you recalled it? / What are you doing to make it safe?

A. Like the FDA and pet owners like you, we are concerned about the reported cases of dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) in dogs that are not genetically predisposed to the condition. Throughout their studies, though, the FDA still has not found any science-based causes to link grain-free diets — including Taste of the Wild — to DCM; therefore, there are no recalls. As they note, it is a complex issue with numerous factors to consider, such as breeds that have a genetic predisposition for developing DCM. We continue to monitor this issue closely and support ongoing research efforts, because our top priority is, and always will be, to provide pets with quality, safe food that meets all federal and state regulatory guidelines.

Based on information collected by the FDA, they do not believe the foods need to be removed from the market.

Q. How many confirmed cases of DCM have been reported?

A. The FDA announced on June 27 that since January 2014 they have received 515 reported cases of DCM in dogs as it studies potential connections between DCM and all types of diets, including diets without grain (grain-free). Of those cases, 53 dogs were being fed a Taste of the Wild food.

Q. How long will the FDA's investigation take?

A. There is no way to know how long the investigation will take, but, like you, we hope it will be resolved soon. We think it is important for pet food companies and pet owners alike to focus on supporting and collaborating as much as is possible with the scientists doing this specialized research. Should you have any further questions or concerns about your pet, pet food or information you are seeing, please don't hesitate to reach out to us or your veterinarian.

Q. What research do you have about DCM and grain-free diets? How is Diamond contributing to the FDA investigation?

A. In our partnership with the Pet Food Institute, we have come together with other pet food makers to help further our understanding of any potential connection between DCM and diet. We continue to monitor this issue closely and support ongoing research efforts.

Q. Is your company researching the possible connection between DCM and grain-free diets?

A. As a member of the Pet Food Institute, we participate in funding a committee of industry scientists working on this issue. Additionally, our veterinary and nutrition teams are offering to collaborate with researchers to provide any additional information they may need to conduct their studies.

Q. How do I know if I can trust the information that I'm seeing on line? How do I know if it is science-based?

A. We, like the FDA, use science-based findings to make decisions. You can also use this approach to sort out which information can be more trusted online or in other mediums. When you take care to do this, you can help the researchers working to identify a cause because as more people find their science-based work, more support it and advance the knowledge about canine health. A report that is science-based means that: 1) it came from use of a specific research approach (using the scientific method where a hypothesis is formed and then the study is properly structured to prove or disprove it), and 2) the findings have been reviewed and approved by other scientific peers (published in a scientific journal).

Sick Dog/Potential Sick Dog

Q. I cannot afford an echocardiogram, but I think my dog has DCM because of your food — you should pay!

A. We are sorry to hear your dog may have DCM. Please know that to date, the FDA still has not found any science-based causes to link grain-free diets — including Taste of the Wild — to DCM. As they note, it is a complex issue with numerous factors to consider, such as breeds that have a genetic predisposition for developing DCM. We continue to monitor this issue closely and support ongoing research efforts. We encourage you to talk to your veterinarian about your dog's symptoms. If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Q. My dog has DCM and it's because of your food!

A. We are so sorry to hear of your dog's diagnosis. We take your concern seriously and we would like to have our veterinary team contact you so they can gather all the information about your dog's situation. It is important also that you submit this case to the FDA for their research if you have not already. Can you please provide your contact information (phone number or email) so our team can reach out to you directly?

Q. I think my dog is sick and may have DCM. What should I do?

A. If your pet is not feeling well, we recommend you contact your veterinarian immediately. Dogs who show symptoms of DCM will often have a heavy cough, weakness, lethargy or a reduced appetite, and/or show signs of difficulty breathing. However, multiple other conditions can also cause these same symptoms, so your veterinarian is the best resource to diagnose and treat your pet.

PREY

Q. I feed my dog TOTW PREY. Was that affected too? If yes, how many cases involved TOTW PREY?

A. Thank you for reaching out to us directly. The FDA announced on June 27 that they have received 515 reported cases of DCM in dogs as it continues to study potential connections between DCM and all types of diets, including diets without grain (grain-free). Fourteen dogs were fed Taste of the Wild PREY. Please know that the FDA still has not found any science-based causes to link grain-free diets — including Taste of the Wild — to DCM. As they note, it is

a complex issue with numerous factors to consider, such as breeds that have a genetic predisposition for developing DCM. We continue to monitor this issue closely and support ongoing research efforts to find the cause.

Taurine-Specific Questions

Q. I've been seeing reports about taurine in dog food. Why is this an issue? Why does it need to be added to dog food?

A. Taurine is not an essential nutrient for dogs because they manufacture their own taurine from other amino acids. However, taurine is included in our formulas because it provides many health benefits, such as immune system, brain, eye and heart support.

Q. Is taurine added to any of your formulas?

A. Yes, taurine is added to all of our grain-free formulas, as well as to our large breed formulas and those containing lamb as the main protein source.

Q. Does your food contain peas, lentils, other legumes or potatoes as main ingredients? Is taurine added to any of your formulas?

A. Yes, all of our grain-free formulas contain those ingredients and are supplemented with taurine, and they have had this supplement since the summer of 2018.

Q. I heard that ingredients like peas, lentils and legumes block taurine absorption, so supplementing the diet with taurine does not matter. What is your stance on this?

A. To date, the FDA still has not found any science-based causes to link grain-free diets to taurine deficiency or DCM. As they note, it is a complex issue with numerous factors to consider, such as breeds that have a genetic predisposition for developing DCM. We continue to monitor this issue closely and support ongoing research efforts, because our top priority is to provide pets with quality, safe food that meets all federal and state regulatory guidelines.