



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

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Director and State Public Health Officer

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Exciting New Changes for Processed Pet Foods Labeled as
“Human Grade” or “Natural”

Dear Pet Food Processor,

In response to the pet food industry’s continued interest in using “human grade” and “natural” claims on processed pet food labels, the California Department of Public Health (Department) initiated the rulemaking process to revise its California Code of Regulations (CCR) to allow for the use of these terms, which were previously prohibited for “human grade” or undefined for “natural”. The Department focused on regulation changes to include provisions for California processors to more fairly compete with out-of-state processors, as many other states allow for “human grade” or similar references.

Revisions to Title 17 CCR Article 16 Processed Pet Food Regulations were finalized and implemented on August 26, 2024. California pet food processors as well as out-of-state pet food processors that intend to distribute their products in California, are now allowed to use , “human grade” and “natural” claims on their labeling or advertising. Review the updated regulations at our [CDPH website](#).

The newly amended Processed Pet Food regulations provide a regulatory framework for substantiating human grade claims including compliance with human food regulations under 21 CFR 117 Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food provided the intended use of food is clearly labeled and solely for consumption of pets. The changes aim to provide clarity for the industry and consumers while ensuring the quality and safety of processed pet food. Additionally, amendments to the licensing section were included to align the language in the Processed Pet Food Regulations with the Pure Pet Food Act (Law).

The California Department of Public Health continues to regulate all processed pet food manufactured within California and those imported into the state. An individual or company seeking a license or registration certificate must submit an application along with a representative label from the product, and a license or registration certificate fee.

Our commitment to protecting and enhancing public health and well-being remains steadfast. We strive to ensure that all foods are safe and that labeling is truthful and not



misleading. We look forward to supporting the pet food industry in meeting these new standards. We encourage you to visit our [website for Pet Food Processor License or Registration \(for out-of-state processors\) applications, FAQ's, and link to updated Regulations.](#)

Sincerely,

Melissa Vasquez, MPA
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Specialized Expertise and Technical Support Section