

# Pet Age

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## FOUR-LEGGED AMBASSADORS

Welcome to the world of social media animal influencers commanding the attention of the world's biggest brands.

The first quarter of 2017 has been anything but casual for Pet Age. We attended the Greater Philadelphia Pet Expo and the Pet Industry Leadership Conference in January. We covered the 141st Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show and were present at both Groom Expo West and Super Pet Expo in February. This month, of course, we'll be taking in the Atlanta Pet Fair and Global Pet Expo (be sure to check out our annual guide, "What's New At Global," which gives an in-depth look at the event that's been dubbed the "Greatest Show on Earth").

On February 28, Pet Age and Pet Store Pro co-produced a free webinar on "How To Use Instagram to Grow Your Pet Retail Business." Ironically, our March cover story, "Dogs of Influence,"

is a feature article devoted to popular social media pets and the rising influence they're having on the pet industry. The piece was inspired by Sam Carroll, owner of Tinkerbelle, the picturesque pup who graces our cover. Carroll was one of the first people to contact me after I joined the Pet Age staff in September, eager to introduce me to Tinkerbelle and her incredible exploits.

"Pet influencers" like Tink and the other animals mentioned in this month's info-packed cover story have become a big part of our lives, and they're now a driving force with startups and major brands that are interested in hiring them to hawk their products. Once-ordinary pets are becoming icons, celebrities and household names, starring in movies and having their own apps or product lines.

And of course, this being Pet Age, that is only the beginning of our coverage this month. We traverse the newest trends in dog kibble (p. 86), take a look at the latest lounge-worthy cat beds (p. 94) and report the results of our Retailer Sentiment Index (p. 6). On the aquatic side of the industry, we examine the newest species and products by GloFish (p. 98) and offer the best advice to get started with stocking this year's pond products (p. 102). As always, after 45 years and counting, we welcome readers old and new to jump in, wherever and however you read Pet Age. So what are you waiting for? Go ahead and see for yourself. Enjoy!

**Glenn A. Polyn**  
Editor  
[glennp@petage.com](mailto:glennp@petage.com)

# Pet Age

#### EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER

**Allen Basis**  
[allenb@petage.com](mailto:allenb@petage.com)

#### ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

**Juliana Hefford**  
[julianah@petage.com](mailto:julianah@petage.com)  
310-507-4605

#### Tara Preston

[tarap@petage.com](mailto:tarap@petage.com)  
917-331-8904

#### BUSINESS MANAGER

**AnnMarie Karczmit**

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

**Jessica Perry**

#### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**Glenn A. Polyn**  
[glennp@petage.com](mailto:glennp@petage.com)  
732-246-5734

#### ASSISTANT EDITORS

**Alexandra Wepner**  
[alexandraw@petage.com](mailto:alexandraw@petage.com)  
732-246-5714

#### Colleen Murphy

[colleenm@petage.com](mailto:colleenm@petage.com)  
732-246-5739

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

**Karen M. Alley, Steven Appelbaum, Andy Black, Mike Bober, Dan Calabrese, Jennifer Higgins, John Mack, Erik J. Martin, Maggie Marton, Joe Olenik, Sandy Robins, Eric Stenson**

#### SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER

**Damon Cassaro**

#### WEB SERVICES

**Joe Barry**

## HOW TO REACH US

#### MAILING ADDRESS

Pet Age, 220 Davidson Ave., Suite 302  
Somerset, NJ 08873

Phone: 732-339-3700

Fax: 732-846-0421

Email: [info@petage.com](mailto:info@petage.com)

To subscribe visit: [www.petage.com](http://www.petage.com)

For list rentals:

The Information Refinery, Inc: 800-529-9020

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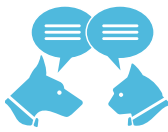
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## FEATURED SOCIAL MEDIA



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**Kerry Sutherland**  
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Last year was a great one for the [#petindustry](#)—will that continue into 2017? [@PetAgeMag](#) sheds some light [ow.ly/XGWF308LXHx](http://ow.ly/XGWF308LXHx) [#petcare](#)



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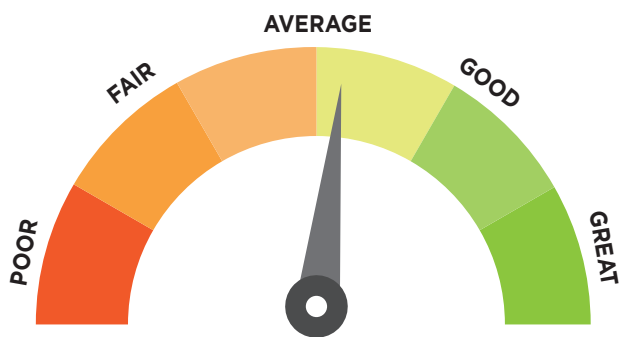


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Entering March, the retailer sentiment is average, with more than half of retailers (56 percent) predicting a 1 to 5 percent increase in customer spending in the next month. Dog food, supplies and accessories continue to make up most of retailers' earnings, a fact that store owners do not expect to change in the near future. As previous retailer reports have indicated, a vast majority of retailers (90 percent) are keeping their advertising spending low (under \$2,000).

What percentage of your sales **last month** came from:

Dec - 39.7%	Jan - 41.2%	Dog food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 9.3%	Jan - 9.4%	Cat food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 2.8%	Jan - 2.6%	Fish food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 0.2%	Jan - 0.3%	Pond supplies & accessories
Dec - 4.0%	Jan - 4.6%	Bird food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 2.0%	Jan - 1.3%	Small animal food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 2.5%	Jan - 1.2%	Reptile food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 6.4%	Jan - 6.1%	Gift & novelty items
Dec - 10.7%	Jan - 7.6%	Companion animals, fish and other livestock
Dec - 22.4%	Jan - 25.8%	Ancillary services (aquarium maintenance, boarding, grooming, etc.)

How many visitors came to your store last month?



How many visitors do you project will visit next month?



What percentage of your sales do you forecast for **next month** coming from:

Dec - 40.3%	Jan - 41.7%	Dog food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 9.1%	Jan - 9.8%	Cat food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 2.7%	Jan - 2.6%	Fish food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 0.1%	Jan - 0.2%	Pond supplies & accessories
Dec - 3.9%	Jan - 4.7%	Bird food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 2.1%	Jan - 1.5%	Small animal food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 2.2%	Jan - 1.2%	Reptile food, supplies & accessories
Dec - 5.7%	Jan - 4.7%	Gift & novelty items
Dec - 10.9%	Jan - 6.9%	Companion animals, fish and other livestock
Dec - 23.0%	Jan - 26.7%	Ancillary services (aquarium maintenance, boarding, grooming, etc.)

Did you offer any significant special sales, i.e. 20% store wide?



Will you offer any significant special sales next month, i.e. 20% store wide?



How much did you spend on advertising in the **past month**?

Jan - 85%	Feb - 90%	Up to \$1,999
Jan - 7%	Feb - 3%	\$2,000 to \$3,999
Jan - 5%	Feb - 2%	\$4,000 to \$5,999
Jan - 0%	Feb - 1%	\$6,000 to \$7,999
Jan - 1%	Feb - 1%	\$8,000 to \$9,999
Jan - 2%	Feb - 3%	\$10,000 or more

How much will you spend on advertising **next month**?

Jan - 85%	Feb - 90%	Up to \$1,999
Jan - 6%	Feb - 6%	\$2,000 to \$3,999
Jan - 3%	Feb - 3%	\$4,000 to \$5,999
Jan - 1%	Feb - 1%	\$6,000 to \$7,999
Jan - 1%	Feb - 1%	\$8,000 to \$9,999
Jan - 1%	Feb - 1%	\$10,000 or more

For the full results of our monthly retailer sentiment index survey, please visit [PetAge.com/retailersurvey](http://PetAge.com/retailersurvey).

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## A FOCUS ON QUALITY

Bag of Bones Barkery uses empowerment, education to improve pets' lives.

BY GLENN A. POLYN

**P**et Age recently visited Bag of Bones Barkery in Hamilton, New Jersey, and spoke with store owner Gregg Bernhardt on what has enabled him to succeed in today's hypercompetitive world of pet retail.

**Q** You opened Bag of Bones in 2007. How has your shop changed over the years?

**A** We've been fortunate enough to go from offering just three all natural pet food brands to more than 25, including frozen and freeze-dried raw diets for pets. With our recent expansion into a space that's nearly 11,000 square feet, we now offer our professional dog training, holistic integrative veterinary consultations, free local delivery and unique in-store events and informational seminars—and our

new shop includes a pair of life-sized, lifelike artificial trees. Unlike when we first began our business, we now administer more than two dozen free loyalty programs for our customers in addition to a free in-store rewards program that gives them credit for every dollar they spend with us.

**Q** What do you look for in the products that you carry in your shop?

**A** Safety, quality and overall value. We look for consumable products that have traceable and clear sources. To us, a product's source is exponentially more important than where a product is made (the latter is important as well). It's fantastic, for instance, when a product is made in the USA. But if that product's components/ingredients are sourced from questionable places or from sources that can't be made clear to us, it's not going to make it onto our shelves. Companies need to be transparent, and we need them to answer all of our questions—whether they are about their products or their company profile. We always tell our customers that when they buy something in our store, they aren't only purchasing a product—they're buying into a company and all of their processes and beliefs, too.

**Q** How have your dog trainer and holistic consultant been received by customers?

**A** Dog training is a service that's in high demand yet short supply. With space dedicated specifically to training and community events, it makes for a well-lit, spacious and comfortable venue. Having Dr. Rohini Sathish join our team as a holistic integrative pet wellness consultant has been very positive for our clients. Joining us from the UK with more than 22 years' experience as both a traditional and holistic veterinarian and veterinary surgeon, she offers services such as holistic consultations, herbal remedies, acupuncture, EFT/tapping, pet reiki, pet bereavement counseling and more. Our customers have overwhelmingly embraced both services as positive additions.

**Q** What are some upcoming events that will be taking place at your shop?

**A** Every May, we have a Pet Mania event to which we invite manufacturers and business partners. We give away stuff, have boardwalk prize wheels and Plinko boards. We'll also host a Christmas in July event to give customers a jump on Christmas card photos and gift-buying, too. **PA**

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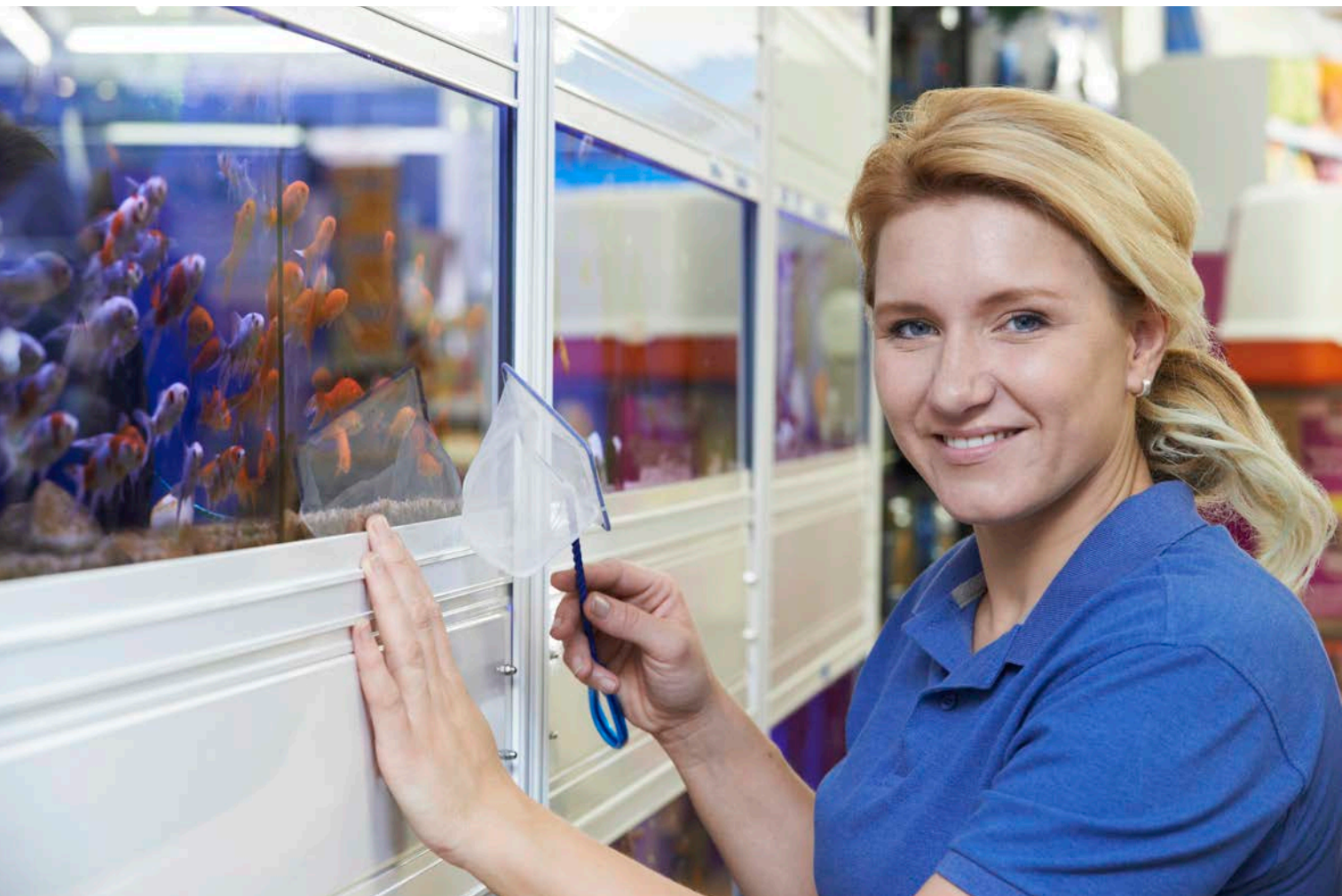
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## SKIP THE ICE CREAM

There are better employee retention strategies than trying to force your team to like you.

BY DAN CALABRESE

I once had a boss who was concerned that his employees didn't view him as fun and spontaneous. I believe he had good reason for this concern—he was pretty uptight and terrified to step out of his comfort zone.

In other words, his employees had pigeonholed him accurately. (To be honest, I'm of the opinion that employees usually do.)

So he decided to show his employees that he was really a fun guy who could live in the moment and do astonishingly cool things when employees least expected it. One day, he called all of us out of our offices and informed us that we were all going for ice cream.

Together. Right then, right there. Drop what you're doing, because we're going.

The four-block walk to the ice cream stand wasn't the longest walk I ever took, but it seemed like it was. The experience gave me that feeling of "You-will-have-fun-and-you-will-like-it!"

Everyone received their ice cream, whether they were hungry for it or not. Everyone smiled so the uptight, regimented boss would approve of our oh-so-spontaneous happiness. Everyone talked to each other about how cool this was.

And when we returned to work, we went back to the same environment we had known before the ice cream stunt. Why? Because no one bought it for a second.

I'll give the boss a little credit for trying, but the problem with his gambit was that he was trying to sell his

employees on a notion that was simply worlds away from reality: that the boss was a super fun guy, and this was a super fun place to work.

Just because an employee is not a manager doesn't mean he or she should never be allowed to exercise judgment or make a decision.

You only had to be there a few days to know that wasn't the case. And as an employee retention strategy, it failed spectacularly. Why? Because the boss totally misread what people were looking for as reasons to stay.

No one wants a job that's dull, repetitive and rote. However, work is work. A little fun in the mix is a plus, all things being equal. But you can keep employees on board without necessarily making work "fun."

In a retail environment, you're not going to make employees rich. And at certain levels, they will only be viable until they reach the point in their lives where they need to support families. So you know you can't keep people forever strictly on the basis of their compensation. But during the period

of their lives when a retail job makes sense for them (those who don't aspire to long-term retail management careers, that is), there are other things you can give them that make the job worth keeping.

A few examples:

Make thinking part of the job. Just because an employee is not a manager, doesn't mean he or she should never be allowed to exercise judgment or make a decision. If they're allowed to stock shelves and ring up purchases but have to run and ask a supervisor for just about everything else, you're hardly giving them an opportunity to make a substantial contribution to the success of your store. And I'm not talking about putting out a suggestion box. I'm talking about anticipating situations in which a quick and wise decision will meet a customer's needs and put the store in a better position to succeed and then teaching employees how to think and act in those situations.

Train the people to know your store; every pet store is not same. Sure, you all basically stock the same items, but everyone who ever founded a store had a unique philosophy and set of goals. Those should be among the things that make your culture,

your priorities and your method of operation unique to this day. Your employees may or may not have retail experience, or even pet retail experience, but have you taught them the unique mission of your business and how they can help you achieve it?

Give individuals a vision of their own personal success. Like I said, many of your employees will not be long-termers. They'll go onto professional careers in other fields or they'll discover a different calling in their lives. That's not a knock on your store—that's just how life is. But even if they'll only be with you for a short portion of their lives, you should have a plan for how their success working for you should bring real-life, tangible rewards. Whether that's a combination of greater responsibility, more money, new experiences or something else, employees are far more likely to give you their best when they can envision what ultimate success will look like for them.

Be creative. How can you reward your best people? And once you've thought of a way, don't let the apparent limitations of the retail environment stop you from actually doing it.

Seasonal hiring increases can also present an opportunity. It gives you a chance to look at potential new members of the team. You tend to think seasonal hires will be with you in November and December and then out by January. But they might be a better long-term fit than some of your current employees, and if it wasn't for seasonal hiring, you might never discover that.

Employees want to be challenged to do good things. They also need to be trained and equipped to be efficient and productive. So challenge them, train them and reward them.

Some will still leave—that's life. But how many premature departures can you prevent by embracing this approach? A lot more than an awkward trip for ice cream, I can promise you that. **PA**





## BEYOND THE BANS

PIJAC encourages a conversation on local pet sale bans.

BY MIKE BOBER



Mike Bober is the president and CEO of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), where he advocates for the responsible pet industry and improvement of the human-animal relationship. He previously served as PIJAC's vice president of public affairs. Find out more about PIJAC at [www.pijac.org](http://www.pijac.org).

