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BUSINESS

Petco Removes China-Made Treats Amid Pet Sickness Fears

FDA Says Initial Tests Haven't Connected the Jerky and Rawhide Treats to Illnesses



Emily Newman and her dog Fred check out all the goodies at a PetSmart event in the Dallas area in October 2014. ASSOCIATED PRESS

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

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LOS ANGELES—Petco said Monday it has removed all remaining Chinese-made dog and cat treats from its website and stores nationwide because of concerns they have sickened thousands of pets and killed 1,000 dogs in the U.S. since 2007.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration says initial tests haven't connected the Chinese jerky and rawhide treats to the illnesses, but the San Diego-based company and its rival PetSmart Inc. vowed in May to ban the snacks.

Petco is the first national pet retailer to pull the treats from its 1,300 stores. Phoenix-based PetSmart said Monday that it plans to have them off shelves at its roughly 1,300 stores by March.

The FDA targeted the treats after receiving more than 4,800 complaints of pet illnesses, including the deaths, after pets ate chicken, duck or sweet potato jerky treats from China. Tests haven't confirmed any connection, but the agency is still investigating.

An FDA spokeswoman on Monday pointed to a news release from May about its investigation and declined further comment.

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Petco Vice President John Sturm said all treats are now made in the U.S. or places such as the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia and South America. The company risked tens of millions of dollars by changing treat vendors, he said.

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