

PETFOOD INDUSTRY

www.PetfoodIndustry.com

Pure Cravings highlights testing for cat food safety

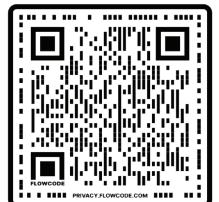
p.12



HEMP, CBD AND BEYOND:
KEEPING IT ALL STRAIGHT

PET FOOD SAFETY
MEASURES, TECHNOLOGIES
EXPAND

SCAN ME



PetfoodIndustry-digital.com



Pure Cravings highlights testing for cat food safety

This year-old premium cat food company tests 100% of its fish ingredients for mercury, ensuring one less thing for pet owners to worry about when looking for quality pet food.

SANDY ROBINS

A life-threatening case of human mercury poisoning and a tiny kitten named Luna were the key motivators to creating Pure Cravings, “the only 100% mercury-tested fish food line for cats.” Now celebrating their first anniversary on the pet food shelf with over five million cans sold, the brand has gained nationwide recognition, is expanding its recipe selection and is also heading to the Canadian marketplace.

A need for better testing

Rewind to the early 2000s when Pure Cravings Co-founder Sean Wittenberg experienced

first-hand the dangers of mercury accumulation in the body when his mother was diagnosed with mercury poisoning while following a specific points-based diet. Determined to find a solution to solving the mercury variance problem in seafood, Wittenberg, who has a business management degree from the University of California-Davis, teamed up with Kevin McKay, the company’s chief operating officer whose background is in technology and engineering, and set about developing proprietary technology to rapidly test individual fish for mercury.

“The problem back then was that a single mercury test required a laboratory and lab tech

< The company's owners wanted to create "pet food with a purpose," specifically quality cat food options with safe, clean and nutritious fish proteins to choose from. *Courtesy Pure Cravings*

and cost about US\$80," says Wittenberg. "And it took a week to return results. We invented our proprietary mobile

technology that can test fish for mercury in seconds."

After unsuccessfully trying to sell their technology to seafood companies, Wittenberg and Co-founder Bryan Boches decided to launch their own brand, resulting in the introduction of Safe Catch fish products for humans in 2015.

"In short, our company was born from the need to drive innovation in pure seafood forward — when no other brand was willing to take the leap for consumers," says Wittenberg.

The brand is currently sold worldwide, has more than 25 SKUs and sales figures that surpassed US\$50 million in 2022.

Then along came Luna

Fast forward to 2020, when Boches adopted a kitten named Luna. After seeing how much Luna loved fish and fastidiously researching existing recipes to feed his new family member, he remained concerned about a fish-based diet for her.

"Because there are no U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines for heavy metals in pet food, our pets are exposed to a significantly higher amount of heavy metal toxins, like mercury, than humans," says Boches. "With this information, we set about applying the Safe Catch mercury testing technology to creating safer food for pets, ultimately introducing Pure Cravings to consumers in 2022.

"Through independent research and conversations with veterinary professionals, we determined that .07 ppm is the level of mercury that can be considered safe for small mammals that are fed a fish-based diet," he says. "So, by establishing this strict mercury limit of .07 ppm or lower across our portfolio, we believe we're setting a new standard for pet food."

Elaborating further, Boches says, "Our proprietary technology to rapidly test every fish or catch for levels of mercury sets us apart from all competitors. We test our fish to a limit that is 14 times lower than the FDA mercury action limit for human foods. Mercury levels vary fish-by-fish, and about one in five of the tuna that we test does not pass our strict purity standards and is sold elsewhere."

A menu of fishy favorites and a sustainability focus

The fish Pure Cravings uses in recipes are wild-caught in the Pacific and Indian Oceans by responsibly managed fisheries and come with a Fisheries Certificate of Origin as well as

a Captain's Statement signed by the captain of the boat that caught it. The products are canned in Thailand in a facility audited by highly respected global agencies such as the British Retail Consortium (BRC), Safe Quality Food (SQF) and the SGS Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI).