**W**e at the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciate Pet Age allowing us to represent the responsible pet industry in its pages on this and other companion animal issues. Our position is simple: pet sale bans are a proxy attack on the commercial breeding of all animals, aimed at the most vulnerable sector of the industry: retailers.

Pet sale bans in localities and states often begin with lofty preambles that cite ambiguous statistics while accusing licensed and inspected breeders of malicious mistreatment in pursuit of profit. Activists also create an impression of local opposition to responsible and irresponsible breeders alike; it's no wonder that lawmakers and the public rush to support them.

This impression is just that, however—the fact is that pet sale ban language is often repeated from one local ordinance to another, making it very clear that these seemingly organic efforts are part of an orchestrated campaign. Its underlying intent is to put licensed, regulated commercial breeders—beginning with dogs and

cats, then expanding to cover all species of companion animals—out of business. The national activist organizations behind these efforts aim to so demonize legal and ethical practices that public opinion forces lawmakers to do their dirty work for them by outlawing the best-regulated source for pets.

For many in the responsible pet industry, these bans have been easy to disregard or, in some cases, to actively support. Food and product manufacturers, service providers and product-only retailers are not directly affected by them. Even breeders can shrug off more than 2/3 of the bans that have passed, as they have no impact since they were adopted by municipalities with no active pet stores.

But this is short-sighted, and by treating pet sale bans as an issue unto themselves, the entire pet industry—which depends on a reliable supply of healthy, responsibly raised companion animals—has failed to prepare for the next stage of the activists' agenda. While dogs sold in pet stores account for less than 5 percent of the dogs acquired in this country each year, the



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supply of dogs available through shelters is far less than national demand. A recently-released study by Mississippi State University makes it clear: if these bans achieve their goal—a complete cessation of breeding at U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-regulated facilities—the pet industry will see a double-digit decline in dog ownership within a few years. Can any of us weather the impact that will have?

It's not about puppies and kittens anymore. Localities, like Cambridge, Massachusetts, are now extending the arguments that have succeeded against commercially bred dogs and cats to small mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. With relatively few of these animals available through shelters and rescues, the impact will be seen much more quickly and in a far more drastic fashion.

Activists' complaints are not entirely baseless. There are bad actors out there, and we as an industry have not done enough to confront and eliminate them. This, coupled with our failure to spend the time and resources necessary to tell our shared story of animal care, has allowed those who oppose companion animal breeding to paint our industry as greedy, callous and heartless. Others have stepped up to claim the mantle of companion animals' champion, with the result being an inherent trust of anything they say and an inherent suspicion of "Big Pet."

And if there's anyone Americans love to distrust more than corporations, it's the government. Critics argue that the USDA holds licensed breeders (of which there are currently fewer than 1,800 nationwide) to inadequate standards, and then fails to enforce even those. They decry the Animal Welfare Act as outdated and insufficient. Citing an absence of federal leadership, they advocate for local action to prohibit commercial breeders and promote shelters and rescues.

But that's not the whole story.

Most USDA-licensed breeders exceed the federal standards. They are either required to by state laws governing their operations or they voluntarily do so to improve the health and well-being of the animals they raise and sell. USDA inspections are designed to be instructive rather than punitive, with comprehensive animal welfare the goal. Inspections are rigorous, but inspectors are encouraged to work with breeders to achieve compliance, rather than trying to "get" them for non-compliance.

Animal welfare expectations should be the same regardless of the name of the operation providing it. Surely, we can all find a way to complement one another's efforts in the name of protecting animals and those who care for them.

Animal health and well-being is always our first priority, so last year we at PIJAC took the steps of contacting and meeting with the USDA to urge the agency to thoroughly review its care standards to ensure that they reflect the best science and data currently available.

With shelters and rescues enjoying the "halo effect" of their effective branding, it comes as no surprise that more and more pet owners are choosing adoption. This viable option has many limitations that are often overlooked.

First and foremost, there's the simple fact that rescues and shelters cannot keep up with the demand from U.S. homeowners and families who want a four-legged friend, let alone one with scales or feathers. In many parts of the country, shelters import far more dogs from out-of-state than they acquire locally.

Furthermore, the lack of reporting requirements for rescues and shel-


ters in most states makes it difficult to understand exactly where dogs and cats come from and where they go. Poor governmental oversight allows hoarding situations and outbreaks of communicable diseases, while a lack of knowledge of an animal's origins and history can lead to issues with temperament and health.

Shelters and rescues play an important role in helping prospective pet owners and prospective pets connect, but part of this bigger discussion we need to have is an honest look at ways in which we can work to make sure they complement, rather than compete with, retail. No one benefits when rescues that can't fill their kennels with dogs that are actually lost or abandoned are actively participating in auctions, bidding up asking prices in the name of "saving" animals. It's difficult to ensure optimal conditions and care standards when relying on networks of volunteers driving vans and trucks packed floor to ceiling with crates from areas of high concentration to areas of high demand.

Yet for many activists, this is somehow preferable to transportation using state-of-the-art equipment designed for exactly this purpose, solely because the animals are being "rescued." Animal welfare expectations should be the same regardless of the name of the operation providing it. Surely, we can all find a way to complement one another's efforts in the name of protecting animals and those who care for them.

We in the responsible pet industry do need to have a conversation about the breeding and sale of companion animals. Actually, we need to have several—among ourselves, with lawmakers and the public, and with those in the shelter and rescue community who are truly focused on animal care (rather than pursuing their own agendas). But arguing about whether bans are "good" or "bad" misses the bigger picture that affects all of us in a very real way. **PA**

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Increase sales and keep track of profits by categorizing your inventory.

BY ANDY BLACK



Andy Black is an associate/partner at Market Strategies, an independent rep group that serves all 50 states. He has more than 40 years in distribution and as a manufacturer's representative focusing on marketing and sales in the pet industry.

The internet is a dominant sales platform. For a brick-and-mortar retailer, that means one needs to be as knowledgeable as possible about what you're selling and why customers visit your store. If all you're doing is selling merchandise, your business will not survive; what you have to sell is your expertise, providing credible advice that will help customers succeed.

Pricing your products according to market value and being a professional in your field will tip the balance in your favor when dealing one-on-one with a customer. No matter how easy a website is to navigate, its customer service is limited to remote contact. Even in this high-tech retail environment, personal interaction will give you an edge.

When deciding on the products to stock and prices to charge, be aware that there are five important categories of products that you should consider. If you divide your inventory into these categories and order accordingly, you're bound to increase your sales and keep your customers satisfied at the same time.

**"Demand items"** are products that customers ask for regularly. These products include consumables like pet food or supplements. Demand items are often price-sensitive and may not yield full margins, but they do draw customers into your store where you can offer other more profitable products or services. Secure a main and secondary supplier for demand items to ensure they're always in stock. Running out of a demand item can cost you customers if they feel they need a necessity item and are forced to go elsewhere to find it.

**"Unique items"** are products that are not substitutable. You can realize better margins on unique products because they are not as price-sensitive. These products include replacement parts, pet clothing, specialized animal training items and such custom-made products as specialty aquariums, cat furniture and dog houses.

**"Completer items"** are products that are required to complete a project or make other products work. Without these items, other items may not sell. These products could include accessories for bird or dog cages, replacement parts for equipment, cartridges for aquarium filters, etc. Completer items are what set you apart from big-box stores that only stock high-volume items. Completer items may not move as fast as other merchandise but can be the difference between customer satisfaction and disappointment.

**"Profit items"** are products that have an established price. They can be minimum advertised pricing (MAP)-protected by the manufacturer or have an established price that the consumer expects to pay. MAP protected items are a growing category that some manufacturers enforce because they want to continue to see a healthy retail showroom for their products. Retailers should consider gravitating toward manufacturers who support MAP protection whenever possible.

**"Seasonal items"** are products that sell at certain times of the year. Examples of these are flea-and-tick items, holiday products and winter clothing. If you don't have them in stock at the right time, you can't sell them. It's true that seasonal items have a time sensitive value—once the season or event has passed, the product value is greatly reduced. Some suppliers will guarantee the sale for customers with good track records and will take back unsold seasonal inventories, which allows the retailer to reinvest in new inventory rather than sit on seasonal products until the next year.

Not all products and brands can be priced the same—not if you want to survive in the ever-changing pet industry marketplace. Try categorizing your pricing formulas and see how it works for you. Consumers only want to spend a portion of their ready cash and will go elsewhere if they can't find it in your store. Profit is relative—you can mark it up, but can you sell it? **PA**

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# A COMBO THAT'S EFFECTIVE

The Pets in the Classroom program closes in on 100,000 grants.

BY STEVE KING



Steve King is a 35-year veteran of the pet industry. He is currently president of the Pet Industry Distributors Association and executive director of the Pet Care Trust.

The Pet Care Trust launched its signature program, Pets in the Classroom, in 2011 with little fanfare and a few social media posts on sites catering to teachers. Today, midway through the 2016-17 school year, we have awarded more than 91,000 grants to teachers in every state and Canadian province.

What has led to the explosive growth of this program? Kids' natural curiosity about animals, teachers' desire to enrich their curricula and the program's hassle-free grant process have proven to be a winning combination. The program not only brings out students' creativity, stimulates learning and improves classroom socialization, it also promotes a sense of responsibility, empathy and compassion for all living things.

The program provides grants to teachers who teach grades pre-K through eight to obtain a classroom pet and the products needed to house and care for the animal. Grants are provided through coupons redeemed at all major pet retail chains. Or, teachers may opt for a rebate grant that reimburses them for up to \$125 spent at any independent pet store. Every teacher who receives a grant is eligible to receive a \$50 sustaining grant each successive school year to buy supplies for their classroom pet.

The program's true impact can be observed best in individual classrooms, like Haley Cooper's 3rd and 4th grade classroom in Thornfield, Missouri.

"I can't thank you enough for allowing our classroom to be part of Pets in the Classroom," Cooper said in a letter that she wrote to the Pet Care Trust. "Having a pet keeps my students excited about school and science. My students love helping with the chameleon's water dish and watching her eat. Students come to school and tell me facts about the chameleon that they researched on their own."

Or as Jaylen, one of Cooper's students puts it, "I think that all of you are amazingly nice for giving us money to buy the chameleon, a cage, and food!"

We all voted and decided to name the chameleon Spike and we decided that before we realized that Spike is a girl!"

Classroom pets can even impact kids outside the classroom. Teacher Denise Morin from Brayton Elementary School in North Adams, Massachusetts, obtained a Pets in the Classroom grant for an aquarium for summer science camp.

"I am one of 10 camp leaders serving over 300 students in the school district's K-6 day camp," Morin said in her letter. "This year, the theme of the science camp has been 'Ocean Commotion.' We are about four hours from the ocean, and the majority of our children live in poverty. The parents can barely afford food for their families, much less a trip to the ocean. In camp, many students need 'relax' time because of home-life situations. In many cases, the students come to summer science camp because it is a safe, loving environment, plus they get at least two meals a day. The tank in the room helps the students relax and be comforted. Many students, when camp is getting overwhelming, go to the tank area to relax, calm down, refocus and then rejoin the group in better spirits."

Pets in the Classroom has touched the lives of more than 3.6 million children. A study by the American Humane Association and funded by the Pet Care Trust and the Human-Animal Bond Research Institute Foundation is expected to show that classroom pets not only increase students' social skills and decrease problem behaviors like bullying, but can also improve academic achievement to a greater degree than children who do not have a pet in their classroom.

Demand for Pets in the Classroom grants is expected to skyrocket as these findings filter through the academic community. We don't want a teacher to tell his or her students that their classroom pet request was denied due to lack of funds. Help us by making a donation to the Pet Care Trust at [www.petsintheclassroom.org/donate](http://www.petsintheclassroom.org/donate). **PA**

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# GROOMING BEHAVIOR

Behavior challenges are a big factor in the grooming salon.

BY STEVEN APPELBAUM



Aside from being a successful standalone business, grooming can be an outstanding service for retail stores to offer customers. In addition to being another revenue source, grooming can boost product sales, inspire greater customer loyalty and drive repeat business. However, grooming could also be problematic, particularly if difficult dogs are not handled properly, which could result in a loss of clientele or even injured staff.

Consider this scenario: a salon customer brings in a dog that doesn't like the experience. The dog growls and snaps when being clipped. The dog detests being in a kennel and snaps when brought back out.

The grooming session takes longer than normal, and the groomer is almost bitten. Exasperated, the salon owner informs the customer when she picks up her dog that it has been aggressive and needs some training.

The customer is defensive, claiming her dog never growls or snaps at anyone at home. She wonders aloud if you or your staff somehow caused this behavior. Politely informed that her dog was treated humanely and with great patience, the customer barely listens. She stops coming to the salon. Several weeks later, a negative Yelp review appears, telling people to avoid the salon because the groomers are inexperienced and their treatment of the dogs might cause the animals to become aggressive.

It's imperative that staff be knowledgeable about the causes of problem behavior that could occur during grooming, as well as how to effectively communicate with customers about it.

While dog trainers and behavioral specialists don't always see eye to eye on a variety of issues, nearly all agree that when dealing with behavioral challenges, you must address root causes if you expect to eliminate or reduce them. Dogs who try to bite or snap at people or that are uncooperative are typically engaging in these behaviors for several reasons.

Stress is the greatest cause of bad behavior in a grooming salon, and it's understandable. Think about this from a dog's perspective. It is taken to a strange place where it has no positive associations. Once there, it is approached by someone who doesn't respond to its signals that indicate distress, alarm, fear, etc. Instead, it is taken to a room with dogs that are clearly stressed or excited and put in a cage. After being taken out of the cage by someone who again ignores its attempts to communicate its discomfort, it is put in a cold tub and scrubbed with shampoo. Next, it is dried and placed back in a cage or onto a table where, from its point-of-view, it is brusquely brushed and clipped.

If this was done to you, would you like it, or would you be stressed? If the latter, your behavior would most likely change and manifest in different ways, such as acting aggressively. The same dynamics apply to dogs, who typically become aggressive when stressed.

Some dogs discover that being aggressive prevents unpleasant experiences from happening. From a behavioral standpoint, when a dog snaps at you and you subsequently modify your behavior, it is administering positive punishment. And since this type of punishment will generally decrease a behavior, the dog will learn that being aggressive works. Dogs and people basically learn in the same ways.

When experiencing pain, dogs will either snap, growl, bite, freeze or attempt to escape. No matter which action a dog chooses, the root cause isn't the aggression, it is the pain stimulating it.

Understanding the causes of behavior and knowing how to effectively explain the issues to grooming clients not only improves communication between you and your customers, but it also decreases any risks to your staff. In addition, you could also learn how to modify challenging dogs' behavior and even get their owners to assist you with it. **PA**

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Steven Appelbaum is the president of Animal Behavior College, the nation's largest vocational school for animal-related careers. He is a freelance writer and dog trainer with more than 30 years of experience.

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# DOGS OF *INFLUENCE*

The popularity of social media pets has given rise to a new breed of brand influencers.

BY GLENN A. POLYN

**P**ets are big business. People don't just like cute animals, they adore them. And if those pets are promoting a brand on a social media platform, fans of that dog, cat or small animal tend to remember those products. There's a term for this—it's called "animal influencer."

And considering that, according to the American Pet Products Association, spending on pets is expected to surpass the \$67 billion mark for 2016, it should come as no surprise that animal influencers have piqued the interest of big brands.

These pampered pets often enjoy a level of social media fame that's

reserved for human celebrities, and they can even bring their owners real revenue through partnerships with big brands like Purina, Pizza Hut and Procter & Gamble.

Pets of all categories are popping up on media outlets like BuzzFeed and Daily Mail, and many feline Instagram accounts, among the most notable being Lil Bub and Grumpy Cat, are filled with sponsored posts for major brands like Friskies, Mercedes and GoPro. Lil Bub has his own weather app and a line of watches, while Grumpy Cat starred in his own TV movie, "Grumpy Cat's Worst Christmas Ever," in 2014.

Then there is the story of a French bulldog named Chloe. Owned by Loni Edwards, a lawyer turned entrepreneur, Chloe's Instagram account went from pedestrian to prominent, with the dog becoming an internet sensation. Chloe has been featured in publications like Vogue and Martha Stewart. She has also collaborated with fashion manufacturer Donni Charm for her own line of dog scarves.

After noticing the impact social media pet superstars have on people, Edwards launched a New York-based talent agency for internet pet influencers called The Dog Agency.

The website for The Dog Agency reads, “We handpick and cultivate the best talent to create premium content that appeals to fans and brands alike, as well as strategically connect the dots and streamline the collaboration process between our celebrity animal clients, brands and media.”

The list of outlets The Dog Agency has worked with for its clients includes “The Today Show,” The Huffington Post, along with such companies as Google, Dyson, 20th Century Fox, Merck and Nikon.

Edwards is not alone in jumping on the internet pet craze, as there are several other management agencies that play matchmaker between pet influencers and everything from small fashion boutiques to major corporations. These agencies, such as Socialffy and HelloSociety, broker deals with brands to have their products conspicuously shown with these animals on social media posts. The agencies take a commission and the animal goes on to parlay their internet stardom into monetization.

Stacey Reiner, founder of New York City-based Remarkable Brands, used her 20 years of experience in the consumer products industry to create the licensing/branding agency four years ago. Last month she added her first non-human client, an easygoing pup known to people around the world as simply “Doug the Pug.”

“I started as a fan of Doug’s social media,” Reiner said of the 4-year-old pooch who, since being adopted in 2012 from an Ohio-based breeder by his owner, Leslie Mosier, has amassed 8 million social media followers. “It was something that I was impressed with, so he became my first animal client.”

“Credit has to go to the Doug the Pug team. They have two to three social media posts a week,” she added. “They’re constantly up to date on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. He’s always in the moment. They do seasonal posts and posts based on things that are in the public eye. He’s fun and relatable to his followers.”

Once Reiner became Doug’s worldwide licensing agent, she said she is now examining the consumer products possibilities—namely T-shirts, slippers and kids products, as well as product lines for pets. She is currently communicating with various manufacturers and retailers to carry the product lines.

“We hope to have products by the end of the year, for the winter holidays, and even some by this summer,” she explained.

