

Sample speech
crafted for a
veterinarian and pet
wellness advocate
(name changed for
privacy).

A Need for Better Pet Food Regulations

Written by Sheri Spencer

Good afternoon, members and board. I'm Dr. Stacy Logan, a small animal veterinarian.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you today where we come together for a common cause: determining the safety and value of the very products we regulate.

Decisions made in this room have very real consequences. It's a responsibility not to be taken lightly. That responsibility isn't merely a duty; it's a moral and ethical burden that should guide our choices. Millions of animals and their families are affected by the choices we make here.

As such, it's troubling to bear witness to trends of the last couple decades in the decline of not just quality of life, but the very lifespan of household pets.

We have the science. We have the technology. And yet, we are failing. Why? Pet food is treated as the dumpster of the meat industries.

For all the oversight we are entrusted with, we have misplaced that trust. We don't have oversight. Regulations are lax. And we leave it to the manufacturers to decide their own quality control. We leave it to the manufacturers to market this food as they please, misleading well-meaning owners over the quality of feed they offer their pets.

But it's not just the animals that suffer. Pets are so much more than just fluffy roommates. They are family. These well meaning owners will spend hundreds, even thousands of dollars in vet bills from preventable inflammatory conditions that are resultant of poor quality food. These owners must watch their pets suffer unnecessarily when manufacturers deny a need to recall, denying any association with feed, even if hundreds of animals suddenly fall ill.

When regulations governing the pet food industry lack the necessary controls, these issues arise with grave consequences.

Risk of contamination and safety concerns looms large. It's almost laughable how many pet foods notoriously test high in heavy metals. Inadequate regulations allow contaminants such as bacteria, mold, and other harmful substances to go unnoticed, leading to outbreaks of illnesses and an increase in pet fatalities.



Safety cannot be compromised. Recent incidents of contamination and illness caused by inadequate quality control highlight the urgent need for enhanced regulation. By implementing stricter oversight measures, we can identify potential hazards early on, before the lives of pets are put at risk.

Nutritional value is not a luxury but a necessity. Just as we carefully assess the nutritional content of our own diets, we must extend the same scrutiny to pet food. Improved oversight would guarantee that pet food actually meets essential nutritional requirements, preventing deficiencies and supporting better long-term health.

Nutritional deficiencies are a pressing issue. Poorly regulated pet food lacks essential nutrients and risks imbalances, contributing to weakened immune systems, chronic health problems, and, in the vulnerable and aging, higher mortality rates. The quality of ingredients used in pet food is too often overlooked, directly impacting the overall health and vitality of our pets. The use of subpar ingredients is a direct consequence of cost-saving and lax regulations. Where is the oversight for 4D meat? Where is the enforcement to keep the dead and diseased out of pet food? Why is testing only performed after pets start to die? The delayed response for recalls poses an increased risk. Even in cases where contamination or safety issues are identified, these harmful products are allowed

to remain on the market and pose continued risks.

Misleading marketing practices further exacerbate the problem. Without stringent regulations, pet food is often falsely promoted as nutritious and safe when it fails to meet adequate standards. Well-meaning pet owners are tricked into making choices that unknowingly jeopardize their pets' health.

These issues demand our immediate attention and action. As stewards of our pets' health, we must advocate for and support the establishment of rigorous regulations and oversight in our industry.

I urge AAFCO to take a leading role in championing better regulation and oversight. Let us collectively work towards establishing and enforcing standards that prioritize the health, nutritional well-being, and safety of our country's pets. Let us lead by example.

A wise man once said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." Gandhi's words ring true.

I urge you, members and board, let your morality choose our pets' welfare. Choose preventative healthcare with better pet food regulations. We alone have this power. With that responsibility comes the burden to act for the betterment of animals everywhere.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

