

Wheat Flour, Not Gluten or Rice, to Blame

The contaminated pet food recall products have caused the illnesses and deaths of cats across North America.

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The melamine-contaminated cat food ingredients imported from China were actually wheat flour disguised to look like wheat gluten and rice protein concentrate, according to David Acheson, M.D., assistant commissioner for food protection with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The addition of melamine could have been used to make the flour appear more protein-rich and less starchy, thus mimicking a high-protein product, such as wheat gluten, Acheson said.

“Now, there is a plausible hypothesis as to why this would be done rather than taking the trouble to extract the wheat gluten and wash away the starch, you simply grind up the wheat, put it all together and then artificially create the appearance of it being high in protein by adding a high-nitrogen containing compound such as melamine,” Acheson said.

The U.S. investigators have been in China for about a week and are expected to return home sometime next week.

“The FDA considers this product to be mislabeled ... and we're considering possible enforcement options,” he said.

The FDA made the discovery during forensic analysis.

The tainted pet food recall products are suspected to have sickened and/or killed potentially hundreds of cats and kittens in the United States and Canada. Anyone suspecting their cat may have eaten bad food is asked to see a veterinarian immediately.

For a list of recalled cat foods, [click here](#).

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