Numbers don’t lie. According to an April 2016 Wall Street Journal article, social media influencers can expect to earn approximately \$3,000 per sponsorship deal when they hit 150,000 social media followers. If a dog surpasses a million followers, it can net \$10,000 for a single post.



Compare that to a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report for the fourth quarter of 2016, which found that men and women between the ages of 25 and 34 make a median weekly salary of \$801 and \$710 per week, respectively.

While pet owners can’t expect to generate a massive amount of revenue from their pet’s social media popularity, it’s not impossible. Take the case of Chloe Kardoggian. Her owner, Dorie Herman of Jersey City, New Jersey, has had her Chloe’s name trademarked, obtained an LLC and even obtained a tax identification for her pup.

What do companies seek in a pet for product placement or an endorsement? According to Daniel Koehler,

senior account executive, marketing public relations for Nestle Purina PetCare, it’s personality.

“There are so many different brands, so many different voices and personalities,” he said. “It’s one thing that’s great about the social media landscape. We can find a pet and mirror it with what our brands embody.”

Koehler has been with Nestle Purina since 2011, a few years after the company started its involvement in partnerships with social media influencers. As he put it, they created his position because “the company wanted to make a bigger play in that field. It wanted to examine the impact of social media influencers, so we built up a history of best practices.”

“It’s not something that’s forced,” Koehler explained. “We want to make it relationship focused. What we do works because it’s a relationship that’s genuine, authentic and not based on monetary issues.”

Part of Koehler’s duties include identifying influencers, vetting them and forming a strategy. Although Friskies receives a lot of attention for its association with Grumpy Cat, Purina also has relationships with social media pets through its Beneful, Pro Plan and Beggin’ brands.

In 2016, Pro Plan put together its Pro Plan Extraordinary Men & Cats calendar, with 2017 featuring a focus on what Koehler calls “adventure cats.” Beggin’, meanwhile, is a popular brand for connecting with social media dogs.

“Beggin’ has a lighthearted tone so it’s perfect for fun posts” Koehler explained regarding what makes it a hit with social media platforms like Instagram. “Beggin’ works best with an account with humor in its posts. It works with pet owners sharing hilarious moments with their dog through that treating moment.”

Pets can become an internet sensation with just a single viral video or photo post. Pet Age decided to profile five dogs that represent the next wave of up-and-coming Instagram stars.

*continued on page 122*



## Editor's Pick

### Outward Hound's Fun Feeder

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[www.kookykittens.com](http://www.kookykittens.com)

### Pod 2 GPS Pet Tracker

Keep better track of Fido and his activity with the Pod 2 GPS Pet Tracker. The innovative smart collar monitors pets' fitness levels and real-time location. The device attaches to the collar and can record up to eight hours of pets' secret lives so owners know if the pets had a lazy day or an active day—and can pick up the slack accordingly.  
[www.podtrackers.com](http://www.podtrackers.com)



### Get Naked Grain-Free Treats for Dogs and Cats

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[www.npicpet.com](http://www.npicpet.com)



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Pet Qwerks is introducing a new line of Flavorit BarkBones. They're available in nylon and wood versions and infused with peanut butter, mesquite chicken or minty flavoring. The bones have flavor cells that can also be filled with your dog's favorite spread, like peanut butter, cheese and more. In addition to its three available flavors, the Falvorit BarkBones also come in three sizes. [www.petqwerks.com](http://www.petqwerks.com)

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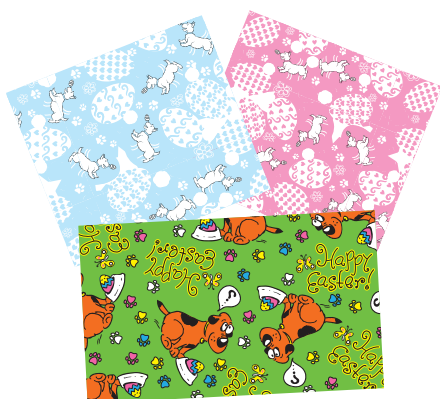
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[www.apollopeak.com](http://www.apollopeak.com)

**Ground Rounds by  
Wholesome Hide**

Wholesome Hide's new crunchy rawhide treats, Ground Rounds, are 2-inch by 1/2-inch circular treats made from ground USA sourced beef hide, blended with USA sourced vegetables, fruits, nutraceuticals and more. The treats come in 10 varieties, including sweet potato, apple, blueberry, duck, chicken, pork and a "healthy hip" formula for older dogs. Ground Rounds are perfect for training and rewards for all dogs but especially older and overweight dogs. They are available in four-pack and eight-pack poly bags with headers and a 2-pound retail jar for individual sales.

[www.wholesomehide.com](http://www.wholesomehide.com)



**Cooling Coat by Trilanco Ltd**

British brand Trilanco Ltd makes this high performance cooling coat for dogs. The product cools without wetting the dog, making it ideal for show dogs as well as pets. In addition to the coat, the range contains the Grooming Towel, which reduces grooming times by up to 60 percent, and a Cooling Mat. There is also a collection of sprays, shampoos and cleaners that kill 99.9999 percent of bacteria, viruses and fungi. The range is being expanded to include equine products.  
[www.trilanco.com](http://www.trilanco.com)



## Outdoor Dog by Fashion Pet's Leather Detail Coat

Keep dogs warm and dry with Outdoor Dog by Fashion Pet's Leather Detail Coat. The Ethical Products, Inc.-made coat is water resistant and insulated for rainy, snowy and chilly days. The coat also features faux leather accent and fur detail on its hood with a snap to hold it in place when not in use. Machine washable, the coat, which is available in sizes XS-XL, has a convenient leash hole for comfort during walks.

[www.ethicalpet.com](http://www.ethicalpet.com)



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[www.parkerstreats.com](http://www.parkerstreats.com)



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[www.handsongloves.com](http://www.handsongloves.com)



### Hilton Herbs

Hilton Herbs has a range of natural health supplements for dogs, cats, birds and poultry. The tried and tested FDA-approved supplements support a variety of common conditions. The supplements are made with 100 percent premium natural ingredients with no fillers.

[www.hiltonherbs.com](http://www.hiltonherbs.com)



### Natural Pork Recipe by Rad Cat Raw Diet

Radagast Pet Food, Inc., makers of Rad Cat Raw Diet, announced the addition of its new frozen, raw Natural Pork Recipe to its product line. The natural pork is made with pork shoulder, which provides a balanced ratio of whole muscle meat to fat, providing outstanding nutrition and flavor. And like all Rad Cat varieties, Natural Pork Recipe is made from sustainably and humanely-raised meats and poultry, and with boneless and skinless whole muscle meat.

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### Stella & Chewy's Raw Blend and Raw Coated Kibble

Each recipe in this Stella and Chewy raw kibble line is gently oven baked and coated in the company's irresistible freeze-dried raw. The raw blend and raw coated kibble also feature "Only the Good Stuff!" including 60-70 percent protein-rich meat, and a grain-free formula. The line will be available in April in 3.5-, 10- and 22-pound sizes.

[www.stellaandchewys.com](http://www.stellaandchewys.com)

### ZenCrate by PNP Robotics

Made in the USA, the ZenCrate dog den is used as a tool to reduce anxiety caused by separation, loud noises and storms. The den is sound insulated and has orthopedic memory foam, a motion-activated fan for improved ventilation, motion-activated music with a curated anti-anxiety playlist and a battery backup to prevent power outages. The ZenCrate's setup requires no tools and can take as little as five minutes.

[www.zendogcrate.com](http://www.zendogcrate.com)



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**Instincts Line by R2P Pet**

Instincts, a new pet specialty exclusive line of dog and cat toys, beds and accessories, was designed specifically for pet specialty retailers. The Instincts line of dog toys includes multiple assortments designed to target different doggy needs while the cat toys feature a variety of assortments that are sure to bring out a cat's natural behaviors and tendencies.

[www.r2ppet.com](http://www.r2ppet.com)



**Oggi's Oven by OGGI GB Inc.**

These British biscuit and cake mixes enable owners to bake their own home-cooked treats for their dogs. Made in the UK and new to the USA with FDA approval, the Oggi's Oven mixes are available in eight flavors, and all ingredients are natural, free from additives and preservatives and are even human consumption approved. New for 2017 are Oggi's Birthday and Christmas Gift Boxes.

[www.oggisoven.co.uk](http://www.oggisoven.co.uk)

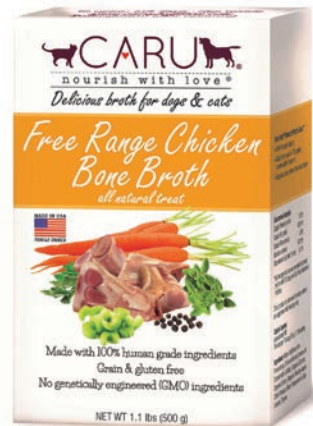
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**Caru Pet Food Free Range Chicken Bone Broth**

Caru Pet Food's line of natural Bone Broths now includes new Free Range Chicken Bone Broth for dogs and cats. The broths are made with wholesome ingredients that look and taste homemade. Caru Free Range Chicken Bone Broth is a delicious between-meal treat that's also ideal for moistening dry food or pouring over raw food to enhance its appetite appeal. The Free Range Chicken Bone Broth is cooked in small batches with 100 percent human grade, all-natural, non-GMO ingredients.

[www.carupetfood.com](http://www.carupetfood.com)

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**Fuzzies Bones by Cycle Dog**

Cycle Dog's Fuzzies is a USA-made soft toy collection. Fuzzies Bones use Duraplush construction, which combines a soft outer material with an inner laminate for high durability and strength. Made from post-consumer recycled materials, Stitchguard double stitched internal seams adds additional protection. The toy is available in three sizes and is hand-sewn in Portland, Oregon.

[www.cycledog.com](http://www.cycledog.com)

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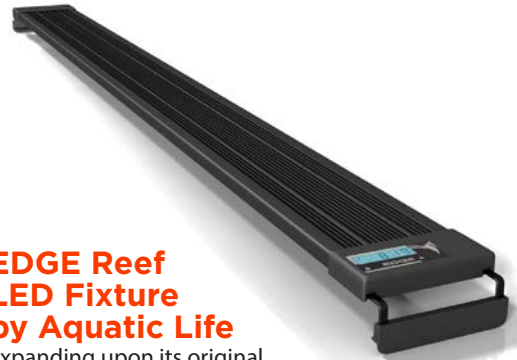
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**Coastal Reflective Safety Vest by Coastal Pet Products, Inc.**

The Coastal Reflective Safety Vest maximizes visibility at night and during the day with reflective material and fluorescent color. The vests are lightweight, water resistant and adjustable for comfort. Reflective safety vests are available in three neon colors—orange, pink and yellow—and in small, medium and large sizes.

[www.coastalpet.com](http://www.coastalpet.com)



**EDGE Reef LED Fixture by Aquatic Life**

Expanding upon its original EDGE LED aquarium lighting fixture launched in 2013, Aquatic Life has released a new EDGE LED into the aquarium market—this time specifically tailored for growing coral. New to the EDGE Reef LED fixture is the addition of three violet LEDs at 400nm wavelengths (within the UV spectrum) that emulate some of the UV wavelengths, similar to that of the sun, to help coral thrive in an aquarium setting.

[www.aquaticlife.com](http://www.aquaticlife.com)



**Red Alert Nylon Chew Toy by Ethical Products**

Ethical Products' newly launched patent pending nylon chew toy for dogs, Red Alert, is all about safety first. The chicken scented, durable nylon toy features a red core visual safety indicator to warn if the strength of the toy has been compromised. Its virtually indestructible outer layer—perfect for aggressive chewers—includes raised nubs that help clean teeth and massage gums. Red Alert is available in bone, ring and Y-bone shapes.

[www.ethicalpet.com](http://www.ethicalpet.com)

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**The Amazing Dog Stopper**

This battery-free training tool will help teach small dogs (up to 50 pounds) to not run away from their owners. The Amazing Dog Stopper simply clips onto a dog’s collar and is activated when the dog starts to run. A dog bone pendant will descend and interrupt the running by gently bumping against the dog’s legs. When the dog stops running, the pendant returns to the collar. Available in red, blue and yellow, the Amazing Dog Stopper is made in the USA. [www.amazingdogstopper.com](http://www.amazingdogstopper.com)



**Macanna Freeze-Dried Dog Food by Grandma Lucy’s**

Every ingredient in the Macanna line of freeze-dried dog food—hemp, coconut, kale and turmeric—was chosen with a specific benefit in mind, such as kale’s potential to promote a healthy heart, skin, bones, and eyes and coconut’s supply of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Made with only human-grade, non-GMO ingredients and manufactured in Southern California, Macanna is also grain-free. [www.grandmalucys.com](http://www.grandmalucys.com)



**Grain-Free All Natural Smart Strips Treats by Einstein Pets**

The USA-made, all-natural, heart-smart Smart Strips dog treats come in two tempting flavors: Sweet Potato + Banana and Sweet Potato + Cranberry. The strips are a tough, chewy, vitamin-enriched, low-fat alternative to conventional treats. They can easily be torn into smaller pieces, which makes them perfect for training sessions, stuffable toys or sprinkling on top of food. [www.einsteinpets.com](http://www.einsteinpets.com)

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# PET BEDS



## The ArmourDillo Bed by Scruffs

The Scruffs ArmourDillo bed is part of the company's MEMORY series of orthopedic pet beds. The bed has a dual compound foam core with an egg-crate top. The egg-crate memory foam molds to the contours of the dog's body, achieving a greater level of comfort. To maximize the bed's resilience against scratching and chewing, its outer cover is produced using near-impregnable 1680D ballistic fabric. And with a 100 percent waterproof backing, the bed is ideal for use outdoors or in kennels.

[www.petslovescruffs.com](http://www.petslovescruffs.com)

## Purr Heaven Cat Bed by Petlinks

Even the most social cats instinctually crave a quiet spot to retreat from the bustle of busy life. Catering to the unique needs of cats, the Petlinks Purr Heaven Cat Bed is a therapeutic memory foam cat bed that supports joints and relieves pressure points. This high-backed cozy cat bed has a shredded memory foam cushion and is machine washable for added convenience.

[www.petlinkssystem.com](http://www.petlinkssystem.com)



## Igloo Deluxe Pet Bed by The Refined Feline

The Igloo Deluxe pet bed is a perfect hideaway for the family cat or dog. Its faux rattan body and wood top and bottom creates a great furniture look, while its soft cushion provides a comfortable place for your pet to rest.

[www.therefinedfeline.com](http://www.therefinedfeline.com)

## Sleep Zone by Ethical Products

Sleep Zone by Ethical Products is launching several new beds at Global Pet Expo. New, fashionable styles and colors in line with current trends are the focus along with the introduction of new pillow beds. Sleep Zone's bed assortment is designed to coordinate with a home's decorative theme while providing ultimate comfort for the pet.

[www.ethicalpet.com](http://www.ethicalpet.com)



# AND BEDDING



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[www.kruuse.com](http://www.kruuse.com)



## Eco-Bedding by FiberCore

Eco-Bedding is an environmentally-friendly, paper-based bedding and enrichment product for small animals and birds (works great for puppies and birds, too). It is hygienic, sanitary and dust free, which makes the bedding perfect for animals and people with sensitive respiratory systems. Eco-Bedding is economical, easy to spot clean for the pet owner and encourages nesting and foraging, which improves pet life. Eco-Bedding is made from 100 percent post-consumer waste and packed by a local group of developmentally disabled adults.

[www.eco-bedding.com](http://www.eco-bedding.com)

## Fresh World Bedding Multi-Pet Strength by Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc.

Expanding to absorb up to three times its weight in moisture, this bedding controls odor for up to 14 days using a unique combination of natural ingredients that eliminates odors. It is 99 percent dust free and safe for pets and owners.

[www.sunseed.com](http://www.sunseed.com)



## Cutie Patootie Dog Beds by Heads Up For Tails

The Cutie Patootie dog beds are colorful, vibrant and full of character. The bed's design has been hand drawn and then converted into a computer graphic for printing. Made of soft, durable canvas fabric, the Cutie Patootie bed is available in powder blue and baby pink and offers three sizes. With these variations, there is one that is perfect for your pooch. The removable cover also makes it easy to wash and maintain.

[www.headsupfortails.us](http://www.headsupfortails.us)



Next Month: Spring Gear



## Lucy Pets Introduces ‘Game Changer’ to Pet Food Category

**J**oe Herrick, founder and president of Lucy Pet Products, recently announced that the family-owned, independent company based in Thousand Oaks, California, will debut Lucy Pet Formulas For Life, a new, innovative pet food that uses the science of dietary fiber and prebiotics to help promote gut health and contribute to a healthier pet.



“This is a game changer,” Herrick said last month. “We put together doctors, scientists and experts with a combined 200 years of experience who performed innovative research. It’s all about gut health. Gut health is big for humans, and what translates for helping humans also translates over to dogs and cats.”

Herrick and Rick Rockhill, executive vice president and partner at Lucy Pet, studied the nutritional research of Dr. George C. Fahey, professor emeritus of animal and nutritional sciences at the University of Illinois, who conducted extensive research on gastrointestinal tract health and the role of macronutrients in digestive physiology and health of the gut. Dr. Fahey discovered the optimal sources and concentrations of dietary fibers in pet food to include identification of the relationship between fiber fer-

mentability, nutrient digestibility and the effectiveness of prebiotics in dogs and cats.

“[Fahey] is a guru on this subject,” Herrick said of Dr. Fahey, who for 40 years has led a research program in comparative nutrition in the Department of Sciences at the University of Illinois. “And he’s let us have all his data and allowed us to interview with him. This patented P.B.F. (prebiotic fiber) shows the balance of fiber, the balance of the good and bad fiber.”

Lucy Pet is using Dr. Fahey’s fiber technology in its Lucy Pet Formulas for Life with P.B.F., which will promote good gut health and thus help the body absorb nutrients more effectively and play a key role in natural immunity for cats and dogs. According to Dr. Fahey’s research, a pet’s gut plays a key role in natural immunity to disease. Dogs and cats eating a food with prebiotics, his studies show, have higher levels of beneficial bacteria, particularly Bifidobacteria and Lactobacilli. Prebiotics also improve regularity and stool quality.

