

# Petfood Report

October, 2012 (update)

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Finding an affordable, natural ingredient-based feline kibble for daily use that is healthy and has never been recalled has proven to be a difficult endeavor.

## Introduction

This has not been an easy search. Since the recalls began in 2007, many pet foods have been seen on the recall lists. Some were harmful, laced with improper or even dangerous chemicals, or contaminated with bacteria, leading to death and illness in thousands of animals. Others simply had problems with honest labeling or equipment that needed repairs, not necessarily resulting in a contaminated product.

Since this all began, many companies have conducted their own recalls just as a precaution in some cases, or to correct a problem they found on their own. A good recent example is the canned dog food, Pedigree, that ended up with some blue plastic bits in it. The company found it, recalled the food, and fixed the malfunction in the production line.

Our switch-over began last year, not because of the recalls, but because of a need to feed a healthy product to all the animals in our shelter. Doing so resulted in fewer veterinary problems, as well as the delightful side effect of using a lot less kitty litter. There also were far fewer puddles of vomit and vomit stains, saving time with the daily cleaning routine.

However, once the 6-month transition was done and laboriously documented in last year's Petfood Report, we suddenly found our food was now on the next recall list. Stunned, we had to embark on yet another search.

## Findings

After many hours on the Internet scouring petfood sites and studying ingredient lists, then cross-checking with the recall sites, the following foods were found and appeared to be acceptable. So, orders were placed.

**Avoderm** Natural Chicken and Herring Meal Formula Adult Dry Cat Food

**Earthborn** Holistic Wild Sea Catch Grain Free Natural Cat Food

**Felidae** Chicken Meal and Rice Formula for All Life Stages

**NutriSource** Cat and Kitten Chicken Salmon and Liver Dry Cat Food

**Meow Organic** from Pugzbrand, all home grown ingredients and processed at the family farm in Ohio

In order to test for palatability and preferences, each brand was poured into a tub, labelled, and set in a row so the cats could choose whatever they liked. One cat, Jesse, actually stopped at each one, sniffed, took a bite or two, then stepped over to the next tub and checked it out. He did this for all 5 tubs then

returned to the one he liked best. It was cute. None of the other cats did this. They sniffed all of them, and seemed to make their selection based on that alone.



The following chart is simply an account of who ate what. Specifics follow.

*Note: A number signifies their first and second choices. If there is no number, and only an X, that was their only choice. Note that no one ate the Meow Organic...at all!*

Cat	Avoderm	Earthborn	Felidae	NutriSource	Meow Organic
					Refused by all
Aries	1		2		
Boots			x		
Callie	x				
Carmen			2	1	
Ciego	1			2	
Georgia			x		
Holly	2			1	
Jesse	x				
Kit			1	2	
Marble	1			2	
*Marmalade	(raw fed)				
Mikey		2		1	
Mystery				x	
OrangeAde				x	
Peaches	1			2	
Punkin		1		2	
Ringtail				x	
*Stubby	(raw fed)				
Sylvie				x	
Tara			x		
TG		2	1		
Toledo	2		1		
GarageGroup (10)	x		x	x	
*will not eat kibble					

## Statistics

Since I did not track individual cats in the garage and simply noted which tubs were eaten the fastest, these numbers apply only to the cats in the house.

Avoderm - 8	(6 were first choice, 2 were second choice)
Earthborn - 3	(only one was first choice, two were second choice)
Felidae - 8	(6 were first choice, 2 were second choice)
NutriSource - 12	(7 were first choice, 5 were second choice)
Meow Organic -	(NOBODY likes this stuff.)

## Conclusions

The two brands containing some corn meal or gluten were clear favorites with several cats, perhaps because they had been used to grain, or perhaps the company uses a palatant (taste enhancer) they like.

Since we prefer to offer them a grain-free diet, and because more cats chose it over the other brands, we have decided to use Nutri Source. It's not grain-free, per se, but has minimal amounts and is affordable at about the same price as Taste of the Wild, the brand we had just switched to. Other, more premium foods are available, but are out of our budget.

We also received a nice testimonial from Carol, who uses NutriSource for her cat and reported that the shelter in her area uses it for all their cats, too. So, based on her recommendation as well as our observations during the taste testing, we chose to use it, too.

"I enjoy your newsletter each month and all the helpful and entertaining articles. Wanted to recommend 'Nutri Source Kitten and Cat' - the local shelter 'Friends of Strays' uses it for all their cats and highly recommends continuing with it. 'Miss Petunia' is doing very well on it. She had some digestive problems when they found her and she can't have moist food but has been fine on Nutri Source. If you buy the smallest bag you will get a \$2 off coupon for the bigger size and the store keeps a record so after [10?] bags you get a free one. It's never been on any warning list that I could find. So try it and I hope it works out.

"Thanks for all you do for the animals,

Carol "

## Final comments

Looks like the dogs will be getting the Meow Organic mixed into their food. They just barely tolerate it, but if I mix tiny amounts into their regular food, they seem not to notice it. At least the food will not go to waste. However, I must issue a strong warning about this product. Meow Organic is produced by Pugzbrand in Ohio, a very difficult company to deal with. If you decide to use them, be sure to get a lawyer first; you may need one if anything goes wrong with your order. Their customer service is non-existent, as they blame the customer for anything that might go wrong.

While any other company takes an interest in helping their customers rectify problems, Pugzbrand does not. As of now, we are out the money we paid for 75 lbs of food. They shipped us 23 lbs, which took 3 weeks to get here. The 48 lbs they claim to have sent in August not only amounts to being 3 lbs short of our total order, but they claim it has been lost and have done nothing to help locate it. When I submitted a report to the Better Business Bureau, one of the Pugzbrand owners called us up and yelled for 10 minutes about it, then denied that anyone ever called. We have phone records proving the call, however, that does not prove the voice, hence, the person who called cannot be verified. *Please, be warned.*

We use PetFlow.com as well as Wag.com to order our pets' foods. These companies are completely reliable and have excellent customer support. They are also very courteous. Unfortunately, there are no stores in our area that offer these products, so we order them online. All deliveries have been on time and complete. If you would like to do the same, plus get a New Customer discount, use this link for PetFlow: <http://www.petflow.com/invite/uu5476711>. Wag.com offers new customer deals also.