

Pet food

We are responsible for animal feed legislation which covers the manufacture of feed for non-food producing animals including pet food and pet treats.

Non-food producing animals typically include:

- fur-bearing animals (rearing of these animals are banned in the UK)
- animals kept in zoos or circuses
- animals kept in laboratories
- creatures living freely in the wild
- pets

Please note for the purposes of the legislation, horses and rabbits are considered to be food-producing animals.

Important

In response to industry queries during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak we have published [clarification for producers of animal feed in relation to reformulation and labelling of products](#), as well as information on production facilities.

Pet food labelling

When declaring ingredients, pet food manufacturers have the option to declare by category, for example, oils and fats or meat and animal derivatives.

There are two benefits to declaring pet food ingredients by categories:

- it allows manufacturers to better manage fluctuations in supply of raw materials used
- provides flexibility for labelling ingredients

Both of these factors help to avoid incurring unreasonable additional costs.

[Feed labelling legislation](#) permits pet food manufacturers to highlight the presence or absence of a certain ingredient and to provide additional information (beyond the statutory minimum required) for purchasers.

Examples of additional information are analytical declarations for protein or fibre, or name and address of the manufacturer.

The additional information is subject to certain safeguards. It must contain objective and quantifiable factors which can be proved. It should not mislead purchasers or make medicinal claims. These safeguards ensure that pet food product labels contain the ingredients as stated on the label.

Domestic pet food production

It is possible to approve processed pet food production in domestic premises, however you will need to adhere to all conditions which are applicable to other pet food plants. This includes the requirement to carry out bacteriological sampling and put in place a feed safety management system based on the principles of [Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points \(HACCP\)](#).

You should contact your [local Trading Standards office](#) to register and seek further advice.

Pet food containing animal by-products

If you intend to use material of animal origin in your products (please note 'animal origin' also includes for example milk, eggs and material of marine origin such as fish and shellfish), then you will also need to register with [APHA](#) under the animal by-products rules for which that department is responsible.

This is because of the implications for animal health from the improper transport, storage and use of material of animal origin.

Importantly, if using animal by-products such as meat, fish or dairy products, you should also contact [the Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#).

More information on these rules is available on [supplying and using animal by-product as farm animal feeds](#).

Co-location of food and pet food production

It is not permitted to make a commercial raw pet-food product from your domestic kitchen.

On **21 December 2020**, the Food Standards Agency published guidance to support food businesses and their enforcement agencies in managing the risks from the production of certain pet food in establishments that also produce food for human consumption. This applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

England, Northern Ireland and Wales

PDF

[View Guidance on co-location of food and pet food production as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#)
(284.13 KB)

This publication followed a [public consultation into proposals to allow pet food production in food establishments](#).

Pet food of animal origin

Pet food which is made up from material of animal origin can be used by the pet food industry. It is made up by parts of animals which are surplus to human consumption needs or are not normally consumed by people in the UK.

Material of animal origin comes from animals which are inspected and passed as fit for human consumption prior to slaughter. The material must be free of transmissible disease, which therefore excludes material from dying, diseased or disable animals.

[DEFRA](#) is responsible for any animal material of this nature which is not intended for human consumption. This material is classified as animal by-products under [Regulation 169/2009](#).

[Find out more information about the animal by-product industry](#).

Additives in pet food

Pet food is subject to similar controls for authorised [additives](#) and levels of undesirable substances as apply to feed for farmed livestock. When setting the maximum permitted levels for undesirable substances for pets, the key part of the risk assessment is generally the extent to which the animal can tolerate them.

Marketing of pet food

There are restrictions on the use of some claims that can be made on animal feed and many of these concern pet food.

Examples of these claims include the following:

- support of renal function in renal insufficiency
- reduction of acute intestinal absorptive disorders
- regulation of glucose supply and support of skin function in dermatosis
- excessive hair loss

More information can be found in retained EU [Regulation 2020/354](#) which includes a list of feedingstuffs for particular nutritional purposes. It also sets down conditions for their use.

For regulations on the control of feed additives in pet food, go to [animal feed legislation](#).

If you use animal by-products to make a pet food product then you will also need to [get approval from APHA](#).