The pet food is created using high quality proteins, a unique blend of quinoa, pumpkin and chickpeas to create a balance of beneficial bacteria in the gut. Lucy Pet sources premium ingredients like duck and wild-caught Alaskan salmon globally from trusted suppliers, with no ingredients coming from China. The pet food lines are manufactured in the U.S. that exceed industry-wide standards, and every production run is checked for contaminants before distribution.

“Our foods are made with truth in labeling, honesty in formulations, the latest in scientific research and attention to detail,” Herrick stated. “I love all my animals and I would never want to be in a position where they were not healthy because I was not feeding them the best food possible. And that is the driving force behind everything that we do here at Lucy Pet Products.”

## Rachael Ray Nutrish Partners with Spotify

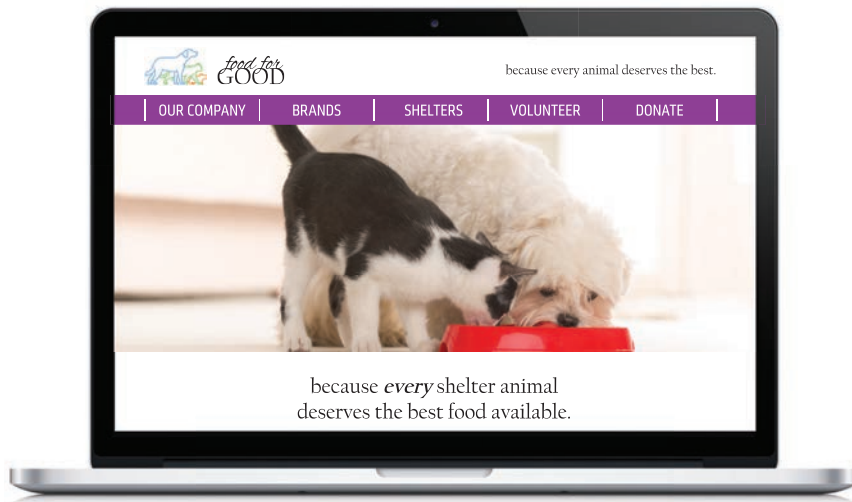
**A**insworth Pet Nutrition, manufacturer of the Rachael Ray Nutrish line of pet food and treats, recently announced that it has partnered with Spotify to sponsor four of the music streaming service’s popular playlists throughout 2017 as part of its “Moments that Matter” campaign. Rachael Ray Nutrish is the first of its competitors to advertise with Spotify in this capacity.

As part of this year-long partnership, music lovers will be served advertisements for Rachael Ray Nutrish while listening to playlists that align with the brand’s specialized recipes for dogs and cats. And since good food and good music go hand-in-hand, the first sponsorship, which launched on February 1, airs during Spotify’s “Dinner” moments and focuses on the brand’s wildly successful Dish from Nutrish Ultra Premium dry dog food.

Inspired by recipes from Rachael Ray’s real kitchen, Dish from Nutrish features whole ingredients you can see, for a whole taste your dog will love. Every bag of Dish includes real U.S. farm-raised chicken or beef as the number one ingredient, as well as real pieces of slow-roasted chicken, carrots, peas, and apples. According to Nielsen data, Dish from Nutrish was one of the largest and most successful new product launches in the dry dog food category in the past five years.

“At Ainsworth Pet Nutrition, we appreciate the value of family time, and as pet parents ourselves, we understand that our four-legged companions are very much members of the family,” said Steve Joyce, vice president of Marketing for Ainsworth Pet Nutrition.

Rachael Ray Nutrish will also sponsor Spotify’s Outdoor, Chill and Holiday moments during the months of July, October and December, respectively.



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## Oxbow Sets Price Policy

Oxbow Animal Health, a worldwide supplier of premium nutrition and care products for small pets, has introduced the development of a minimum advertised price (MAP) policy relating to the company's premium product offerings. Designed to support a fair marketplace for its partners and customers, as well as to protect the integrity and premium value of the Oxbow brand, the Oxbow MAP policy affects all authorized dealers, distributors and resellers of Oxbow products.

"Preserving the integrity of the Oxbow Animal Health brand benefits all of our partners and customers," said Jeremy Baker, Oxbow's director of Sales and Distribution. "An important element of this task involves the preservation of a fair marketplace—one in which the integrity and value of our products can be carefully and thoughtfully preserved."

Oxbow will sell its products only to authorized dealers who advertise Oxbow products at or above these minimum advertised prices.

## Petnostics Expands National Distribution with Meijer

Petnostics, makers of the first at-home mobile urine test for pets, recently announced that its product lineup is now available at all 230 Meijer locations across the country. Pet parents shopping at Meijer supercenters and grocery store locations throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin can now purchase Petnostics smart urine test-kits, test strips and accessories to check their dog or cat's health instantly with the help of their iPhone or Android phone.

Leveraging the same diagnostic technology that veterinarians use in their clinics, pet parents can utilize the smart urine cup and the free Petnostics iPhone or Android app to assess potential health issues for their pet. With results easily shareable to vets—and at a fraction of the cost of a vet visit—Petnostics makes healthy living easier and more affordable for pet families.

Pet parents can also monitor chronic conditions, such as diabetes, bladder stones and urinary tract infections, in their dog or cat by purchasing

disease-specific Petnostics Test Strips at Meijer. Simply collect your pet's urine in a cup and wet the strip. Then, place the test strip on the backing card and let the Petnostics app do the rest.



Pet parents can easily check their pet's health with Petnostics:

- **Collect:** Petnostics' smart urine cup collects a pet's urine cleanly until pet parents are ready to test with the Petnostics iPhone or Android app.
- **Seal:** Once a pet's urine is collected, pet parents can screw on the Petnostics lid to begin testing.
- **Analyze:** Pet parents simply scan the top of the lid with the Petnostics iPhone or Android app and results will be available instantly.

According to veterinarians, checking a pet's urine is one of the best ways to keep them healthy. It allows for the identification of early warning signs and can help prevent more serious problems from occurring further down the road.

"We are excited to partner with an innovative retailer like Meijer to bring pet parents in the Midwest a new way to check their dog or cat's health instantly," said Stephen Chen, CEO of Petnostics. "Meijer has always been about family, and now, pet parents can be better informed about the health of the pet in their family by knowing that a lifetime of love is only a scan away."



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# WiggleLess Back Brace For Dogs Offers Back Support

**D**ogs may be great at expressing their love for us, but when it comes to pain, they often suffer in silence. It is important that pet parents pay close attention to their pets' non-verbal cues and take the necessary steps to help cure or alleviate their discomfort. Canines living with chronic back pain may no longer have to suffer thanks to an innovative new support brace that helps bring relief to the animal and

peace of mind to the owner. WiggleLess Back Brace For Dogs has a unique design, which provides comfortable back support for dogs, while improving their overall quality of life.

Believe it or not, dog back pain is something that many breeds experience at some point in their lives. A

few of the many breeds that are most prone to back issues include dachshunds, beagles, shih tzus, pugs, pekingeses, lhasa apsos and corgis. The causes of back pain may vary—from a disease of the muscles surrounding the spine to disc disorders and trauma to the spine.

Lisa, the founder and creator of WiggleLess Back Brace For Dogs, was on a mission to find something to ease the persistent back problems of

her dachshunds June and Henry. Both dogs suffered from intervertebral disc disease, which really compromised their quality of life. Lisa could sympathize with her pups' pain due to her own personal back injury experience. A back brace helped her significantly; however, she had no luck finding a brace on the market for dogs. Lisa decided to design a solution herself, and that's when WiggleLess Back Brace was born.

"It all comes down to quality of life for you and your pet," Lisa said. "I loved June and Henry in the same intense way that you love your dog. I refused to watch June suffer. I created WiggleLess dog back brace so that she could live a fulfilling life. My mission is to provide you and your dog the same comfortable support and the accompanying peace of mind."

WiggleLess is designed to help stabilize the spine and prevent injury without restricting the dog's activity. When used as directed, the vet-recommended and patented WiggleLess Back Brace offers firm support, back stability and stress relief for dogs. Featuring a durable, lightweight and breathable construction, the brace's built-in boning provides the snug and comfortable back support that a dog needs, while allowing for full freedom of movement. Adjustable and easy to use, the brace comes in seven sizes based on a dog's specific girth and back measurements.

Dog owners who use WiggleLess report seeing increased mobility, reduced pain and overall improved comfort in their pets. Some also report using the brace on their dogs as an alternative to a recovery cone collar, as a barrier to skin irritations, and as a stress and anxiety reducer.

The WiggleLess brand offers several other beneficial products, like the WiggleLess Comfort Shirt, the SnugglePuppie, the SpornNon-Pull Harness and Power Paws Reinforced Foot Non-Slip Dog Socks.



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## True Leaf Completes Purchase of OregaPet

**T** rue Leaf Pet Inc., the Vernon, British Columbia, Canada, company that produces and sells hemp-based functional chews for dogs, has completed the purchase of the assets and intellectual property of OregaPet, an award-winning Canadian brand of medicinal products for animals.

Previously, True Leaf and OregaPet announced the signing of a letter of intent on November 3, 2016. The purchase is now complete, with True Leaf acquiring all of OregaPet's assets.

"This is a major positive step forward for True Leaf Pet," explained Darcy Bomford, True Leaf CEO. "The OregaPet brand and natural-remedy focus align perfectly with our company's 'Quality of Life' vision for our customers and their pets. At the same time, the addition of 10 new items to our product line-up will instantly expand our in-store presence and generate revenue in all of our markets."



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True Leaf Pet paid a total of \$200,000 for the brand assets and then agreed to pay \$146,409.95 for finished goods and packaging inventory over three years with no interest. The seller and its principal shareholder, TLM Development Ltd., also agreed to enter into a five-year non-competition and non-solicitation agreement covering pet-related businesses.

Sales of OregaPet products in Canada are approximately \$12,000 per month, and the company expects significant growth as it rebrands the product line for sale in the U.S. and European specialty pet and natural grocery markets.

"OregaPet is unique in that it is the only brand that has leveraged the widely-recognized medicinal powers of 'oil of oregano' and incorporated them into a pet product line," said Bomfield, adding that additional line extensions under its "True Hemp"

brand and new product offerings through acquisitions and entries into new market segments are key. "Natural remedies and holistic alternatives to pharmaceuticals are top-of-mind with our customer demographic and we see a real winner here."



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## Rad Cat Raw Diet Adds Additional Distribution

**R**adagast Pet Food has expanded distribution of Rad Cat Raw Diet by adding distribution with Fauna Foods in the northeastern U.S. and with Frontier Distributing in the Midwest.

“We’re thrilled to partner with

Frontier Distributing and Fauna Foods to help grow our brand and better serve our retail partners in the Northeast and Midwest portions of the country,” said Tracey Hatch-Rizzi, Radagast Pet Food’s vice president and co-founder. “With the addition of our



newest pork variety, sales are expected to take a sharp increase.

“The additional distribution will help ensure that retailers can maintain stock of our products, especially since demand has grown significantly in those areas of the country,” Hatch-Rizzi continued. “And both distributors have superb reputations for customer service and a true love for pets, which we feel is a great fit for our growing line.”

“Frontier and Fauna are excellent additions to our already outstanding distributor community in the eastern U.S.,” said Dan McCain, the eastern sales manager for Rad Cat. “They will continue to help fulfill our goal of providing the felines of the world with a variety of delicious, nutritionally balanced foods that are convenient and affordable, using only the highest quality ingredients available.”

Rad Cat Raw Diet is available in thousands of stores nationwide and expects significant growth in the coming months due to additional distribution, a dynamic sales team and the release of the highly anticipated new Natural Pork Recipe.

Radagast Pet Food, which is located in Portland, Oregon, uses free-range, organic and humanely-raised meats and poultry in their six varieties of all natural raw cat food. The company produces all of its products in-house, in its own manufacturing facility that operates under strict QA/QC protocols and HACCP programs. According to its website, Radagast Pet Food’s goal is “to provide the felines of the world with a variety of delicious, nutritionally balanced foods that are convenient and affordable, using only the highest quality ingredients available.”



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# Mars, Incorporated Buys VCA Animal Hospital Chain

**M**ars, Incorporated and VCA Inc. recently announced that the two companies have entered an agreement under which Mars will acquire all of the outstanding shares of VCA for \$93 per share, or a total value of approximately \$9.1 billion, including \$1.4 billion in outstanding debt. The agreement has been unanimously approved by the boards of directors of both companies.

VCA joins Mars Petcare, one of the world's leading pet care providers. According to Mars, pet care has been an important part of the company for over 80 years. Mars says that the transaction reaffirms its commitment to the pet care industry and the veterinary profession and, once completed, will help drive Mars Petcare's purpose to create "A Better World for Pets."

Mars Petcare's portfolio of veterinary service businesses includes Banfield Pet Hospital, Bluepearl and Pet Partners. Together, with VCA, Mars says these businesses will provide an unprecedented level of access to high quality veterinary care for pets—from wellness and prevention to primary, emergency and specialty care.

"We are thrilled to welcome VCA to the Mars family and to our portfolio of brands and businesses around the world," said Mars Chief Executive Officer Grant F. Reid. "VCA is a leader across pet health care and the opportunity we see together—for pets, pet owners, veterinarians and other pet care providers—is tremendous. We have great respect for VCA, with whom we share many common values and a strong commitment to pet care. Together, we will be able to provide even greater value, better service and higher quality care to pets and pet owners."

Since its founding in 1986, VCA has grown from one facility in Los Angeles to nearly 800 animal hospitals with 60 diagnostic laboratories throughout the United States and Canada.

Upon completion of the transaction, VCA will operate as a distinct and separate business unit within Mars Petcare, alongside Mars' other veterinary services businesses, and will continue to be led by Bob Antin, who is CEO, president, chairman and a founder of VCA.

"Joining the Mars family of brands provides significant value to our stockholders while also preserving the company's values and a culture focused on investing in our people and facilities to promote excellence in pet care and long-term growth," Antin said of the agreement.

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## Mars DNA Test to Enhance Health of Pedigreed Cats

**M**ars Veterinary has launched a new test for feline breeders under the Optimal Selection brand Powered by Genoscooper. Developed with Genoscooper Laboratories of Finland, a company specializing in highly-developed DNA testing for companion animals, Mars Veterinary says this is the most comprehensive test of its kind on the market.

Genoscooper and Mars Veterinary are hoping to enable proactive and sustainable breeding programs by providing breeders with a more comprehensive view of each cat's unique genetic health and well-being.

The new Optimal Selection test is a simple swab-at-home kit that includes screening for more than 25 genetic mutations causing inherited feline diseases and testing for traits such as coat color and length and morphology. The results reporting system allows breeders to review the cat's extensive health analysis all on one easy-to-use online portal. This same reporting system features the Breeder Tool, which enables the identification of potential mates based on a health results score for compatibility.

"We are excited to be working with

our partners at Genoscooper to bring this first-of-its-kind disease testing panel to cat breeders," said Dr. Cindy Cole, general manager of Mars Veterinary.

Many inherited diseases may not become apparent until a cat is older and may have already had litters. For this reason, inherited diseases can persist in the feline population and even increase within a breed if a popular tom happens to be affected with a late onset genetic disease and the mutation is being repeatedly passed down.

"This kind of tool enables breeders to work proactively to identify diseases in their litters," she said. "Ultimately, it can help them to make informed choices and may reduce the likelihood of producing kittens with preventable genetic diseases."

Just as in humans, comprehensive DNA testing is an important part of predicting, preventing and personalizing healthcare for cats.

Health testing in cats used to mean testing breeding stock for single mutations of interest in the breed. Fast-forward to 2017 and the new tools available to screen cats for inherited diseases and phenotypic traits

have improved dramatically, providing a broader evaluation of a cat's genetic health status.

"While the use of genetic testing is not new to the world of feline breeding, the breadth of its application is so much wider now," said Jamie Christian, internationally respected cat show judge. "Genetics can provide breeders with the tools to enable smarter and more sustainable breeding decisions. Our hope in the cat breeding community is that through this kind of advanced testing, they will be able to increase their breed's genetic diversity. Breeders will be able to keep unwanted diseases out of the future generations, while maintaining the valuable traits associated with the individual breeds."

The Optimal Selection test is now available to breeders in the U.S. via the Mars Veterinary website.



## UPP Joins Bravo Pet Foods Distribution Network

**B**ravo Pet Foods recently announced that United Pacific Pet (UPP) will be joining its national distribution network. This means that independent retailers in California, Nevada and Hawaii will find it more convenient than ever to order Bravo's extensive line of premi-

um, "meat first" recipes and treats.

"We are definitely looking forward to partnering with UPP," said Bette Schubert, the company's co-founder and SVP of sales. "With their depth of expertise and commitment to customer support, this promises to be a mutually rewarding relationship."

The latest Bravo offerings that UPP will be detailing retailers about are Canine Cafe and Feline Cafe canned dinners. The sales force will also be responsible for introducing retailers to the company's raw frozen line, the Homestyle Complete raw freeze dried dinners for dogs, along with their wide

variety of dog and cat treat options.

Retailers interested in stocking and selling this popular brand—of which there is over 125 different products for dogs and cats, according to the company's website—are invited to contact their Bravo distributor or call 866-922-9222. People can also visit the company's website.

According to its site, "Bravo is a family-owned business located in Manchester, Connecticut," whose parent company began "providing high quality meats to fine dining establishments throughout New England" in 1942.



# Safe Rx Signs with Leading Animal Health Distributor

**S**afe Rx LLC has entered into a distribution agreement with Jorgensen Labs, Inc., a leading specialty distributor to the animal health market. Under the agreement, Jorgensen will market and distribute Safe Rx locking prescription vials (LPVs) throughout North America and overseas.



“This agreement enables Safe Rx to access the animal health market immediately through a partner recognized industry-wide for their expertise,” said Milton Cohen, president and CEO of Safe Rx.

“The veterinary community needs and wants to take an active role in bat-

ting the opioid epidemic,” said Norm Jorgensen, VP of Sales and Marketing at Jorgensen Labs. “Safe Rx LPVs are a new and innovative tool that should be a part of every veterinary clinic’s prescription services. It is an inexpensive and simple-to-use product that pet owners will readily value.”

