

Product Survey of Cat Food for Mycotoxins

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The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) commissioned this survey to obtain occurrence data for a range of mycotoxins in wet and dry cat food samples at two sampling points.

In the summer of 2021, a rise in cases of feline pancytopenia was reported across the UK. Analysis of the cat food suspected to be linked to this increase was carried out however the testing was not able to definitively determine the cause. At the time the FSA reported that: “The results of extensive testing identified higher levels of mycotoxins in some samples of the recalled cat food. This includes specific compounds known as T-2 and HT-2. These products are no longer on sale. Mycotoxins are found in some types of feed and food and do not, in themselves, indicate they are the cause of feline pancytopenia. No causative link between pancytopenia and the recalled cat food products has been established.”

Following on from the above incident the FSA and FSS commissioned work to develop an evidence base for current mycotoxin occurrence data within wet and dry cat food products. The aim of the study was to carry out a survey to obtain quantitative occurrence data for the following mycotoxins: aflatoxins, ochratoxin A, zearalenone, deoxynivalenol, T-2, HT-2, diacetoxyscirpenol and neosolaniol. A further semi-quantitative screen aimed to determine the occurrence of 70 mycotoxins and mycotoxin metabolites (including and not in addition to the mycotoxins in the quantitative screen). Samples were taken from 20 wet and 20 dry cat food products available on the UK market using accredited methods of analysis. The study was carried out at two different time points to assess whether there were seasonal differences. As far as possible, the same samples were bought during both sampling periods.

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