

## Australia Bans Pet Food Irradiation

**Action taken after cats died or got sick after eating imported cat food that underwent government-mandated irradiation.**

Posted: June 2, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

Australia has banned the government-mandated practice of irradiating imported pet food, the Sydney Morning Herald reports. The ban comes after a number of cats died or became ill after eating irradiated cat food manufactured by the Canadian company, Champion Petfoods Ltd.

Tony Burke, the Australian minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, has ordered the sterilization process to cease immediately after receiving international reports that some cats can suffer neurological damage from eating irradiated dry food, according to the Herald. Details on the reports were not immediately available.

In late 2008, Champion issued a voluntarily recall of its Orijen cat food in response to multiple reports of cats showing symptoms of neurological problems after eating the food. At that time, the company reported that 30 to 40 cats were affected and four or five cats had to be euthanized.

Champion eventually pulled out of the Australian market after concluding that the health issues were caused by Australia's irradiation process. Additionally, Champion changed its policy to one that prohibits it from selling to countries where its products will be irradiated.