Safe Rx LPVs are used by pharmacies and veterinary clinics in dispensing controlled substances and helping fight the drug abuse epidemics.

In 2015, the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health published an extensive opioid report recommending research into the effectiveness of more secure packaging, following the U.S. FDA’s request for comment in 2013 on using innovative packaging solutions as a response to the prescription drug abuse epidemic.

Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., according to the Safe Rx press release. Prescription drugs are the number one gateway to heroin addiction and have become the most commonly abused substances among 12- and 13-year-olds, with pilfering from family medicine cabinets the leading source for teen abuse, according to the press release.

“Jorgensen Laboratories works with every major veterinary distributor in the United States and Canada and has over 40 international distributors,” states the company website.

“Veterinary medical equipment is what we are all about, it is our passion, it is our love and it is what we do best,” the site continues. “We have been offering top-quality medical products since the early 1970s, and our product line continues to expand to this day.”





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## Petland Named to Entrepreneur Mag's Franchise 500

**P**etland placed in the top 200 spots of the top-ranked franchises in the United States, ranking 188 overall for Entrepreneur magazine's 38th Annual Franchise 500. According to World Franchising Network, there are more than 4,000 active franchisors in North America.



Franchising is "the Midwest of the business world; the best franchise systems put their nose to the grindstone and work year after year, sometimes decade after decade, to slowly and methodically make their franchisees successful and to refine and expand their systems," Entrepreneur's Jason Daly reported in a story about the rankings.

"It is an honor to once again be

recognized by Entrepreneur magazine as one of the top 500 franchise concepts in the United States," said Joe Watson, Petland, Inc. president and CEO. "This recognition is a testament to the continued relevance of the Petland brand and our proprietary operating model which matches healthy, happy pets with new families."

"The strength of the Petland franchise system directly correlates to the dedication of Petland franchisees located around the world," said Steve Huggins, Petland, Inc.'s vice president of Business Development. "The love of pets is universal and the Petland brand continues to be a world leader in pet retail."

In conducting its annual rating of franchises in the world, Entrepreneur considers numerous factors, including financial strength, stability, growth rate and size of the franchise system. Other rating factors include number of years in business, length of time franchising, start-up costs, litigation, percentage of terminations and whether the company provides financing. For 2017, Entrepreneur reported that new methods

were used for measuring and analyzing franchise businesses. Additionally, new factors, such as social media, were also considered. An independent CPA firm audits financial data. Every company with verifiable data receives a cumulative score. The franchises with the highest cumulative scores become the Franchise 500.



Petland, Inc., is a franchise operation with quality, full service retail pet centers across the United States, Canada, Japan, China, Mexico, South Africa, Brazil and El Salvador. It was founded in 1967 and is headquartered in south central Ohio.

For more information on Petland, visit [www.petland.com](http://www.petland.com).

## Deepwater Aquatics Becomes Exclusive N. American Distributor for One COVE, X Marine and Aquabee

**R**epresentatives with Deepwater Aquatics recently announced that the company is now the exclusive North American distributor for One COVE, X Marine and Aquabee pumps.

"We're very excited to represent One COVE, X Marine and Aquabee products" said Dean Tapper, vice president of sales for Deepwater Aquatics, a company that was officially opened in 2007 as a full service marine aquarium distribution company and rapidly expanded by offering some of the most premium brands on the market to local stores and distributor partners, such as Aquaforest, Pacific Sun, Brio and many other specialty brands. "COVE, X Marine and Aquabee products will now be available

to U.S. retailers and consumers."

Deepwater will handle all sales, warranty and technical support for the brands.



COVE is the leading Import Aquarium equipment manufacturer. The COVE products are made for hobbyists who demand only the best products for their aquarium.

X Marine is a new brand of unique aquarium cleaning products. The product range is offered in multiple sizes for different types of aquariums. The X Marine cleaning magnets are simple to use, affordable and retail ready.

With decades of experience in the construction of pumps, filter equipment and accessories, Aquabee offers the highest level of German quality and service. Aquabee products are used all over the world and come standard in the COVE protein skimmers.

Deepwater Aquatics' new vision brings exciting products to retailers looking to increase their margins. Deepwater expects to begin shipping orders to retailers across North America as early as March.

# Trouw Nutrition Processing Plant Awarded by AFIA

A commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in the manufacturing process is a key operational philosophy at Trouw Nutrition USA's Neosho, Missouri, premix plant.

The facility has been named the Premix Manufacturer Category Winner in the 2016 Feed Facility of the Year competition, a national contest conducted by the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) and Feed-stuffs.

"We are very proud of this facility and everything that we do," Plant Manager Doug Vanjoff said, noting that a top priority has long been listening to customers and doing whatever it takes to help them achieve their product and manufacturing objectives.

Several significant changes in the pet food business that Vanjoff has seen

in the past few years include a greater emphasis on fruits and vegetables and naturally sourced ingredients.

According to Vanjoff, the design of the Neosho facility allows for a wide range of manufacturing options to meet unique customer requirements,



ranging from the handling of specialty raw materials to adhering to a wide variety of packaging requirements.

Vanjoff credits, among other things, the facility's computer-controlled systems for in-process analysis, quality control and strict on-site quality assurance programs designed to satisfy the highest industry standards.

"As we and our customers become more innovative, we must adjust our methods and equipment to meet the stringent requirements of internal and external stakeholders," said Vanjoff, adding that at the Neosho site, evaluation is constant, and all areas are continuously monitored for opportunities that might lead to improved efficiency and/or quality and reduced cost to ensure the integrity of finished goods.

"Ingredients that we mix must be very exact," Vanjoff said. "Government, industry and customer requirements, along with six external certifications, ensure the product accuracy and integrity of customers' brands."

Owned by BASF before being acquired in 2007, the Neosho facility has received more than \$3 million in upgrades since then, offering a flex facility for Trouw Nutrition USA.

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## Pharos Diagnostics Expands into Vet Diagnostics

The Pharos Diagnostics team is expanding and will be among the first diagnostic laboratories to offer mass spectrometry into the veterinary diagnostic market. Mass spectrometry is widely regarded as the most accurate and sensitive scientific method for measuring drugs, hormones and other analytes in both humans and animals.

Pharos Veterinary Diagnostics will be one of the few veterinary diagnostic laboratories in the country that will be operating under the guidelines of CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments), the federal standard for laboratories that perform human diagnostics.

Technology improvements of the last decade haven't been fully provided to the veterinary diagnostic market, according to Pharos Diagnostics.

Veterinarians traditionally have had to choose between expensive, slow and sometimes inaccurate testing options whether performing testing in their office or through external providers, the company said. Especially when compared to their peers in human medicine, Pharos Diagnostics says veterinarians haven't enjoyed the benefits of the advancements in diagnostic technology, and that its company is poised to fill this void.



The primary benefits to veterinarians will be more accurate testing, with faster turnaround time, in a more cost

effective manner. The mass spectrometer platform employed by Pharos Diagnostics allows multiple tests to be performed using the same sample. That smaller sample can often be obtained using less intrusive methods, meaning less hassle for the veterinarian and a better experience for the pet and its owner.

Pharos Veterinary Diagnostics recently announced the addition of two renowned veterinarians to its scientific advisory board, Dr. Robert Murtaugh (DVM, MS, DACVIM, DACVECC, and FCCM) and Dr. Dale Paccamonti (DVM, MS, DACT). Pharos Veterinary Diagnostics will support individual veterinarians as well as veterinary hospitals with specific outsourced testing requirements that can be efficiently provided by a laboratory experienced in more esoteric testing specialties.

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## ADM Purchases Crosswind

**A**rcher Daniels Midland (ADM) Company recently announced that it has signed an agreement to acquire Crosswind Industries, Inc., a Kansas-based producer of dry-expanded, dual-texture, semi-dry and semi-moist treat products for pets.

“The global pet food industry represents a strong opportunity for strategic growth, especially for a company with the global resources of ADM,” said Brent Fenton, president of ADM’s Animal Nutrition business. “ADM already sells more than 50 ingredients and commodities that are used by more than 70 percent of all pet food companies in North America. Now we’re taking the next step with the addition of Crosswind Industries to our global network.

“With five production facilities and a wide range of successful products, Crosswind represents a strong opportunity to expand our capabilities, and a great fit—not just with the Animal Nutrition business, but across ADM’s wider portfolio of ingredients, colors and flavors for pets. We’re looking forward to combining Crosswind’s operations and products with our own to provide customers an even broader

array of products and services,” Fenton continued.

Crosswind is a leader in the manufacture of contract and private label pet treats and foods, as well as specialty ingredients. Its 300 employees operate processing lines across five Kansas facilities, with nine “ready for retail” packaging lines.

“Since early 2015, we have announced or completed several organic growth and improvement projects for our Animal Nutrition business across the U.S., as well as overseas,” Fenton said. “We’ve also been active on the M&A front, with the acquisition of Lyrco Nutrition and the creation of our Alliance Liquid Feeds joint venture. With the addition of Crosswind, we are continuing our efforts to grow our business so as to set the industry standard and ensure that we are continuing to meet growing customer needs for quality animal nutrition products.”

For more information on ADM, visit [www.adm.com](http://www.adm.com).



## Pet Age Announces Survey Winner

**P**et Age sent out the 2016-2017 Retailer Survey to more than 11,000 independent retailers in November to gain a better understanding of the state of their businesses. The cover story for the January issue of Pet Age was a comprehensive guide to the state of the pet industry based on the results of the survey.

Respondents who completed the survey and opted-in were automatically entered into a drawing for an Apple



iPad mini, and the winner was Rose Scarisbrick, co-owner of For Footed Friends in Naples, Florida.

Family-owned and operated since 2008, For Footed Friends researches the products it offers to ensure a better quality of life for pets. Products must meet the store’s strict guidelines, which is exemplified by the high quality brands that are carried by For Footed Friends.

One of the pet store’s co-owners, Eric Brix (husband to fellow co-owner Janet Rossano), notes that raw foods by such brands as Primal and Instinct are currently the store’s top sellers. Other brands that he considers popular include Orijen and Acana brand dry foods by Champion Petfoods.

“I’d also say that a lot of natural remedies, for things like fleas and ticks, as well as herbal tinctures, have been popular,” Brix said. “And Ark Naturals, which is a local company, is popular with us.”

For more info, visit For Footed Friends at [www.forfootedfriends.com](http://www.forfootedfriends.com).

## VetDC Receives FDA Conditional Approval for New Animal Drug

**V**etDC, Inc., a veterinary cancer therapeutics company, announced that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) has granted a conditional approval of Tanovea-CA1 (rabacfosadine for injection) for the treatment of lymphoma in dogs. Tanovea-CA1 is anticipated to be available to veterinarians in the spring of 2017.

“This is a significant milestone for VetDC, and we are excited to announce the first ever FDA-approved drug for canine lymphoma,” said Steven Roy, VetDC’s president and CEO.

“We look forward to introducing Tanovea-CA1 to the veterinary cancer community in the months to come.”

“The conditional approval of Tanovea-CA1 represents a first on multiple levels for veterinary oncology, and we eagerly anticipate adding this very active and promising new drug to our lymphoma fighting arsenal,” noted Dr. Philip J. Bergman, a board-certified veterinary oncologist at VCA-Katonah Bedford Veterinary Center in Bedford Hills, New York.



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## Wahl Renews Animal Behavior College Partnership

**F**or the second year in a row, Wahl Clipper Corporation will be a gold-level sponsor for Animal Behavior College's (ABC) Grooming Instruction Program (GIP), the school announced.



"Wahl is honored to be a continued partner with ABC's Grooming Instruction Program," said Helen Cox, Wahl Clipper Corporation marketing

manager. "ABC is focused on quality education and improving the lives and safety of professional groomers and the pets they care for. The GIP offers an essential service of education, as well as promoting the wellness of professionals and animal care."

The gold-level sponsorship enables Wahl to reach out to and interact with GIP students, graduates and alumni in a number of ways, such as product information fliers and articles, product samples and social media contests.

"We appreciate Wahl's commitment and continuous support for professional pet groomer education," said Steven Appelbaum, president and CEO of ABC. "They are a global grooming products leader and offer some of the most sought-after and innovative supplies and tools available in the industry."

Best-known for its wide-ranging professional and home grooming products, Wahl products are popular among barbers, hairstylists and groomers worldwide. For almost 100 years, the Sterling, Illinois-based company has manufactured personal care and professional grooming supplies, including clippers, trimmers, combo kits, brushes and shampoos. Wahl products are currently sold in 165 countries with six global manufacturing facilities.

ABC offers certification through its Dog Obedience Program (DOP) and Veterinary Assistant Program (VAP). The school also offers a variety of relevant Short-Term Programs on subjects such as cat management and training, pet nutrition, pet massage, pet sitting, training shelter dogs and doggy daycare.

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## Quality Marine Receives Unique Breed of Fairy Wrasse

**Q**uality Marine announced it has received the Monsoon Fairy Wrasse (*Cirrhilabrus hygroxerus*).



*C. hygroxerus* is one of the most exciting wrasses to be discovered in recent years, states a Quality Marine news release. Described in 2016, this distinctive fish is known only from a small patch of reefs in the Timor Sea, many miles away from the nearest land, in a region prone to seasonal monsoon rains. It takes collectors days just to reach this remote corner of the world, situated equidistant between Southern Indonesia and Northern Australia, and so the fishes found here are unsurprisingly some of the rarest within the aquarium trade.

“We wouldn’t be excited about getting this fish if it didn’t happen to also

be drop dead gorgeous,” Quality Marine reported.

Separating this species from a sea of gorgeous and strikingly hued members of this family is its unusual coloration. While most of these Fairy Wrasses display a spectrum of rich jewel tones and delicate pastels, *C. hygroxerus* possesses a beautifully mismatched color palette, with murky shades along its flank that are quite unlike anything else in the popular fairy wrasse genus, contrasting vividly against a stark white underbelly.

The bright red pelvic fins and reflective blue tail of the male hints at the close relationship this species has with another of our favorites in the genus, *C. rubriventralis* from the Red Sea.

As a newcomer to the aquarium trade, *C. hygroxerus* is seldom seen, with only a small number of specimens having been collected. However, Quality Marine is excited to reveal that the group has been housing and conditioning a perfect pair of this stormy species for a little while now. They’ve been thriving in the company’s system and are voracious eaters. This is a unique opportunity to get your hands on a fish that few have ever seen in the flesh, according to Quality Marine.

For more information on this remarkable newcomer, contact your Quality Marine sales rep.

## Advisory Board Teams Up With Blue Buffalo

**B**lue Buffalo announced the formation of an ongoing 10-person Veterinary Advisory Board to provide input on natural, therapeutic nutritional advances. The independent advisors will also focus on Blue Buffalo-sponsored scientific research and evidence-based treatments.

“It is a privilege to work with veterinary thought-leaders who have such a broad range of expertise in clinical nutrition, practice management, oncology, dermatology and academic research,” said Greg Reinhart, PhD, senior vice president of Research and Development at Blue Buffalo. “Our team looks forward to collaborating and innovating with this diverse group of expert advisors to provide new and proven health care solutions to veterinary clinic practitioners.”

The first collaborative effort between Blue Buffalo and the board was held at the North American Veterinary Community (NAVC) Conference with the presentation, “What Food These Morsels Be: The Role of Nutrition in Health and Disease.”

This ongoing collaborative effort will provide all veterinary clinics with important information and solutions to enable them to better serve and recommend research-backed, natural dietary solutions for their patients.

## Purina and Westminster Begin 10-Year Partnership

The Westminster Kennel Club and Purina recently began a 10-year agreement, making Purina Pro Plan the exclusive pet food sponsor of the world-famous dog show. A five-year sponsorship, from 2012 to 2016, preceded this. The new partnership pairs the oldest continuously held dog show in the country with the maker of Purina Pro Plan, the dog food that has fueled the past 10 Westminster Best in

Show champions.

“It is an honor for Purina to sponsor the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show,” said Nina Leigh Krueger, president of Nestlé Purina PetCare. “Purebred dog enthusiasts aspire all their lives to show their dogs at this prestigious show. The opportunity to partner with Westminster for the next 10 years allows us to work together to celebrate all dogs and to spread the

word about responsible dog breeding and ownership.”

“We look forward to our long-term partnership with Nestlé Purina PetCare,” Westminster Kennel Club President Seán W. McCarthy said. “When an iconic institution such as Westminster combines with the premiere brand Purina Pro Plan, everyone benefits from the amazing dog show experience.”



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## Pet Product Innovations Nets GoPure Distribution

**P**et Product Innovations, LLC of Des Plaines, Illinois, announced its partnership with Bloc Enterprises, LLC, a specialized distribution company with a focus on innovative consumer healthcare products. Bloc Enterprises, LLC is changing the way the world enjoys drinking water with the launch of its PuriBloc GoPure pod—the first portable and continuous water enhancement device featuring PuriBloc water quality improvement technology. Pet Product Innovations, LLC has an exclusive distribution agreement for GoPure in the pet industry, covering the USA, Canada and the UK. It will be the exclusive distributor for GoPure and GoPure Pet within the pet industry.

Convenient, reusable and designed for dropping in any water bottle, hydration pack, pet drinking bowl or fountain, coffee maker or small water container up to three quarts, the GoPure pod is a revolutionary and natural water purification process that constantly cleans and enhances potable tap water for peace of mind and taste satisfaction everywhere you go.



At the heart of the GoPure pod is PuriBloc—an advanced, highly porous ceramic that not only adsorbs many soluble and particulate chemical impurities, but also balances pH levels to re-mineralize and alkalize the water.

As the pod continuously completes these actions, the drinking water returns back to a more natural state, just like nature intended it to be—cleaner and great tasting.

“Consumers around the globe spend billions of dollars each year on water in disposable bottles because they don’t trust the quality of water supplies, or they don’t like the bad taste of tap water,” says Bloc Enterprises CEO Kent Atherton. “The GoPure pod is a simple, reusable device that not only facilitates water enhancement everywhere you go, but also provides an environmentally friendly alternative to help reduce the enormous burden on our planet from discarded plastic water bottles.”

