



**Statement of U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown,
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive
Commission on China (CECC)**

**CECC Hearing on “Pet Treats and
Processed Chicken from China: Concerns for
American Consumers and Pets”
Tuesday, June 17, 2014**

As prepared for delivery.

We have called this hearing to seek answers for American consumers, pet owners, farmers, and parents about the safety of pet treats, processed chicken, and animal feed from China.

Americans want to know where their foods come from and want to make sure that everything is being done to keep it safe.

Sixty-two million households in this country have a pet. They are raising 83 million dogs and 96 million cats just like members of their family.

That’s why it’s so troubling that seven years on, we still do not know what’s causing the deaths and illnesses of thousands of dogs. Just last month, the FDA said that reports of illnesses had increased to 5,600 pets, including 1,000 dog deaths, and now three human illnesses. While no cause has been identified despite extensive study, the illnesses may be linked to pet treats from China.

Days later, major pet stores Petco and Petsmart announced they would be phasing out the sale of pet treats from China out of safety concerns.

Many of us still remember the pet food scare and recalls of 2007, the result of melamine-tainted pet food from China.

Given this, pet owners in Ohio and across America are rightfully concerned. When they go to the store to buy treats and food for their pet, they face difficult and confusing questions, just like the ones our family faces for our dog Franklin.

If something says it's made in China, can we be assured that it is safe? If it says it's made in the USA, what exactly does that mean? Is everything being done to keep pet treats safe?

Last year, the USDA declared that China is eligible to export processed, cooked chicken to the United States, paving the way for chicken sourced in the United States to be shipped to China for processing and then sold back to American consumers.

While no such chicken has entered our shores yet, it's possible that very soon this processed chicken could end up on our dinner tables and in our school lunchrooms.

Can we trust our Chinese counterparts to enforce safety up to our own standards, given China's poor enforcement of their own laws and rampant corruption? Will the label clearly indicate that the chicken was processed in China, so Americans can make an informed choice?

And finally, researchers are exploring a possible link between animal feed from China and the Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDv) that has wiped out some 10 percent of our pig population. It's been a year and no definitive cause has been identified.

Americans want and require better answers, clearer labels, and the peace of mind that the foods we import from China are safe.

I appreciate the FDA and USDA being here to shed more light on these issues and to help American consumers better understand them.

In the meantime, I would urge the Chinese government to fully cooperate with our agencies and to make significant improvements in their food safety system.

And I would urge our FDA and USDA to continue devoting every effort to determining the cause of the pet illnesses and PEDv.

I urge companies to ensure the highest safety standards and to put pet and human safety first.

Finally, I would also urge us in Congress to consider whether we need to update our labeling requirements to take into account an increasingly globalized marketplace and to ensure the public health of our citizens.