

FROM FARM TO FIDO – HOW BULK HANDLERS ARE SUPPORTING THE UK'S PETS

As details emerge of record spending on pet food following a surge in demand for high-quality products, FPE Global's CEO Dave Cooper discusses how bulk handling firms are ensuring the 57 million pets across the UK are provided with the highest quality products.

At home and across the globe, the UK enjoys its status as a nation of animal lovers. It is estimated that 40 per cent of households across the UK host a pet, while there are approximately 8.5 million pet dogs alone nationally. As a result, we are now spending more money than ever before on our pets.

A record £10.6bn is expected to be spent on dogs by owners in 2017 as pet pampering reaches new heights. Representing a 25 per cent increase since 2010, the spending comes as pet owners invest in an increasingly diverse range of products and services, from travel and treats to bespoke accessories and hygiene.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the pet food sector, where an increasing demand for higher-quality products has emerged. As a result, Britain's dog owners are willing to increase spending in this area, and are expected to invest an estimated £393 per person on pet food products this year. With the average owner set to spend £1,252 on their pets over the next 12 months, pet food represents the largest single cost and is a significant outlay for owners.

Reflecting the recent trends in human food production and consumption, the addition of genetically modified ingredients and unnatural preservatives in pet food is no longer a consideration for many health-conscious owners. Modern pet food manufacturers are now sourcing higher-quality ingredients than ever before, including sustainably sourced and organic vegetables, grains and meats, to raise the quality of products.

The bulk handling sector has also responded to these new standards, adopting advanced techniques and multifunctional equipment to ensure that there is as much care put into pet food production as there is human food.

Materials handling and processing technology experts, FPE Global, operate with robust food safety protocols and stringent processing measures from receipt of product through to processing and delivery, ensuring pet food processing is as safe and efficient as possible.

As is the case with human food, maintaining careful handling of pet food products from arrival through to processing and delivery is vital. Providing a sterile and hygienic environment nullifies the threat of cross contamination, which has the potential to cause recall of a product and damage relationships with a brand.

FPE Global has developed full scale Test Facilities in order to give their clients reassurance that their product can be conveyed quickly and safely, whilst also demonstrating that cross contamination during the materials handling process can be completely avoided.

Stringent de-packing and storage measures ensure products with different ingredients and nutritional compounds such as dog and cat food are kept separately, while the utilisation of low-velocity dense-phase conveying maintains the integrity and quality of dry food products.

Retaining the desired shape of dry foods and delivering a visually appealing product is also important. Brands are often very strict on breakdown and, as many dry pet food products are designed to be a certain size and shape, may turn away products that fail to meet stringent structural requirements.

To achieve this, gentle conveying and handling of the material is essential. FPE employs the latest automation systems, utilising dense-phase, low-speed conveying systems for its dry food material handling solutions.

After going through rigorous changes to its physical state during the production process, each individual piece of pet food product is subject to precise ingredient addition and size requirements at the processing stage. Once the material has been extruded, dry pet food is subject to drying and cooling. Following that, the product is coated with a digestive and is then conveyed through the packing lines, ready for shipping.

The pet food industry is a competitive and rapidly developing market. As new standards and higher demand for pet food emerge in consideration of the health and well-being of our pets, the duty of manufacturers and bulk handling firms to deliver the highest standard of products becomes equally important.

With the cutting-edge technologies and techniques now adopted by the industry, FPE Global is able to deliver against the standards customers have come to expect.

GET IN TOUCH

T +44 (0)161 477 4775

F +44 (0)161 474 0257

E sales@fpegroup.co.uk

WWW.FPEGLOBAL.COM