Australian cats and dogs can sleep easy, knowing that pet foods made by members of the Pet Food Industry Association of Australia (PFIAA), representing over 98% of prepared pet foods sold in Australia, are produced to some of the highest standards in the world.

Australian dogs and cats consume over 40 million meals a week and most of these are produced by highly capable and reputable pet food manufacturers who are members of the Pet Food Industry Association of Australia (PFIAA) making over 98% of the processed pet foods sold in Australia.

The confidence that Australian pet owners have in prepared pet foods is well placed as the quality and safety of prepared pet foods made and marketed by PFIAA members is world-class, which is borne out by the success that these manufacturers have achieved in exporting pet foods throughout Asia and beyond. This is largely due to the selection of raw material and ingredients, manufacturing capabilities and quality systems of member companies, who for many years have committed to and observed the guidelines for pet food manufacture and marketing detailed in the PFIAA code of practice.

Pet health is of critical importance and our members understand the importance of your pet’s health and the trust that you place in them as pet food manufacturers to produce high quality, nutritious, tasty and safe pet foods. That is why the pet food industry has been working with key government and private sector organisations to develop a new, enhanced standard for pet food manufacturing and marketing in Australia, the Australian Standard (AS 5812): Manufacturing and marketing of pet food.

The PFIAA code of practice has served Australian pet owners well over many years; however, our member companies recognise that the commitment to continuous improvement demands even more rigorous standards for quality and pet health. Therefore, the Australian pet food industry has been working proactively and cooperatively with representatives from state and federal government, Standards Australia Ltd, the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) to develop and implement a new Australian Standard, revising and upgrading many aspects of the original code of practice.

This Australian Standard (AS 5812) was approved in 2011 and extends across the entire process of pet food production and labeling requirements applicable to the making and marketing of pet foods in Australia to help assure production and sale of safe and nutritious pet foods to Australian pet owners, including:

- Providing fresh & safe ingredients
- Formulating foods for your pet’s needs
- Food safety-focused manufacturing systems
- Controlled and well documented processing
- Providing consistent and informative packaging
- Nutrition information labeling requirements
- Independently audited for compliance

The Standard applies to both Australian made and imported manufactured pet food products. To comply with AS5812 companies are required to undergo rigorous assessments, conducted by independent qualified auditors who inspect premises and assess conformance with processes and labeling as specified in the Standard.

The Standard is an agreed, consistent and transparent approach to the industry’s operations that provides additional reassurance and confidence in Australia’s large and internationally competitive pet food industry.
The PFIAA has been working directly with the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) to implement an additional joint initiative entitled: “Pet Food Adverse Event System of Tracking” (PetFAST,) an Australian veterinary reporting system to track any suspected pet illness that might be associated with pet food or pet meat sold in Australia. This world-first initiative is another example of the commitment of the Australian pet food industry to product quality and pet safety (see www.ava.com.au).

Pet food companies, like other businesses, are also required to observe the comprehensive Australian consumer legislation requirements, weights and measures compliance, Australian quarantine legislation and controls and any state or territory legislation applicable to specific pet food manufacturing operations. Additionally, pet foods that include therapeutic claims for preventing or alleviating veterinary medical conditions are required to be registered by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). www.apvma.gov.au

The Australian pet food industry is a vibrant and successful part of Australian food manufacturing, providing world-class foods for pets across the nation and overseas. The industry continues to be responsive to the changing needs of our pets and their owners and recognises the trust that people place when choosing foods for their much loved pets.

Copies of AS 5812 for the manufacturing and marketing of pet food are available for purchase from SAI Global: www.saiglobal.com.

Summary

- Over 98% of the prepared pet foods sold in Australia are made by members of the Pet Food Industry Association of Australia (PFIAA).
- PFIAA members make pet foods to some of the highest standards in the world.
- The Australian standard AS 5812 was developed in 2011 and includes comprehensive requirements for the manufacture and marketing of prepared pet foods.
- Australian pets enjoy more than 40 million meals a week and they can relax in the knowledge that Australian pet owners have access to some of the finest and safest pet foods in the world.

This article is for general information only: This information is provided by the PFIAA as general information only. For advice and information concerning feeding your individual pet, we recommend that you seek the advice of your veterinarian.