One reusable GoPure pod lasts up to six months and can treat up to 264 gallons of water. That’s over 2,000 single-use plastic water bottles one individual can keep out of landfills and the ocean. The outer polypropylene capsule of the GoPure pod can be recycled at the end of its lifespan.

“It’s easy to understand the public concern regarding water quality and its taste. Not only are disturbing amounts of pharmaceuticals found in the nation’s water supplies, but [also] pesticides and herbicides from farming use, contaminants from fracking, industrial wastes and even rocket fuel can also be found,” says PuriBloc advisor Professor Ronald Russell, M.A., Ph.D. “Much of the tap water in the United States is susceptible to these types of pollution, but unfortunately the municipal water treatment processes in place cannot always do enough. Our mission with the GoPure pod is to give the world peace of mind that the water they’re drinking is healthy, clean and better tasting.”

Bloc Enterprises also recognizes that healthy hydration and good nutrition is essential for pet care. The PuriBloc GoPure Pet—a portable, dome-like structure housing the GoPure pod made specifically for pet drinking

bowls is now available thru Pet Product Innovations, LLC..



“The most important thing you can do to keep your dog or cat healthy is to have them drink plenty of fresh, clean water,” says Earth Animal founder Robert Goldstein, DVM, who specializes in animal nutrition. “GoPure Pet is the first product we’ve seen that enhances water from any tap water source and keeps it cleaner and great tasting throughout the day. The peace of mind that comes with knowing you’re enhancing this most essential ingredient for your pet’s health is invaluable.”

Pet Food Experts is the first U.S. distributor who will be distributing GoPure Pet, as well as Go Pure for humans, to its retail customers in the Northeast, Midwest and Pacific Northwest.

According to its website, Pet Food Experts is “focused on establishing solid partnerships with retailers and vendors that are built on honesty, integrity and trust,” and that “over the past decade, great strides have been made to strengthen the Pet Food Experts portfolio with brands that make our retail customers more exciting, relevant, and poised for future growth.”

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## MASNA Creates New Fund for Open Access Research

In an effort to assist in making marine aquarium research freely available to all, Marine Aquarium Societies of North America (MASNA) created The Dr. Junda Lin Memorial Fund for Publishing Open Access Marine Aquarium Research.

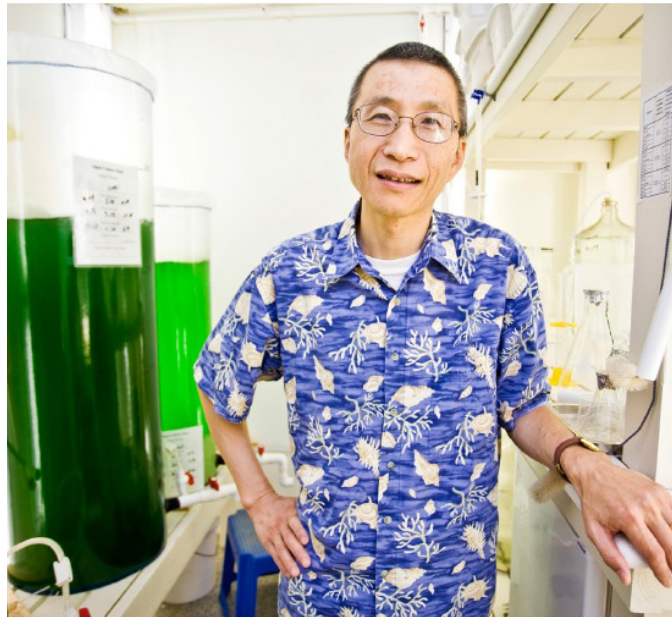
The goal of the fund is to offset the cost of publishing research as open access articles to students in order to promote the spread of scientific ideas to not only scientists, but also to anyone who is interested in the research, by making it freely available.

Rather than in the traditional scientific publishing scheme, where the reader of the scientific article incurs a cost to access the article, with open access articles, the article is available to the world for free, and the author is

charged a fee when the article is accepted by the publisher.

Therefore, the Dr. Junda Lin Memorial Fund for Publishing Open Access Marine Aquarium Research is a fund sponsored by individuals, aquarium clubs, businesses and universities that provides students with a financial offset to the costs of publishing a scientific article as an open access article.

Dr. Lin was a professor of biological sciences at the Florida Institute of Technology and the director



of the Institute for Marine Research (IMR). Dr. Lin's lab focused on the development of aquaculture technology for marine ornamental species to offset and replace wild collection. Dr. Lin's lab studied the basic biological processes of several shellfish and fish species, evaluated their aquaculture potential and developed cultivation technology.

Dr. Lin has mentored dozens of undergraduate and graduate students in the field of ornamental aquaculture, including many in the marine ornamental trade and MASNA. His legacy will live on through the people he has inspired.

MASNA welcomes donations from any organization or individual who shares the belief that advancements in science should be freely available to the general public. More information about the Dr. Junda Lin Memorial Fund, including the donation and application links can be found on the fund's webpage.

MASNA is a non-profit organization composed of marine aquarium clubs, individual hobbyists and industry partners from North America and abroad, totaling several thousand individuals. For more information, visit the organization's website.



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## Pet Product Innovations Now the Exclusive US Distributor of QCHEFs Natural Dental Dog Chews

**P**et Product Innovations, LLC of Des Plaines, Illinois, has been appointed the exclusive U.S. distributor of QCHEFs natural dental dog chews by QMilk Deutschland GmbH of Hannover, Germany.

“We are currently selling in 35 countries but did not have a partner in the largest and most important market in the world—the United States,” QMilk founder and inventor Anke Domaske said of the announcement.

“We selected Pet Product Innovations, LLC because of its record of success with high quality, innovative products, its extensive distribution relationships and its complete belief in the QCHEFs products.”



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- Ziegler's Pet Supplies

The common ingredient in all of QCHEF's products is casein, which is a lactose-free protein derived from milk. Domaske, who studied microbiology in the U.S. and Germany, invented and patented the process which allows casein to be used in dog dental chews. She also invented a process to turn casein into fabric.

The QCHEFS line includes a puffed chews and sticks, puffed cheese sticks and rolls as well as hard cheese chews. According to David Levy, owner of Pet Product Innovations, LLC, the QCHEFS line of dental chews is revolutionary.

“Many people may not realize that studies have been conducted on humans and the results prove that casein reduces plaque, tartar and the bacteria that cause plaque and tartar while also remineralizing tooth enamel,” Levy said. “QCHEFS's patented process allows these unique properties to be utilized in a high-quality canine dental chew. It's patented, effective and made in Germany. There's nothing else like it on the market.”

For additional information on Pet Product Innovations and its new line of QCHEFs, visit the company at [www.petppi.com](http://www.petppi.com).



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### Donations for Homeless Vets, Pets from TailsSpin

TailsSpin Pet Food and Accessories and its parent company, Bentley's Pet Stuff, with assistance from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 660, Animal Supply Company and the Border Pawtrol Disc Dog Team, have collected much needed supplies and food for local homeless veterans and their pets. The collection was conducted as part of the company's successful Pet Nutrition Week food sale event.



Over 2,000 pounds of dog and cat food was collected, along with blankets, treats, toys and personal hygiene items to assist local homeless veterans and their pets in Georgia's Savannah and Chatham County.

TailsSpin's Annual Pet Nutrition Week consisted of food nutritional workshops from Precise Pet Foods' Donovan Meyer and Orijen's Savanna Ullman at its three greater Savannah area locations and a special presentation for Islands High School's Veterinary Science Program students. Patrons' pets were also able to participate

in nourishing Bone Broth tasting at the pet food sale event.

"We are so humbled and proud to be a part of helping our homeless veterans and their pets, especially during these cold winter months," said Lisa Senafe of Bentley's Pet Stuff. "We hope this little bit can help veterans and their pets stay healthy, warm and more importantly stay together."

TailsSpin, with the help of Chief Master Sergeant Jim Fox of the 165th Airlift Wing, is honored to partner with the VFW Post 660 to collect supplies for, and raise awareness of, U.S. veterans who are pet owners and homeless in Savannah and Chatham County.



"We recognize that sometimes these homeless veterans have no choice but to live under freeways or trees to be with their pets," said Jeff Manley, co-owner of TailsSpin Pet Food and Accessories. "Too often they find that they are not allowed to bring their pets inside the shelters."

### Petco Foundation Grants \$250K

The Canines-N-Kids Foundation announced it was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Petco Foundation (San Antonio, Texas), a founding partner of the new nonprofit, to raise awareness of the tremendous potential that comparative oncology has as an integrated approach to accelerating the development of innovative new pediatric cancer treatments while also helping man's best friend. The first portion of the funding is expected to be used to raise public awareness of the advancements in comparative oncology research and to support the Canines-N-Kids Foundation's first "Paws for a Cure Summit" of key opinion leaders in veterinary and pediatric oncology, immunology and translational research, June 11-12, in Washington, D.C., at the National Press Club.

"The Petco Foundation is honored to support Canines-N-Kids and this new initiative intended to spark lifesaving collaboration and research through funding innovative studies to save both dogs and children," Petco Foundation Executive Director Susanne Kogut said. "This investment is made possible with funds raised annually in May during our Pet Cancer Awareness campaign in partnership with the Blue Buffalo Foundation."

For the full version of this article, please visit [www.petage.com](http://www.petage.com).

### SodaPup Announces Winners of MUTTSKICKBUTT Award

SodaPup founder and CEO Adam Baker recently announced the winners of the MUTTSKICKBUTT award program, which recognizes volunteers and employees of non-profit organizations dedicated to dog rescue activities. The goal of the MuttsKickButt program is to highlight the work that volunteers and non-profits do to rescue and place dogs in forever homes.

"The MUTTSKICKBUTT awards program demonstrates our ongoing commitment to recognize and give back to the community of dog lovers who do tremendous work to save ani-

mals," Baker said.

The first place winner is Susie Hansen, a volunteer with Abandoned Pet Rescue (APR) in Fort Lauderdale, South Florida's largest no kill shelter. Although Hansen has a full time job, she spends every waking hour that she's not at work at the shelter.

The second place winner is Mark Lane, another true dog hero, who volunteers at James River Greyhounds in Richmond, Virginia. James River Greyhounds has placed over 1,100 greyhounds into caring forever homes.

SodaPup's third place winner is

Melissa Meyer, who volunteers at Pets of the Homeless in Carson City, Nevada. The mission of Pets of the Homeless is to provide basic emergency veterinary care to their pets and, thus, relieve the anguish and anxiety of the homeless who cannot provide for their pets.

To honor these dedicated people and the amazing organizations where they volunteer, SodaPup will make product donations to each of the three organizations.

To read the winners' reactions, please go to [www.petage.com](http://www.petage.com).

**Sarah Cribari Joins McCann Pet Group**

Sarah Cribari has joined McCann Pet Group as its new senior product and media manager.

“We are thrilled to have Sarah on board as part of our product design and social media team,” said Ariane Condit, SVP of Global Creative and Design for McCann Pet.



“While working with Sarah at PetSmart, I had the privilege of seeing her revitalize their proprietary brands by offering innovation, and developing stylish on-trend products and programs in multiple categories.”

Cribari is an experienced product manager in both the pet and fashion industries, with significant experience in global sourcing, product development, trend research, vendor management and eCommerce. Most recently, she worked at PetSmart as a product manager for cat toys, cat scratch and pet bedding. Prior to this, she worked for retailers, such as Wet Seal and Kohl’s, the latter where she designed and developed collections for the Candies and LC Lauren Conrad fashion jewelry lines.

**WellPet Announces New CEO Camelle Kent**

WellPet, LLC, an independent, family-owned natural pet food company, has named Camelle Kent, a member of the company’s senior management team, as its new chief executive officer. Kent joined WellPet three years ago and has been serving as WellPet’s chief commercial officer, with responsibility for product development, sales and marketing. Kent succeeds Tim Callahan, who has been appointed CEO and president of Berwind, the family company that owns WellPet.

“I’m incredibly proud of the work Camelle and I have done together over the past three years to build WellPet’s business in the U.S. and globally, bringing the benefits of WellPet’s high-quality pet food and treats to more pet families,” Callahan said. “Camelle has the business acumen, understanding and appreciation of WellPet’s culture and customers and passion for pets that make her a clear choice to lead WellPet.”

Since joining WellPet in 2013, Kent has helped the company expand into new, fast-growing product categories and regions. That included a move into raw nutrition with Wellness TruFood and WellPet’s acquisition of Sojos and the launch of Wellness in the UK market, as well as growth in Asia Pacific.

Prior to joining WellPet in 2013, Kent served in senior global market-



ing roles for Timberland and Gillette, helping to steer brand and product development informed by consumer insights and working closely with a range of retail customers. At Timberland, Kent was responsible for new, in-store communications that simplified Timberland’s positioning as an outdoor lifestyle brand with built-in performance.

“I’m deeply honored by and excited about the opportunity to lead WellPet,” Kent said. “WellPet is on the cutting-edge of innovation in natural pet food, and I’m inspired every day by the expertise and commitment of our senior leadership team and the hundreds of team members who are part of the WellPet family.”

Kent will continue to be based at WellPet’s headquarters, north of Boston. A native New Zealander, Kent is a graduate of Auckland University and worked internationally for Gillette before moving to the U.S.

**Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council Names New Communications Director**

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) announced that Dustin Siggins has been hired as director of Communications and Public Affairs.

“We’re excited to have an experienced journalist and public relations professional to enhance PIJAC’s pro-active approach to the human-animal experience,” said PIJAC President Mike Bober.

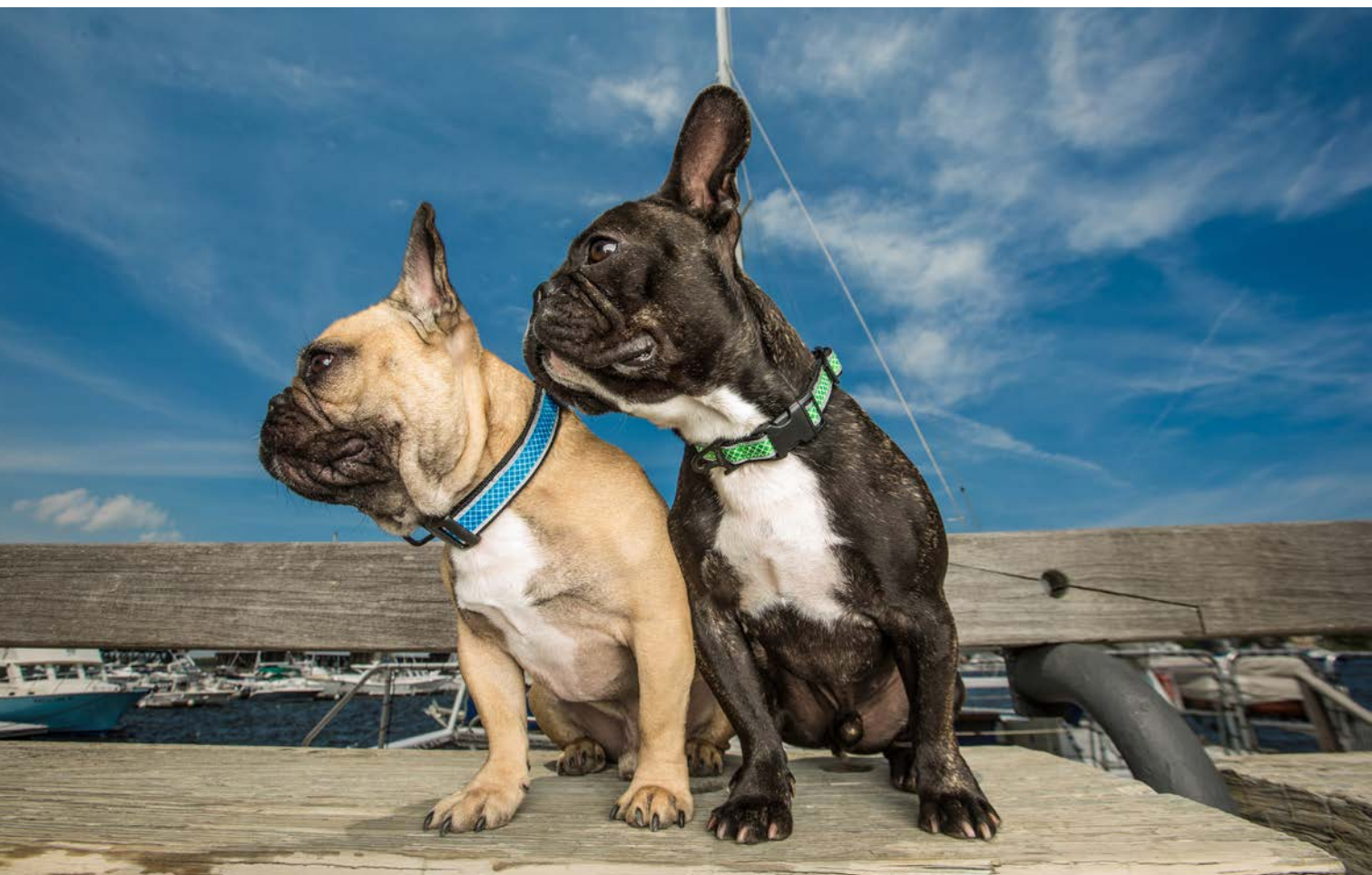
Siggins previously worked as a reporter and commentator for numerous publications and was a pub-

lic relations consultant. His work has been published by USA TODAY, Real Clear Policy, Huffington Post and elsewhere, and he has appeared on dozens of radio and television programs. His clients have received exposure at outlets such as Reuters, The Washington Post, Roll Call and The Washington Examiner.

“I’m excited to help legislators better understand PIJAC’s leadership in protecting pets, pet owners, and the pet industry,” Siggins said.

In his role as PIJAC’s director of Communications and Public Affairs, Siggins will work with reporters, editors, producers and others in the press to communicate PIJAC’s representation of the pet industry. He will also play a leading role in PIJAC’s partnerships with pet advocates across the country.

Siggins has a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and a minor in communications from Plymouth State University.



## ALL ABOUT STYLE

Purchases of dog leads, collars and harnesses are often driven by fashion.

