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WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition

Scientists discover dietary moisture window that boosts urinary tract health in cats

WALTHAM researchers have shown that **increased dietary moisture is beneficial for urinary tract health in cats**

Oct. 13, 2011 – Researchers have shown for the first time that **increased dietary moisture really is beneficial for urinary tract health in cats**. The research was conducted at the WALTHAM® Centre for Pet Nutrition, the science centre supporting Mars Petcare brands such as WHISKAS® and ROYAL CANIN.

The research demonstrated that **a diet high in moisture boosts a cat's total daily water intake to a level that cannot be achieved by simply providing drinking water alongside dry food**. The higher daily water intake resulted in increased urine volume and dilution.

Urine dilution has shown to be beneficial in reducing the risk of urinary stone disease in cats.

"Bladder stones occur in around 2% of cats and, if left untreated, can cause severe discomfort and a range of health problems," said study author and Head of Value Transfer at WALTHAM®, Dr. Abigail Stevenson. "Although the benefits of a wet diet for urinary tract health are widely accepted, this had not previously been established in a well-designed study."

The research involved six healthy adult cats, which were fed dry food with three levels of added water. The original dry food contained 6.3% moisture and water was added to deliver 25.4%, 53.2% and 73.3% moisture. When cats were fed the 73.3% moisture diet they **produced larger volumes of more dilute urine with a lower risk of stone formation** than when they were fed the lower moisture diets. This indicates that the dietary moisture window for urinary dilution, i.e. the level at which benefits are seen, is between 53.2% and 73.3% dietary moisture.

These findings **reinforce the benefits of feeding cats a diet high in moisture in order to promote urinary tract health**. The benefits seen in this study can be achieved by incorporating wet foods (pouch, tray, can) into the daily food ration.