Response to Letter: “Melamine Toxicity—Stones vs. Crystals”

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We agree with Reimschuessel and Puschner that ingestion of melamine and cyanuric acid will result in the formation of intratubular crystals and crystalluria, both from pet food contamination in domestic pets and in experimental animals. We had described crystal formation and crystalluria, but inaccurately also referred to these as stones on several occasions.

During the melamine contamination of infant formula in China, initial field reports of melamine–uric acid stone composition were consistent with animal experiments of melamine feeding alone [1]. Other than the two references in our paper ([2, 3], and now other reviewers [4, 5]), stating the stone composition to be melamine–uric acid, specific additional reports of stone analysis from this episode have appeared [6–8] which also confirm a composition of melamine–uric acid in near equimolar amounts. We agree that limited information is available about putative precursor crystals and their composition.

Reference 15 (an international meeting with multiple presentations) was cited several times in the text to document the history of the Chinese infant milk event. Reference 15 also included presentation slides from Dr. Reimschuessel showing a figure which was adapted from [9] as referenced in Figure 3.

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