BY MAGGIE MARTON

Maggie Marton is a freelance writer and pet lifestyle pro. She lives in Bloomington, Indiana, with her husband, three dogs and a cat.

Not long ago, customers looking for a leash or collar had limited options: Leather or nylon? Red or black? Buckle or... buckle?

“Once upon a time, collars and leashes were a ‘commodity’ item: choice was limited and most shoppers did not have strong feeling about what they bought,” said Tracy McCarthy, part of marketing and product development for LupinePet. “Now the category carries about the same prestige in pet supplies as clothing does for people. Function, durability, style and material quality are important. Price is a component of the buying decision, but value is considered in relation to the other factors.”

The array of options available today is seemingly endless. Product is still available in the traditional leather and nylon, as well as modern iterations, like odor-resistant neoprene,

upcycled seatbelts, hemp and organic cotton. The designs also encompass nearly anything your customer could imagine: licensed sports teams and cartoon characters, rhinestones and studs, holidays and even night-safety reflective strips.

Ultimately, this category is about style. Dog owners use collars, leashes and harnesses to reflect their own personalities. While not every dog owner wants to dress their pet in costumes, every dog owner needs their pet to wear these items, so it provides an opportunity to reflect their own sense of style.

Kurgo Chief Business Officer Gordie Spater said that his company noted a shift away from flashy designs to products that are purposeful, durable and secure.

“That doesn’t mean that people aren’t still interested in fashion or

matching colors between collars and leashes,” he said.

He cited two trends affecting consumer demand. The first is that pet owners are taking their dogs more places and need to maintain security and control.

The second: The rise of the “athleisure” trend in human fashion.

“We see with the rise of the athleisure trend in human sportswear, a similar trend with pet accessories. People are looking for the sporty, rugged styling and reliability they like for themselves in their Lululemon yoga pants, North Face jackets and Patagonia wicking shirts that they wear every day,” he said. “While they may not need a tech shirt to go get a coffee, they like the style and the knowledge that the apparel has purpose and can be used on their adventure days, too. It’s natural that this fashion trend translates to their dog who reflects their personality. We see more popularity with products with outdoor styling and features like durable ripstop or reflective materials.”

Kurgo offers the Quantum Leash; it’s an award-winning dog lead that comes in seven colors—in reflective and non-reflective nylon—and converts into six different styles. With a carabiner adjustment, this leash switches from a 6-foot lead to a 3-foot lead to a hands-free dog leash that goes around the waist or over the shoulder, courier-style. It also has the ability to become a two-dog walker.

The brand also offers a practical but stylish Muck Collar, which comes in a suite of bright, colorful designs and resists odor. It’s a solid solution for dog owners who want the combination of practical and cute. Kurgo is launching a Patriotic Flag Muck Collar to expand the line.

Coastal Pet Products manufactures every type of collar for every type of dog owner. For the littlest pups in the pack, the Lil Pals line includes adjustable collars and harnesses in bright colors and prints, along with a fashion-forward glitter overlay. The



line also includes specialty pieces like suede, jeweled leash and collar sets.

The Coastal Soy Adjustable Dog Collars are natural, soft and eco-friendly with anti-bacterial properties. The line is made from natural fibers that feel like soft cashmere. While there are few color choices in this line, the leash, collar and harness coordinate and appeal to an eco-conscious consumer.

Coastal Pet Products also offers licensed products from popular, best-selling brands, like Harley-Davidson.

Another fashion-forward manufacturer to consider is Hip Doggie. The brand carries an NFL license, which is a great pet product for a football fanatic family.

In addition, Hip Doggie’s collars and leashes appeal to the young, fashionable set. With designs like its bowtie collars and matching leashes, and glittery options with coordinating charms, the brand’s offerings allow dog owners to showcase their—and their dog’s—style with flair. Jeweled and studded pieces that include decidedly feminine and masculine options round out the offerings.

“There’s always going to be that person who doesn’t have a closet full of clothes or a closet full of shoes, but they still buy clothes and they still buy

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shoes—that carries into their pets,” said Alisha Navarro of 2 Hounds Design. “They’re just going to use their collars until they wear out. Others use collars to express their personality and express their pet’s personality.”

Navarro says that some of her customers stock up on the brand’s unique designs, some boasting collections of up to 50 collars.

This year, Navarro plans to launch a collection close to her heart.

“I’m a geek by preference. I have an MA in applied physics, and my background is in electronics, programming,” she said. “The collection that we’ve got coming out in time for Global, we’re calling our geek collection: monsters, aliens, robots, ninjas, full force, that whole geek line.”

Even for owners who love the practical, there are options for leashes and collars that are both functional and fashionable.

Eran Konorty, CEO of Angel Pet Supplies Inc., noted that more dog owners training their dogs has caused a shift.

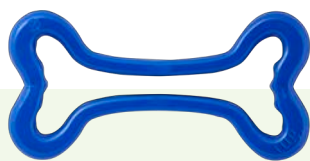
“I believe one of the largest, if not the largest growing trend is training,” he said. “Training has gained immensely in popularity, and so many products which aid in training a puppy, security dog, guide dog, et cetera, are very popular. The Angel Rio Martingale collar collection is very popular amongst

many consumers seeking a humane approach to training collars. They are constructed of top grain leather with a soft-padded bottom and stainless steel hardware. Our Multi-Function leash is great for training as well. It can be used in several different lengths, hands-free and more.”

For eco-conscious customers, Planet Dog offers leashes, collars and harnesses made of hemp. In a range of five colors, from a neutral green to a bright pink, these are persistent best-sellers.

The eco-friendly products are naturally dyed pure hemp. The natural strength of the hemp fiber makes a strong fabric and a safe product. Their Hemp Leashes are made with chrome hardware for extra durability and safety. The products are also fleece-lined for the comfort of both person and pet, and all three product lines can match one another.

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Style emphasis tends to fall on collars and leashes, yet Charlie and Spike is a brand that manufactures lightweight harnesses in its fashionable WagSwag line. The line includes harnesses with superhero emblems, leopard prints and sassy sayings, such as “Single & Looking.”

An important aside: There is a large and growing sub-category within the harness segment. Consumers are looking for crash-tested, safety-rated

car harnesses as distracted driving laws around the country come into effect. Those pieces are best merchandised separately from the fashionable set, simply because the consumers are two different shoppers. Safety products, though, group well together or in a dedicated travel section.

Ultimately, pet owners are defining themselves through their pets’ style. Plus, many pet owners like to showcase their pets’ personality in these purchases. Though safety will always be a concern when it comes to picking these products, style is the deciding factor for most purchases.

One key to success in merchandising these pieces is to group similar items together in a thematic display or endcap.

“We have always suggested a traditional collars-above-leashes, although that doesn’t work for every store. One SKU per hook and color-blocking are

two points that will have good results every time,” McCarthy said. “Waterfall displays are difficult to keep tidy and don’t do a very good job of encouraging people to browse. Handling the merchandise does increase sales, but requires more frequent straightening. Any display will sell better if it gets a daily touch-up. Harnesses seem to get handled the most, and readjusted the least, which greatly reduces unit sales.”

The jumbled leash, collar and harness aisle can sometimes obscure standout designs. Instead, create a theme—like an NBA endcap during the height of basketball season, or a display that showcases all things studded for a cowboy display. This type of grouping allows for cross-merchandising with other categories that hit on the same theme. Rotate the displays throughout the year to showcase your most fun, fashionable and forward-looking lines. **PA**

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## TRENDS & PRODUCTS



## THE NEWEST KIBBLE

Companies reinvent ways to make dry food a healthy and exciting option.

BY SANDY ROBINS

Sandy Robins is an award-winning multimedia pet lifestyle expert, author and pet industry spokesperson. Her work is visible on a variety of print, digital and TV platforms.

In the category of dog food, 85 percent of dog owners used dry food most often in 2014, according to the 2015-2016 APPA National Pet Owners Survey. What's more, the level of use is even higher (91 percent) among owners of large dogs.

However, according to the American Kennel Club, there has been a steady increase in the popularity of small breeds (dogs under 20 pounds) in the past decade. Currently, they account for about 47 percent of dogs in American households. Further, a report published by Wakefield Research indicates that the small dog popula-

tion is still on the increase, as more than 60 percent of all millennials are looking for "portable dogs" to match their lifestyles.

"With this trend comes a growing demand for high quality dog food that's specially formulated to meet their particular dietary needs," said Pete Brace, vice president of communications and pet parent relations for Merrick Pet Care. "We launched Merrick Lil' Plates to cater specifically to the big appetites of these small dogs. This line of dry (and wet food) contains probiotics and prebiotic fiber for optimal digestion and industry-leading levels of glucosamine and chondroitin, which help promote healthy joints.

"Further, the kibble is small in size to make it easier for small dogs to pick up and chew comfortably," Brace said. "And, like all Merrick recipes, Lil' Plates start with deboned meat, fish or poultry as the first ingredient and include fresh fruits and vegetables. There are three grain-free kibble recipes and they mirror current trends in the dry food category, namely a variety of protein options as well as products that are completely poultry-free."

Health Extension will be showcasing a number of new additions to the company's food line at Global Pet Expo. Following the recent packaging updates made to its Grain Free Line, it



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will also introduce revamped packaging for its Original Line. The company is also releasing a new line of dog food specifically for large breeds.

“We will be launching our first breed specific product, a highly palatable large breed recipe formulated as a complete and balanced food,” said Brad Gruber, Health Extension’s president and COO. “With this product, calcium and calorie content can be monitored by the provided feeding guidelines that also prevent over feeding. This recipe was formulated to help lower the risk of skeletal issues while helping a large breed puppy cope with issues associated with rapid growth periods.”

### Dry Food Predictions

When it comes to dry dog food, Gruber believes baby boomers, which he views as a growing generation, are driving current and future trends.

“I believe that the trends we have seen in 2016 will continue into 2017 and beyond,” Gruber predicted. “Recipes in pet foods will continue to mirror the trends driven in human diets. This includes local sourcing of premium ingredients and customized recipes, and addressing issues such as

allergies and obesity. Also, the entire grain free category will continue to explode as well as growth in raw and limited ingredient category diets.”

### Building on a Brand

According to Heather Hickey, national sales director for Nature’s Logic, the company has no current plans to add to the line but instead is focusing on creating a larger retail footprint for its existing products. Its K9 beef recipe, she notes, remains a top seller.

“It meets all the needs pet parents consider important in a food,” she added. “Further, it’s produced from beef sourced in the USA, contains no GMO fruits or vegetables and offers great value as a whole food diet.”

The family-owned company’s website notes that the food it manufactures provides all the amino acids, vitamins and minerals listed in the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) Nutrient Profile for dogs without using synthetic fortification. The AAFCO states “it would be false and misleading to use the term ‘natural’ if any chemically synthesized ingredients are present in the product.”

The focus for Evanger’s Dog & Cat Food Co Inc. at the Global Pet Expo



will be the debut of the new packaging for its Hi-Bio line, dubbed by the company as “a new generation ‘Super Food’ for dogs that combines the benefits of raw food, the convenience of kibble, and the deliciousness of real meat.”

“Promoting this packaging is our goal for the first quarter of this year,” said Holly Sher, president of the company. “The idea is to make it easier for the consumer to better understand the content and benefits of the recipes.”

Sher says her company prides itself in its ongoing educational efforts that first and foremost are aimed at retailers so they are better placed to pass this information on to their customers. The company is hosting a dinner/workshop in Orlando just before the start of the Global Pet Expo that will highlight the Hi-Bio line (which stands for High-Biological) and explain the benefits of this high-nutrient food that contains nine essential amino acids for robust canine health throughout all life stages.

### Staying Natural

Canadian company Petcurean launched its Gather product line in response to the growing consumer expectation for manufacturing transparency of pet foods and sustainable and organic ingredients. The recipes are

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free from rendered or genetically engineered ingredients and feature single source, fresh and dehydrated primary proteins.

Endless Valley is a vegan recipe in this Gather lineup that features the Certified Vegan trademark, which guarantees that the recipe does not contain any animal ingredients or animal by-products, and has not been tested on animals.

“Endless Valley provides all of the essential amino acids and complementary ingredients that provide complete

and balanced nutrition,” said Jenna Fortin, the company’s marketing manager. “It is a great option for dog owners who want to switch to a plant-based diet. Unlike cats, dogs can meet their nutrient requirements from a plant-only diet. We consider this recipe as a possible solution for dogs with sensitivities to animal proteins, too. The response from retailers and consumers has been overwhelmingly positive.”

Last year, Royal Canin launched a nationwide TV campaign that will continue through 2017 that focuses on individual breed nutrition with new formulas debuting in the coming months.

“I think we’re moving beyond ‘one size fits all’ nutrition, towards more and more specialization,” said Brent Mayabb, DVM, vice president of corporate affairs at Royal Canin USA, forecasting trends in pet nutrition. “Instead of ‘dog food,’ the focus will

be on ‘your dog’s food.’ It’s a very exciting time!”

Another company intending to make a splash at Global is Lucy Pet Products, which is debuting Formulas for Life. Using the latest advanced science on gut health, the company has created its Prebiotic Balanced Fiber (PBF) blend, a dry dog food line that creates a healthy digestive system to feed the entire body system. The food includes proteins like duck, salmon and chicken meal, as well as unique ingredients sourced globally from only trusted suppliers.

“I love all my animals and I would never want to be in a position where they were not healthy because I was not feeding them the best food possible,” said Rick Rockhill, executive vice president and partner at Lucy Pet. “And that is the driving force behind everything we do here at Lucy Pet Products.” **PA**



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# FELINE FEASTS

Retailers looking to boost pet-specialty sales should bet on wet cat foods.

BY ERIC STENSON

Eric Stenson is a veteran journalist with 25 years of experience as a newspaper writer and editor. He's also spent more than 15 years as a corporate communications professional. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, children and a 13-year-old Newfoundland named Luna.

Trends in wet cat food, much like those for human cuisine, have been toward better protein sources, higher-quality ingredients and less processing. Emphasis toward specific needs is another focus that is being increasingly seen in the marketplace, according to Bette Schubert, co-president and senior vice president of sales at Bravo Pet Foods in Manchester, Connecticut.

"There is an ongoing shift in consumer demand toward higher-quality, species-specific and nutritionally sound foods," Schubert said. "As a result, we're seeing a lot more products entering the all-natural space that are USA-made, grain-free, meat and poultry 'first' and that use clean, wholesome ingredients. There also is an emergence of foods formulated specifically for those companion animals that may be suffering from specific medical problems such as allergies, diabetes and/or issues associated with being overweight, such as joint problems."

Bravo's Feline Café line of canned foods for cats features 95 percent meat or poultry dinners and natural fricassees. Schubert emphasizes that the foods contain essential amino acids for feline health, such as Taurine and Arginine, as well as cranberries and a

medley of garden greens, salmon oil, green-lipped mussels and turmeric.

Schubert considers it essential that retailers become key points of education to consumers. For example, they should continually remind cat owners that felines require double the amount of protein that dogs do. She suggests that retailers look to stock products

that are grain-free, that are formulated with higher protein levels and that feature low carbohydrate and phosphorous levels.

## Popular Combinations

Health Extensions of Deer Park, New York, has six new formulations of wet cat food, using premium protein

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sources along with such exotic-sounding (at least for cat food) ingredients as apple cider vinegar and coconut oil, which are intended to make the products especially palatable and help boost the immune system, aid digestion and keep the kidneys healthy, according to Brad Gruber, president and chief operating officer.

Supplementing the established beef, turkey, chicken, and chicken and turkey are chicken and duck, chicken and salmon, tuna and prawns, chicken and tuna, tilapia and tuna, and tuna and pumpkin. All are grain-free foods.

"Some really good combinations were developed," Gruber said. "Premium ingredients, local sourcing, customized recipes, the limited-ingredient category will all become growth areas."

To Gruber and Health Extensions, building a relationship is key to developing success for retailers in this marketplace.

"We have a real partnership through training to make them authorities on our product," Gruber explained. "We're not dump-and-run."

### Completely Natural

Whitebridge Pet Brands in St. Louis, Missouri, makes Tiki Cat products, which are 100 percent meat or poultry cooked in natural broth, according to Ann Hudson, vice president of marketing.

No artificial colors are used, and the meat and fish are not pre-formed

or unnaturally cut or shaped. It is sliced, shredded or flaked, and then packed by hand. Tiki Cat also thinks outside the box, or at least the can, per se, as far as packaging is concerned. In addition to the traditional tins, many of the Tiki Cat products are available in BPA-free pouches.

Tiki Cat's most recent product, unveiled in September, is its Velvet Mousse, a smooth mousse packaged in a pouch.

"It's an all-lifecycle diet and works as well for kittens in the weaning stage as it does for older kitties with sensitive mouths," Hudson said. "Both the texture and flavors (wild salmon, chicken, tuna and mackerel) are extremely palatable and will appeal to even the pickiest cats."

"It's an enormous opportunity for pet-specialty retailers, and a high-quality range of nutritious wet foods gives them a way to effectively compete."

**Ann Hudson,  
Whitebridge Pet Brands**

### On the Horizon

Available very soon will be Tiki Cat's After Dark, which Hudson described as taking "wet to a whole new level... with unique proteins like duck, quail and pork in a safely prepared and ready-to-serve food."

Hudson sees the wet food category as "under-penetrated" in the overall pet-specialty marketplace and emphasizes that moisture within food is particularly important for a healthy cat's diet.

"Cat owners know this, having become much more sophisticated when it comes to nutrition," she said. "They want the very best for their babies and they are willing to go out of the way to get it."

Hudson sees the cat food industry following in the footsteps of dog food, with a continuation into more natural offerings and distinctive protein sources.

"Everyone knows cats are carnivores, but figuring out how to get the perfect carnivore diet into a can or bag is still a challenge for most manufacturers," she said. "It's an enormous opportunity for pet-specialty retailers and a high-quality range of nutritious wet foods gives them a way to effectively compete."

From a retailer perspective, Stephanie Damiano, a manager at Madison Pet Shop in Madison, New Jersey, says that products from Weruva, of Natick, Massachusetts, and Merrick, of Amarillo, Texas, are big sellers in her store. She says chicken, beef and turkey flavors are popular but that chicken is the most common, since it's the easiest to digest. The paté version of wet food tends to move briskly in her store, but food with juices and chunks is also quite popular.

