

## Survey: Consumer Confidence in Pet Food High

**Seventy percent of respondents have favorable opinions toward pet food despite the recall.**

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Pet Food Institute President Duane Ekedahl testifying before the Senate on the pet food recall April 12. (Photo courtesy of The Pet Food Institute) Despite a pet food recall that has dragged on for more than two months, consumers remain confident about pet food and its brands, according to a new survey commissioned by the Pet Food Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based association that represents pet food manufacturers.

Seventy percent of pet owners responding to the poll said that their opinion toward pet food at this time is “favorable” or “very favorable,” Pet Food Institute President Duane Ekedahl told Pet Product News International.

In addition, a similarly high number of pet owners said that they are sticking with their original brand of pet food, Ekedahl said.

Although hundreds of brands were affected by the recall, and many media reports indicated pet owners turned to home cooking for their pets, sales of pet food declined by only three to four percent during the last four weeks, he said, citing statistics from Information Resources Inc.

“Those numbers indicate that we have a recovery here and that, in fact, the consumer has maintained their confidence through this and in the product,” Ekedahl said.

The pet food recall has caused significant confusion among pet owners and the industry, which the institute aimed to combat.

“In those early weeks, it was difficult for everyone,” Ekedahl said. “The difficulty of identifying the contaminant added to the confusion.”

At this point, the pet food recall is “basically complete and considered successful,” he said, but now the industry must turn to preventing and identifying future problems.

To that end, the Pet Food Institute created the National Pet Food Commission, which plans to issue recommendations to the industry and government regarding future safety and quality standards for pet food.

“It really is in everybody’s interest that this be done in [a] way that doesn’t stifle trade,” he said.

Ekedahl, who testified before a Senate hearing on the pet food recall April 12, said what’s interesting is that the pet food industry’s recall caught the attention of the world and of the food industry as a whole.

“I think we’re going to learn from this,” he said. “Pet food is kind of the example for the food process.”

With those in Congress calling for an overhaul of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and additional testing now in place for food imports from China and elsewhere, the U.S. food system seems poised for a shake up.

“What’s going to come from this is better survey of food that crosses international borders,” Ekedahl said.