



## SA faces pet food shock

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Two big pet food manufacturers have removed some of their products from shelves after reports that some animals fell ill after eating of the food.

In the one instance, Hill's Pet Nutrition has recalled all stock of their Prescription Diet m/d Feline dry food.

The product was recalled in the US after reports that it could contain melamine and melamine by-products that had been detected in wheat gluten. Melamine is used as a fertiliser in Asia.

Hill's spokesperson Dr Guy Fyvie said no cats in the US had fallen ill after eating Prescription Diet m/d Feline dry food and that the recall was purely a precautionary measure.

Fyvie said cats in SA were never at risk as the potentially affected product had not left the warehouses for shops.

### Acute renal failure

But while investigating this story, it emerged that one of the country's premier dog food companies announced that it was to withdraw its dog food from shelves around the country.

Vets Choice, manufactured by Royal Canin, is a premium dog food product sold only at veterinarian's offices and pet shops.

According to South African Veterinary Association's Gerhard Steenkamp, Royal Canin decided to recall all Vets Choice products after there were signs of contamination in the food.

Recently, there were confirmed cases of 19 dogs in Cape Town and Johannesburg who had presented with acute renal failure, all of whom appeared to have been fed Vets choice products. According to a statement sent out to veterinary surgeons across the country and in the possession of News24, it wasn't clear what had caused the condition.

### Sales suspended

"In the interests of patients and pending tests being conducted on Vets Choice products, Royal Canin South Africa has decided to suspend all sales of Vets Choice with immediate effect and vets are requested to advise clients to cease feeding Vets Choice products to their pets until further notice," the statement said.

"It will be a huge loss for the company. It's a massive industry," said Steenkamp.

He said it was commendable that the company had decided to recall the product as soon as it heard of the problem with the food as it was unclear what had caused the problem.

Several vets confirmed that they had received a fax asking them to remove Vets Choice products from their shelves pending further instruction.

Vets Choice had at the time of publication not given a statement to confirm that they had ordered a recall of their food.

Recently, Woolworths had to recall all of its dry dog and cat food due to contamination of certain products.

Dr Steenkamp said as different companies manufactured the dog and cat foods and imported them from overseas in most instances - and different ingredients were used in the manufacturing process, any link between the reports of contamination appeared to be coincidental.

He said worried pet owners should speak to their vets who would have up-to-date information and would advise them on what to feed their animals. – (Andrea Botha, News24)

This story was originally published on **News24**.

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