

# Biden's Supply Chain Failures Are Impacting America's Pets

By Michael Robison

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206 Comments



The impact of a stressed economy, rising fuel prices, supply chain struggles, and the strain on America's farms is beginning to have a direct effect on the food supply in the country, not just for humans but for the animals we love as well.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have experienced cycles of supply shortages. Those earlier items that impacted consumers were toilet paper, Clorox cleaning supplies, and 91% rubbing alcohol. But, as the ripple effect of a once shuttered economy continues to make waves, the food supply for all living creatures is at risk of a coming Tsunami.

**Daniel F. Baranowski** @DFBHarvard · Jun 14, 2022



What's Next?

I'll tell you when Americans will really get good and PO'd.

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There has been a pet food shortage going on for months. I've been on waiting lists and haven't heard back.

Last weekend I went on a scavenger hunt to local pet shops and got lucky.

I carried home \$138.00 worth of much needed pet food.

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Pet owners, farmers, animal sanctuaries, and zoos all feel the impact and share a growing concern over the nutritional needs of their animals.

In June 2021, the **Pet Food Institute (PFI)**, representing America's primary pet food makers, sent public comments to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), outlining supply chain and manufacturing woes impacting the industry. According to PFI, those same issues continue to plague manufacturers and consumers in 2022.

“As the entire food system faced incredible disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. pet food makers were also forced to address new

ingredient sourcing and transportation challenges,” said Dana Brooks, president, and CEO of PFI.

“These ingredient shortages have not abated as the pandemic began receding. PFI members report all ingredient costs have risen 8-20%, with dramatic price increases for corn and soybean derivatives, which are key ingredients in many dog and cat food formulations,” PFI said.

Brooks went on to note that PFI has asked the Biden administration to “identify policy solutions that will help further strengthen all of American food and agriculture for the future.”

The impact is being felt across the animal care industry, from pet stores, animal shelters, livestock farms, and more.

In California, many PetSmart locations **have reported** they are out of canned food for dogs and cats alike.

According to **FOX 13 Tampa**, the Tampa Bay Humane Society (TBHS) in Florida saw a shortage of some canned foods, a cause for concern for the animals in their direct care.

The cost of these foods has risen as well. Sam Moline, a Minnesota native, noted that the special needs animals she cares for require very specific types of dry food. That food has been more scarce, and when she can locate the food, she is paying as much as four times the regular price. She also pointed out that ordering food online was often undependable because e-commerce stores could not guarantee delivery when needed.

Moline said, “Amazon was asking \$24 for the \$8 bag of dry food. WITH NO DELIVER BY DATE!!

According to a recent **report by Reuters**, Minnesota pig farmer Randy Spronk has been forced to reformulate feed rations due to a shortage of the widely used ingredient lysine. Lysine is an amino acid that helps livestock grow.

Supply-chain disruptions are hitting America's meat producers and sending them scrambling for alternatives as they seek to care for farm animals and keep down costs.

Competition for raw materials between people and animals as the COVID-19 pandemic shifted and inflation spiked, although ongoing demand has disrupted the usual marketplace. Add to that shipping logjams and port bottlenecks due to labor shortages, and farmers and feed producers are experiencing a hard time finding the supplies they need.

As grain prices surge, American chicken giant Perdue Farms Inc. bought soybeans, an American staple, from rival Brazil. The move raised Purdue's feed cost by no less than 30%. It impacts the cost of the goods they sell, and chicken often becomes a primary ingredient in foods for other animals.

The result is a rising cost of food for all animals, even those who will become part of the food source for others.

But other factors are just beginning to show up in the industry. Sanctions on Russia, **one of the world's top producers of fertilizers**, have resulted in a spike in the cost of the farming staple. For many, the increased cost of fertilizer is **over 100%**.

When fertilizer costs increase, the cost to produce essential crops such as wheat, corn, and soybeans also increases.

It is not the only cost increase affecting the bottom line. The cost of fuel has risen more than 38% in the last year. Diesel fuel recently set a record of more than **\$5.50 per gallon**. This increase affects the cost of farming and transporting the raw material used to produce foods.

The rising fuel costs affect organizations like sanctuaries and zoos that care for animals who need whole protein food sources. The price of shipping fish, rodents, and poultry to feed exotic animals has risen by more than double. And, when the source of those items has trouble feeding their animals, the available stock is reduced. All of this impacts the availability of food sources for the animals being cared for across the country.

What is driving this shortage?

Simply put, the long-term **effects of an economy shuttered** under the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the workforce has yet to return, specifically in manual labor and manufacturing jobs.

The economy is experiencing **record inflation**, the highest we have seen in more than 40 years. The costs of items related to food sources and manufacturing have increased, transportation costs have increased, and labor costs have increased to stay on pace with inflation.

**According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics**, the cost of goods and services has risen by 8.6% for the year. But when you take a closer look at the data, you will see certain industries that have seen even higher rates of impact.

For instance, poultry, fish, and eggs increased the most among food items, rising by 14.2%. Fruits and vegetables saw an increase in cost at 8.2%.

The energy index rose 34.6% over the past 12 months. The gasoline index increased 48.7% over the last year. The index for fuel oil more than doubled, rising 106.7%, the most significant increase in history.

These cost increases, supply chain struggles, **labor shortages**, and rising demand have resulted in a food shortage. And sadly, we are just starting to feel the most significant impact.

This growing season will be the first in many decades when fertilizer is less abundant and more expensive. The struggle will be coupled with spiking labor costs and fewer workers. For many, such as Archer-Daniels-Midland, who has often supplied lysine and other food items, they will reduce or even cease production.

The end result is a food shortage, rising prices, and the concern that many animals will face hunger, malnutrition, or starvation.

One animal sanctuary in Ohio, **Union Ridge Wildlife Center**, has reported numerous struggles in securing food consistently for many of the animals in its care. While they have been successful, it now comes with more effort and much more advanced planning. Items such as frozen fish, chickens, and rodents used to feed the raptors, otters, lions, and other carnivores have become harder to secure. So, when the items are available, the sanctuary must purchase as much as possible to ensure an ongoing food supply.

So, what can we be done? There are a few steps that every person can take to help.

First, the most practical step is to stock your shelves. When you can secure the usual food items for your animals, make sure you purchase enough for a few weeks. Be practical, don't overdo it, but ensure you have

sufficient supply in case a shortage causes a lengthy delay in getting food.

Second, reach out to state representatives. Ask them to take action to ease regulations and approve resources that could help local farmers, retailers, and manufacturers access resources and labor to ensure a more reasonable recovery for the nation's economy. You can find the contact information for your representative by [clicking here](#).

Finally, support local farmers, small businesses, and animal shelters. Buying local helps to continue the flow of resources for your community. It empowers local farmers to gain access to the funds and resources they need to continue the crucial work of supporting the nation's food supply.

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Michael Robison



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