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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ODA Issues Health Alert, Urges Caution when Handling Pet Food

Pet food manufacturer recalls products for Salmonella contamination

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (April 26, 2012) – Following today's expanded pet food recall by Diamond Pet Foods, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) is issuing a health alert urging consumers to use caution when handling pet foods.

Diamond Pet Food issued a recall on April 10, 2012 for a limited number of dry dog food bags. That recall was expanded today to include certain lots of its **Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover's Soul** dog food. Laboratory analysis completed by ODA's Consumer Protection Laboratory showed the pet food tested positive for *Salmonella* contamination.

Salmonella is an organism that can cause illness in a person who eats a food item contaminated with it. Symptoms of infection may include fever and gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, diarrhea, vomiting or abdominal pain. The illness primarily impacts young children, frail and elderly people and those with weakened immune systems. Most healthy adults and children rarely become seriously ill.

Anyone exhibiting signs of a *Salmonella* infection should contact a healthcare provider.

"People typically contract a *Salmonella* infection by ingesting food or water that has been contaminated," said Dr. Beverly Byrum, ODA Laboratory Director. "In this case, however, an infection can occur by putting objects or fingers that have touched a contaminated product, such as pet food, into the mouth or by touching a pet or, in extreme cases, a person, that is infected."

Pets that have consumed food contaminated with *Salmonella* may also become ill. Signs of an infection in a pet include decreased appetite, fever and abdominal pain. If left untreated, pets may also become lethargic and have diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, fever and may vomit. If your pet is exhibiting any of these signs, contact your veterinarian.

"It is important to note that healthy pets can also be carriers of *Salmonella*, even if they are not exhibiting signs of illness, and they can still infect other animals or humans," said Dr. Byrum.

Consumers who believe their pet has consumed the recalled product should limit contact with the animal by humans and other animals, and be sure to thoroughly wash any hands or objects that come in contact with the animal.

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Editor's Note: A copy of the Diamond Pet Foods recall notice and a fact sheet with information on safe pet food handling is attached to this release

