

Sanitary Scale Design Standards

for Pet Food Processing



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What Is the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)?

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) ensures all U.S. food supply is safe by preventing on contaminations. Before 2017, this act applied to human food production plants and has since been enforced upon animal food producers. In accordance with FSMA, Preventative Controls for Animal Food (PCAF) and Current Good Manufacturing Practice (CGMP), these manufacturers are required to have a food safety plan to analyze hazards and identify the ones that need risk-based preventive controls, plus an implementation process.

Customers desire properly regulated, safe food, which is also true for their pets, livestock and other animals. Pet food is just as susceptible to dangerous bacteria as human food, which is why processing plants require durable and easy-to-clean equipment to meet customer needs and follow industry best practices.

Sanitary Best Practices for Pet Food Processing

Sanitary equipment is vital to the safe manufacturing of food, just like equipment used in companies that produce food for human consumption. Equipment used in pet food processing should be easily and fully cleaned, sanitized and maintained to ensure bacteria does not become a safety concern. Stainless steel is frequently used for these types of equipment because of its ability to withstand thorough and regular cleaning procedures.

Equipment placement is equally as important as the equipment itself and must be considered. Hygienic pet food production equipment should be placed away from the wall and elevated to prevent potential bacteria or product buildup. This placement assists with thorough sanitation requirements.

Similarly to human food processors, a weighing scale is a crucial piece of equipment. In food manufacturing environments, scales capture valuable weight data and ensure product quality. To ensure company compliance with FDA, FSMA and GMP, as well as other safety standards, stainless steel and easy-to-clean scales should be chosen.



The pet industry is growing, and pet food manufacturers must meet their customers' changing demands and continue to produce high quality pet foods.

Purchasing habits may fluctuate, but a common trend has been buying refrigerated options dedicated to animal wellness. Greater awareness of dietary support and food ingredients, such as the meat-to-grain ratio, from customers, means producers must satisfy purchasers and guarantee there is no risk of cross-contamination within their animal food products.



Sanitary Design Standards for Scales

1. Made of stainless steel

Stainless steel allows for simple and thorough cleanings, which prevents bacteria growth and product buildup. Stainless steel equipment can withstand denting, shock and abrasions, and resist warping and chemical washdowns. Corrosion-resistant and composed of smoothly bonded seams, stainless steel also meets FDA hygiene requirements.

2. Accessible for inspection, maintenance and cleaning

Processors should clean equipment using the necessary time, mechanical action and temperature, and a chemical capable of breaking up fats and proteins. Frequent inspection and maintenance must occur to verify contaminants are detected and removed properly, which ensures FDA pet food regulations are met.

3. Hermetically sealed with no niches

When possible, frames and rollers should be eliminated or permanently sealed. External parts should be welded continuously, rather than drilled, to the equipment's surface. Equipment should not have pits, cracks or protruding ledges.

4. Legal for Trade

When products, such as pet foods, are sold based on weight, Legal for Trade scales are required. These scales are certified to confirm the made and packaged products at food processing plants are accurately weighed, allowing them to be sold.



Added Benefits of Sanitary Equipment

Food processing companies can rest assured that they are complying with government regulations when incorporating sanitary equipment, such as a stainless steel washdown scale. Cross-contamination can be detrimental to humans, animals and companies, which is why it is important to integrate the proper equipment and follow regular maintenance and washdown procedures. FSMA, CGMP and PCAF protect not only pets, livestock and other animals but also employees and families.

Rice Lake Weighing Systems offers durable and hygienic weighing equipment that meets the high demands of pet food processing companies. Including the MotoWeigh® in-motion checkweigher, CW-90X washdown static checkweighing bench scale and the RoughDeck® QC-X quick clean extreme floor scale, companies can meet FDA standards with Rice Lake's built-to-last weighing solutions.



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