

FDA NEWS RELEASE

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FDA Health Alert for Merrick Beef Filet Squares Dog Treats Packaged and Distributed by Merrick Pet Care

Products may be contaminated with Salmonella

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration is warning consumers not to use Merrick Beef Filet Squares for dogs distributed by Merrick Pet Care with a package date of “Best By 111911” because the product may be contaminated with Salmonella.

The product was distributed nationwide through retail stores and Internet sales.

Although no illnesses associated with these products have been reported, the FDA is advising consumers in possession of these products not to handle or feed them to their pets. In December 2009, the FDA conducted routine testing of Merrick Beef Filet Squares and detected a positive finding for Salmonella. A follow-up inspection found deficiencies in the packaging and manufacturing processes.

Salmonella can affect both humans and animals. People handling dry pet treats can become infected with Salmonella, especially if they have not thoroughly washed their hands after having contact with the treats or any surfaces exposed to these products. Consumers should dispose of these products in a safe manner by securing them in a covered trash receptacle.

Healthy people infected with Salmonella may experience some or all of the following symptoms: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramping and fever. Although rare, Salmonella can result in more serious ailments including arterial infections, endocarditis (inflammation of the lining of the heart), arthritis, muscle pain, eye irritation, and urinary tract symptoms. Consumers exhibiting these signs after having contact with this product should contact their health care provider immediately.

Pets with Salmonella infections may become lethargic and have diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, fever and vomiting. Some pets may experience only a decreased appetite, fever and abdominal pain. Infected, but otherwise healthy pets can be carriers and infect other animals or humans. If your pet has consumed any of the affected product or is experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your veterinarian immediately.

The affected Merrick Beef Filet Squares were packaged in a 10-ounce green, red and tan re-sealable plastic bag. The “best by” date is imprinted on the top portion of the bag, which is torn off when the bag is opened. The FDA recommends that consumers who are unable to determine the “best by” date discontinue use of the product.

Consumers can report complaints about FDA-regulated pet food and pet treat products by calling the consumer complaint coordinator in their area. Please see <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth/ReportaProblem/ucm182403.htm> for additional information.