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## CAUTIOUS PET OWNERS FEED JUMP IN SALES AT LOCAL SPECIALTY FOOD STORES

### Shops lap up recall business

NICHOLE MONROE BELL  
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**Specialty pet food shops around the Charlotte region say they have seen sales rise as much as 50 percent from customers reconsidering their pet food choices in the wake of a nationwide recall that has ensnared more than 100 national and private-label brands.**

**Much of the recalled food, which federal regulators say was contaminated with the chemical melamine, was manufactured by Canada-based Menu Foods and is being blamed for kidney failure in an unknown number of animals across the country. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it has fielded more than 10,000 complaints from owners claiming their animals have been harmed.**

**Charlotte-area store owners said customers, surprised that so many national brands relied on the same manufacturer for ingredients, are looking for brands made by smaller companies.**

"What this has done is show the dirty little secret of the dog food industry, which is that most of the dog food is made by one company and there can be plenty of cross contamination," said John Calchera, owner of Pineville Pets.

At Animal Supply in Rock Hill, staff estimated sales of all-natural foods were up at least 25 percent.

Pet food companies and the FDA have worked to reassure the public that food made outside the recall dates is safe. The Pet Food Institute, a trade group for pet food manufacturers, has said the recall affected only 1 percent of all pet food.

Nutro Products has said customers should feel "absolutely safe" allowing their pets to eat any of its foods that remain on store shelves. The maker of Iams and Eukanuba brands, P&G Pet Care, bought full-page newspaper ads this week, including the Observer, saying the company was "heartsick" that its products were involved and that the dry foods are safe.

Rebecca Russell, a Charlotte graphic designer, said she was stunned to learn the premium brand, Nutro Natural Choice, she had been feeding her Shetland sheepdog, Garland, was recalled.

Frantic to ensure her pet's food was safe, Russell, a vegetarian, began cooking chicken and ground beef for Garland. But when Garland refused to eat some of it, Russell became so desperate she gave him a McDonald's hamburger for dinner one day.

Since then, she's switched to a canned food made by Merrick, a family-owned Texas company that specializes in foods that are minimally processed and have no artificial flavors or preservatives. The Merrick food costs about \$2.20 a can, double what Russell had been paying.

"I'm just going to do this until I can figure out what to do," she said.

At Canine Cafe Charlotte, a sign on the door advertises that none of the products it sells has been recalled. The store has doubled the amount of food it orders because of new customers interested in its line of organic and natural foods, co-owner Barbara Burg said.

"For a small boutique like ours, that's a big business boost," said Burg, who estimated sales were up about 50 percent.

Not everyone is shunning the mainstream, though.

Rachel Belmonte, who feeds Science Diet to her 1-year-old Bichon dog, said she worries that smaller manufacturers might not be monitored as closely as the larger ones.

Although her dog food was not recalled, Belmonte said she has seriously considered cooking her own food.

There's just one problem.

"I don't even know how to cook," she said.

Nichole Monroe Bell: 704-358-5103.

#### Pet Food Recall Expanded Again

The recall of contaminated pet foods and treats expanded Thursday to include dog biscuits made by an Alabama company and sold by Wal-Mart's Ol'Roy brand. The Food and Drug Administration said the manufacturer, Sunshine Mills Inc., is recalling dog biscuits made with imported Chinese wheat gluten.

Also Thursday, Menu Foods expanded its original recall to include more dates and varieties. Menu Foods was the first of at least six companies

to recall the now more than

100 brands of pet foods and treats.

The recall now covers "cuts and gravy"-style products made between Nov. 8 and March 6. Menu Foods also said it was expanding the recall to include more varieties, but no new brands.

The FDA knows of no other pet product companies planning recalls, agency officials said.  
 -- Associated Press

A list of recalled



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**Announcement of S.C. site raises questions about claims that Lenoir faced competition**

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## Shops lap up recall business

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## N.C. gun company agrees to sale

**Remington to be bought by N.Y. equity firm**  
Remington Arms Co., the N.C. gunmaker that has equipped U.S. soldiers for 150 years, agreed to be acquired by a New York equity firm Cerberus Capital Management LP for \$118 million.



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### DOUG SMITH

## Pancake House to move to bigger space

A pioneering South End restaurant plans to move after 10 years to another emerging revitalization area.



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- Midwest grape growers fear for wine crop - 10:24 AM
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- More pet food coming off shelves
- Report Rat poison in recalled pet food



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### THE NEXT BIG THING

## 'The best of both worlds'

**University City parcel being developed around lake to combine both transit and low-density development**

The longtime steward of nearly 400 wooded acres in the University City area is taking an innovative approach to developing it. The E.C. Griffith Co. plans 1,104 homes, including an age-restricted community, initially on land near existing neighborhoods at W.T. Harris Boulevard and Old Statesville Road.

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