

Pet Food 101

The definition of a “pet food” means any commercial feed prepared and distributed for consumption by dogs and cats including homemade treats, supplements or a food intended as sole ration. Whether an individual or as a company, you are still subject to licensing, product registration and labeling requirements set forth by the Illinois Commercial Feed Act, Subchapter B: Pet Food, prior to such distribution.

Basic Label Format

1. Product name and Brand name, if any,*
2. Statement of Species designation e.g. “Dog”, “Cat”*.
3. For a snack or treat, the word "snack" or "treat"* (e.g. Dog Treats, Dog Snacks, Cat Treats).
4. A quantity statement in both English and metric on the bottom one-third of the label*.
(*All must appear on the principal display panel)
5. The heading “Guaranteed Analysis” for the following in this order and terminology:
Crude Protein (min.) %
Crude Fat (min.) %
Crude Fiber (max.) %
Moisture (max.) %
6. An ingredient statement listing each ingredient by AAFCO definition or if no def. is available; by common or usual name in order of predominance by weight. Ingredients must be approved for use in animal feeds!
7. Name and address of company including city, state and zip code. If the company cannot be looked up in a phone book, street address should be included.
8. Feeding directions, if designated other than a “snack” or “treat”.

There are more rules on labeling under the Illinois Commercial Feed Act depending on the pet food you wish to manufacture and the complexity of your label such as nutritional adequacy statements, use of ingredient(s) as part of the product name and feeding directions. Additional references available to insure proper manufacturing and labeling of a pet food include the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) Official Publication which can be purchased through their web site at www.aafco.org containing ingredient definitions, the Dog and Cat Food Nutrient Profiles or procedures for feeding trials, declaration of calorie content, guidelines on natural and tartar control claims and use of such descriptions as “low calorie or lite” “lean or low fat”, “less or reduced calories” and “less or reduced fat” and the Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) [guidance document](#) for raw animal diets .

As a manufacturer of a commercial feed, you must also follow Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMP’s) to assure the pet food produced meets the intended specifications and is not adulterated:

1. Clean area.
2. Clean equipment and capable of performing the function.
3. Proper storage of ingredients.
4. Proper Labeling
5. Record Keeping a). Label and formula maintained on file. b). Date of batch manufacture or mixing and c). Distribution records (example name of product, quantity, batch date, date of shipment if distributed to stores, grooming places etc. other than you own store, flea markets, festivals etc.) enabling recall if necessary and maintained for 1 yr following the date of last distribution.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Department at (217) 524-1291 or tom.waller@illinois.gov