The first recipes to come to market were a cutlet in gravy-styled offerings featuring tuna, sardines, mackerel, salmon, sardines and mackerel, and a tuna and salmon combo. The recipes are also grain-free and contain only non-GMO ingredients. The lineup received instant recognition, winning Best in Show in the cat category at the 2022 Global Pet Expo's New Product Showcase. There is also a seafood variety pack, currently the top-selling item on the company's own website. It introduces pet parents to four flavors in one shopping experience.



Pure Cravings Co-founder and President Sean Wittenberg was determined to ensure mercury-free cat food options for pet owners and has done so using the technology already being used in his human food fish company. *Courtesy Pure Cravings*

► PURE CRAVINGS HIGHLIGHTS TESTING FOR CAT FOOD SAFETY



Pure Cravings Cutlets in Gravy only uses the whole loin of the tuna. However, instead of discarding the red meat portion, it's now being incorporated along with the whole loin in the company's newest innovation, Pure Cravings Minced Tuna, which is available exclusively in the pet specialty channel as of the first quarter of 2023. The tuna is topped with additional proteins like salmon, sardine, mackerel and chicken. It's also free of grains, gums and GMOs.

Additionally, the company is laser-focused on reducing waste; no plastics of any kind are used in the manufacturing process.

What the future holds for Pure Cravings

Focusing forward on the rest of 2023, the plan is to add several new products:

- Pure Cravings flakes in consommé
- Pure Cravings shredded poultry and meat
- Pure Cravings mousse
- Pure Cravings treat sticks

"Our other goals include recyclable pouches alongside the current cans," says Wittenberg. "Plus, we are also developing a kibble that will provide the first mercury-tested kibble for cats. In fact, by the end of 2023, we hope to have introduced 40 new items to our brand. With such a full portfolio of textures and styles, we believe Pure Cravings will be able to accommodate every feline palate and we're in a position to offer a competitive price point of entry to experience our mercury-tested fish products and a 'better for your pet' feeding opportunity."

Lastly, Wittenberg believes that his company's future growth and success starts and ends with education.

"Our research shows that 85% of pet owners believe the food they choose to feed can extend the life of their pet and 84% think manufacturers should do more to ensure the

Pappas 225 DPE/TPE

Only Pappas guarantees you the reduction you need for your operation.

Our emulsifiers are designed and built to your specifications. They help you improve product quality and keep production costs in line.

- ✓ All stainless steel
- ✓ 30 hp to 250 hp
- ✓ Multiple-hole plate sizes
- ✓ Single- to triple-plate available
- ✓ Training available
- ✓ Superior technical support
- ✓ Extensive parts inventory

Let us GUARANTEE your meat reduction today.
pappasinc.com • sales@pappasinc.com
 800-521-0888 • (Outside U.S. 1-313-383-7379)

© 2020 Pappas Inc.



The Pure Cravings line of offerings includes complete formulas with sardines, mackerel, tuna and salmon cutlets in gravy, and the company hopes to expand significantly in 2023. *Courtesy Pure Cravings*

safety of pet food and treats,” he says. “Hence the importance of educating our retail partners and customers about the dangers that mercury overaccumulation poses on our pets’ lives. Mercury accumulation in cats can cause a litany of health issues, including hyperthyroidism, kidney failure (the organ where mercury accumulates in cats), neurological disorders and cancer.

“About a third of all our cats are diagnosed with cancer annually and, while that is not solely due to the presence of heavy metals in their diets, providing pet parents and retailers an option that eliminates this concern falls directly on the shoulders of the manufacturers,” says Wittenberg. “We are proud to offer a solution to this issue. Our mercury testing technology and purity screening process speaks directly to caring pet parents.” ■

FAST FACTS



NOTABLE: The fish and other ingredients used in Pure Cravings formulas are human-grade and the cat food is made in an FDA-registered facility with the highest level of certifications for human food safety.

HEADQUARTERS:

Sausalito, California, USA



OFFICERS: Bryan Boches, co-founder and CEO; Sean Wittenberg, co-founder and president; Kevin McCay, COO; Craig Cuffney, vice president of products; Jamie Jimenez, director of marketing; Bond Milburn, national pet food manager



WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA:

Website/Social: www.purecravings.com;
@purecravingspet on Instagram and Facebook

Setting the standard for petfood testing

Celebrating

40
YEARS



570.756.2656 • www.SRFarms.com