



The sanitary ProDiet factory.

## About cat food

SOME of the questions commonly asked about pet food include: is the jelly as nutritious as the fish? Does kitten food have more vitamins than food for grown cats? And, how much dolphin is there in my tuna cat food?

In general, it's very difficult to find out what's in commercial pet food or even how it's made.

A few weeks ago, ProDiet conducted a tour of the factory where their wet cat food is made. Basically, frozen tuna is defrosted, steam-cooked and cleaned by hand. Bone and skin is sent off to be rendered for meat meal. Eyes go for Omega 3 processing. The white meat is made into products intended for human consumption while the dark meat is used for pet food.

What's nice is that everything is very clean. The sections of the factory are separated by walls, sterile curtains and sanitised footbath systems according to international ISO standards, and all fish is handled only by workers wearing full protective gear.

In the pet food section, the fish is chopped up uniformly, weighed, has vitamins and minerals added in powder form, and is then packaged along with jelly, gravy or other moisture.

Pet food is made to specifications of the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), a US-based NGO that sets quality and safety standards for animal feed and pet food. (See [www.petfood.aafco.org](http://www.petfood.aafco.org) for details.)

During the tour, Somsak Smittiset, factory general manager, and Siripong Chatratana, regional manager, marketing department, provided some interesting answers.

First, the jelly in the cat food can absorb some of the nutrients along with the flavour but is in itself not very nutritious. To get the benefit of the food, everything has to be eaten. Second, kitten food usually has more vitamins than adult pet food; however, talk to your vet before putting an old cat on a different diet as more is not necessarily better.

A pet can overdose and damage its health by eating too many vitamins just as we can. Finally, the factory adheres to a no-blue fin, as well as turtle- and dolphin-safe, fishing policies.

■ For more pictures of how pet food is made, visit <http://blog.lepak.com>.