She agrees that protein is even more important for cats than it is for dogs. She says the dry foods are big protein sources, but that owners often supplement with wet food for extra nutrition. The moisture content is a major reason. When asked about feline nutrition, she says that it is crucial to keep cats well hydrated.

"Make sure they get enough water, especially for male cats," she said. "So they don't develop kidney stones or crystals in their urine." **PA**



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## CATS LOVE TO LOUNGE

The most recent trends for cat beds cover a wide range of styles (and also include dog beds).

BY SANDY ROBINS

Sandy Robins is an award-winning multimedia pet lifestyle expert, author and pet industry spokesperson. Her work is visible on a variety of print, digital and TV platforms.

When it comes to beds, a cat has a lot in common with Goldilocks. They both desire the ultimate comfort zone.

From a retailer's standpoint, however, there is a variety of innovative choices to build an inventory that will offer consumers plenty of options to meet their felines' needs.

While cats traditionally like to sleep "in the round," many also enjoy stretching out. In multi-pet households, cats are not shy about sharing a sleeping area with a housemate, so there is definitely some crossover from the dog bed category that will appeal to cat owners, too.

### From Firm to Soft

"Nearly all of our products are appreciated by both cats and dogs," said Bill Parsons, sales manager at P.L.A.Y. (Pet Lifestyle and You), in San Francisco. "Our Lounge Bed line is a particular feline favorite. They seem to like our Pet Teepees, too, and the classic canvas color and the denim remain firm favorites. While in our specially designed feline Snuggle Bed Collection, the most popular color has always been charcoal gray, because it offers such a rich selection of color shades."

Snuggle Beds feature a plush velvet on one side and a smooth, sturdy canvas on the other, with the cotton-mix canvas being breathable and light for summer while the velvet keeps pets warm in the winter. Stuffed with a high-loft, eco-friendly PlanetFill, the Lounge Bed collection is crafted with furniture-grade materials that include natural cotton canvas and ultra-soft velvet materials.

Meanwhile, Pet Teepees offer a stylish sanctuary that is constructed of 100 percent natural cotton canvas and pine wood poles. The ergonomic inner foam cushion has a removable washable cover.

When it comes to designs, hooded beds offer felines comfort and the privacy to temporarily opt out of household activities. Albeit, other cats prefer being able to see around and above them or snoozing in a raised position.

"Cats enjoy materials like soft, plush fabrics," said Nancy Waters, marketing manager for R2P Group Inc. "But, ultimately, apart from being comfortable, if they don't feel secure, they are not likely to use the bed. Thus, our selection includes hideout options such as hooded bed tents, igloos and designs like our Stuff Snuggle Sack. We also have a large selection of couch-styled beds as well as round designs with high sides, which give cats the option to stretch out or sleep with a furry friend.

"It's our policy to always cater to season demands in terms of fabric selections," she added. "Consequently, we will be debuting a lot of new designs at the Global Pet Expo this month."





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In keeping with criteria such as comfort and privacy, Josh Feinkind of The Refined Feline, headquartered in New York, confirmed that his new A-Frame cat bed, available in mahogany and espresso brown, was created after seeing photographs of customers' cats lying on top of home heating vents.

"We knew that, while cats love a warm surface in the winter or a cool surface in the summer, this couldn't be comfortable. Plus, they block the airflow of the vent itself," Feinkind said. "Our goal with this design was to create a raised bed that was comfortable while allowing airflow rise into the micro-suede foam-covered cushion as well as out the sides of the bed."

"To complete the piece, we added a large sisal scratch pad and a top platform to create an A-Frame style end table that can be placed against a wall or by a sofa," he added. "Also, the sisal pad can be swapped out and replaced with a designer carpet floor square for cats that prefer a softer surface and a pattern that will further enhance the room's décor."

### Window Beds

Functional beds from K&H Manufacturing include the EZ Mount Window Bed and the EZ Mount Kitty Pod that turn a window lookout into an "entertainment center" by tapping

directly into the notion that cats love to bask in the sun and observe the activity this viewpoint has to offer.

The products attach with a suction cup mounting system and come with the Amazin' Kitty Pad designed to trap hair, dirt and dander.

K&H is known for its outdoor cathouses designed for outdoor cats and feral communities. Recently, the company introduced the K&H Outdoor Kitty House Extra-Wide to their



lineup, which offers additional space for multiple cats to escape the cold.

According to Wonjung Song, director of bedding innovation and product development at Worldwise Inc., cat bed styles offered in the marketplace generally tend to be smaller based on the premise that cats like to sleep "in the round."

However, concurring with Parsons, Song added that Worldwise is aware of the feline propensity to hijack a dog's bed.

"We have found that many consumers also consider our Petlinks Supreme Soother dog bed for multi-cat or multi-pet households," she said. "However, we have developed many designs in our Petlinks line in all sizes and shapes to meet all sleep needs as well as the tendency to hide and play in their bedding."

"In general, cat beds tend to offer additional functionality as opposed to standard dog beds," Song added. "For example, adding a sachet of catnip to a bed is a popular accessory."

### The Touch Test

According to Song, cat beds is a pet category that many consumers like

to shop for in a brick-and-mortar store as opposed to online.

"Pet parents like to touch and feel the fabrics and textures, as they envision the bed as an extension of their furniture and decor in the home," she explained. "The goal is to blend and complement, not stand out and contrast. Over the last few years, we have continued to use super soft, high pile plush that consumers are already familiar with in comfortable human bedding like blankets and comforters."

"We are seeing the cat bedding market just starting to expand as more options are offered," Song concluded. "In the past, pet owners have tended to spend less on their cats than on their dogs. This is definitely changing. Our Petlinks design team is excited to launch new technologies and designs in 2017 that address our Complete Needs product policy. And at the same time, the goal is to keep the price point affordable." **PA**



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## AN AQUATIC ADVENTURE

GloFish releases new species and products to enhance the interactive experience.

BY KAREN M. ALLEY

**B**right colors, new characters and an interactive experience—this might sound like a description of the latest smartphone app, but it’s actually what retailers and consumers can look forward to from the world of GloFish. When these bright-colored fish hit the market a little over 10 years ago, they immediately started making waves, adding something new to the market that appealed to a wide range of customers, and the category continues to grow in popularity and in sales.

“GloFish is a significant and growing portion of the market in both hard goods and fish sold in the United States,” said Sean Raines, director of marketing, aquarium environments and equipment for Spectrum Brands, Pet, Home and Garden division.

Part of the reason for this growth is the very fact that the category’s description could easily be mistaken for a smartphone app or even a theme park, showing the excitement and innovation of the category that appeals to kids and young families looking for new experiences. But the appeal of GloFish casts a wide net extending even to long-time hobbyists. The colorful fish make a fun addition to

existing aquariums, and the fact that there are constantly new fish and products coming out on the market means consumers find something new to enhance their experience when they come back into the store.

### A Growing Lineup

One thing helping GloFish to remain popular with hobbyists is the addition of new colors and species. Last year saw the introduction of three new lines of GloFish—two longfin tetras, green and orange, and a red barb—bringing the total lines available to consumers up to 15. The red barb brings a second color of GloFish to the barb line, which is a helpful addition since it’s usually recommended to have a group of at least five barbs living together.

“Having that second color makes the barb a more attractive choice now that consumers can have more than one color in their group,” said Alan Blake, CEO of Yorktown Technologies, the company behind GloFish.

And of course, the three new fish add more color and choice to the category overall.

New fish are introduced to the public through research and develop-

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Karen M. Alley is a freelance writer who specializes in writing for retail and marketing publications.



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ment as well as traditional selective breeding of existing lines.

“Sometimes we find a really beautiful fish that comes about through natural variation in the fish or through making different crosses, and we just want to share it with the public,” Blake said. “It’s exciting to be able to continue to add variety and build the category, giving people more options and choices.”

Researchers at Yorktown Technologies are continuously working to add new dimensions to the GloFish experience, and new additions are planned for 2017 as well.

### Interactive Habitats

In addition to the fish themselves, innovations in lights and décor help add to the growth and excitement in the GloFish category. While the fish themselves are brilliant on their own, adding different lights changes the way they fluoresce, making them more vibrant or more florescent depending on the color. The lights can also cre-

or-Changing Décor, this light actually makes the décor change colors.

Other modes of the Cycle Lights include sunlight, which makes the vivid colors of the fish even more vibrant; moonlight, which makes the décor and fish fluoresce; and twilight, which cycles between moonlight and midnight modes.

“The Cycle Lights really tie the fish and the ornaments together, creating something unique and allowing people to have a multitude of experiences with the aquarium,” Raines said.

The Cycle Lights and Color-Changing Plants and Ornaments expand the line-up of GloFish products available from Tetra that includes ornaments and plants that stand out under blue LED lights, aquarium backgrounds and aquarium kits.

### Introducing Gloria

In 2017, Gloria GloFish joins the ranks of Nemo, Dory, SpongeBob and other characters who help bring the world under water to life. Created by Yorktown Technologies, this green tetra will be used for marketing, starting with a cling that retailers can use to help educate their customers on the origins of GloFish.



ceptions among the public about GloFish, and Gloria provides a great way to communicate with customers and helps build a personal connection to GloFish.”

In addition to the clings, Gloria will have her own storybook, “Gloria and the Aquarium of Smiles,” as a promotional item given away in Tetra’s GloFish aquarium kits.

“GloFish is an area where I feel we are able to go beyond the purchase and enrich the life of the consumer, and Gloria and her book helps us do that even more,” Raines said.

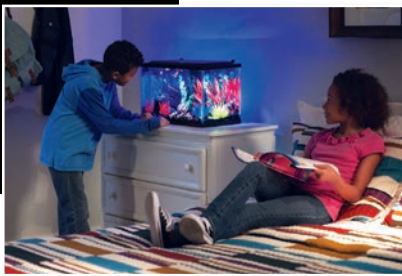
These books also provide a great marketing opportunity for stores. Retailers can hold a story time on weekend afternoons, inviting families to come to the store for a reading of Gloria’s book and light refreshments. In addition to creating a community event, the story time is a great way to bring in new people to browse through the store and have an introduction to the exciting world of aquariums.

All of the innovation around GloFish helps make it a significant segment in the aquarium category.

“GloFish speaks to the people who are seeking a connection with animal life and family, as well,” Raines said. “We’re closing the gap between just having an aquarium in the house and having it be part of the family.” **PA**



ate an interactive experience for the aquarium. New Cycle Lights from Tetra add a new dimension to GloFish aquariums through the addition of a black light to the white and blue light experience. The black light is found in the midnight mode of the cycle light, and when used in conjunction with Color-Changing Plants and Col-



“Through our research, we found that half of all freshwater fish owners would be more likely to buy GloFish if they knew the fish were not dyed, injected or otherwise harmed,” Blake said. “There are still certain miscon-



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## SPACE AND STOCK

Lots of factors drive retailers' decisions on what pond products to stock.

BY JOE OLENIK

Joe Olenik is an aquatics industry veteran, having managed one of the nation's largest retail aquarium departments for more than 25 years. He founded and currently owns Aquatic Environments, which designs, installs and maintains custom aquarium and outdoor water exhibits.

Spring is a time when pond and water garden owners start taking stock of what they need for the coming season, and aquatics stores should be ready to accommodate their needs. Gardening and home improvement centers, as well as big box pet stores have realized the value of stocking pond supplies but often lack knowledgeable staff to assist shoppers in solving problems and making sound buying decisions. Aquatics retailers can significantly increase their bottom line by offering pond products and training their staff members in the items' usage. This can be a real boost during summer doldrums in aquarium-related sales.

Deciding what pond products to carry will depend on a number of factors. Space is always a concern, especially in smaller stores, but key items, like koi and goldfish foods,

water treatments and algae remedies, are always in demand and don't take up a lot of room. Furthermore, they are typically high-turnover, profitable items.

Glenn Laborda, dry goods buyer at Absolutely Fish in Clifton, New Jersey, says available space does factor into the scope of his pond supplies inventory and adds that koi and goldfish foods make up the bulk of the store's pond product sales because they sell koi and pond goldfish.

Brand recognition is another factor to consider when choosing pond supplies for your store. TetraPond koi and goldfish foods are among the most recognized products in their respective categories.

"Proven brands will sell quicker and resonate with the end consumer," said Tim Plafcan, senior product manager at UPG Aquatics, Pond Division.

TetraPond foods include Spring and Fall Diet, Vibrance Color Enhancing sticks and Koi Growth food in a wide range of container sizes.

All pond owners need a water conditioner when filling their pond or doing water exchanges. While aquarium-use de-chlorinators do work, pond specific products are much more concentrated and economical to use. API Pond Chlorine & Heavy Metal Neutralizer makes municipal and well water safe for all pond fish, while Pond Stress Coat conditions water and also helps replace fishes' slime coating that may be removed during netting or handling. TetraPond's all-in-one AquaSafe dechlorinates, neutralizes heavy metals and provides a protective colloid coating for fish.

Most pond owners will eventually have to deal with algae in some form or another. Jim Kostich of Aquatics Unlimited in Greenfield, Wisconsin, agrees, saying algae remedies and flocculants are among his top-selling consumables—after fish foods. API's Pond Algaefix is a fish- and plant-safe remedy for green water outbreaks, string algae, blanket weed and a variety of other nuisance algae in ponds and water gardens. TetraPond's Algae Control also eliminates many types of algae and Water Clarifier clumps suspended particles, including suspended green water outbreaks that cloud the water.

Stores should be proactive, though, helping hobbyists to avoid algae problems rather than fight them once they occur. Barley-based products are effective, low-cost algae preventatives that work best when placed in the pond or filtration system as soon as it's ready for the new season, before algae outbreaks occur. They are not as effective once an algae problem has appeared. Clear-Water Pond Barley Straw bales, Microbe Lift Barley Straw Pellets and TetraPond Barley & Peat Extract are among many affordable, easy-to-use options.

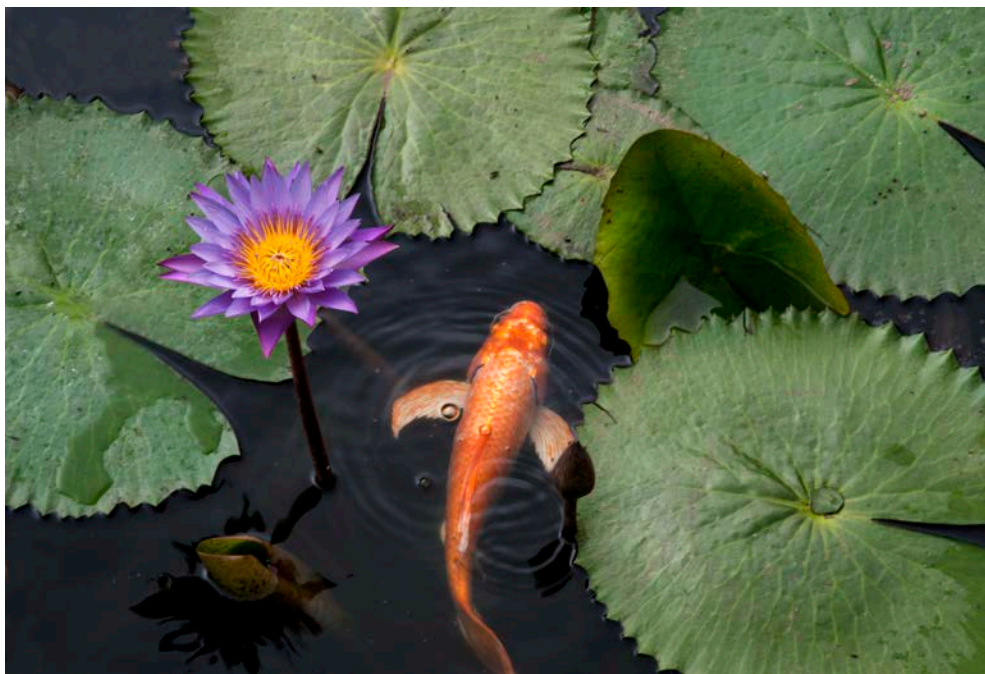
Another common challenge for pond owners is accumulated sludge and organic matter that causes a gen-

eral deterioration in water quality and contributes to algae problems. Spring is the perfect time to remove it and perform a water exchange before turning on pumps and filters and introducing fish. Python Products' pond nets, with telescoping handles, and Ulti-vac vacuuming system make the job easy and are 100 percent made in the USA. And for those who prefer not to use chemical cleaners and algacides in their pond, API's Microbial Algae Clean is an EPA-registered product that breaks down sludge naturally, helps eliminate algae and improves dissolved oxygen content in the water.

If you haven't already, get your inventory as soon as possible. Take advantage of distributor pre-orders and spring specials to stock shelves and save money at the same time! If you already have a pond supplies section, are there products your customers have asked for that you didn't stock last year? Now is the time to add them

challenges that pond owners face, knowing what questions to ask shoppers and having effective solutions and products on hand will not only result in sales, but also keep satisfied customers coming back. It establishes your store as a go-to source for information and problem solving and helps hobbyists get maximum enjoyment out of their ponds. Kostich agrees, adding the use of seasonal and general pond care hand-outs are great tools that help employees and customers alike. List the products you carry for each topic.

Finally, get the word out! Revisit your website and social media tools and think about ways to improve outreach. Plafcan encourages stores to keep a database of customers and email new product information, special sales and seasonal events as an effective way to generate sales. Perhaps even generate a YouTube video or two on ponds featuring do's and don'ts and the products you carry.



to your inventory and take a long hard look at products that didn't move last year—perhaps it's time to close them out and try something different.

Pond owners don't always know what they need, so a well-trained staff is vital. Being familiar with common

Pond keeping continues to be a popular hobby and a lucrative industry. With knowledgeable staff members and a strong inventory of support products, independent aquatic retailers have a golden opportunity to share the wealth. **PA**



## COZY COMFORTS

Quality terrarium environments prove beneficial to owners, pets and retailers.

BY JENNIFER HIGGINS

Jennifer Higgins is a veterinary technician at Mount Laurel Animal Hospital, a general practice and a 24/7 emergency veterinary hospital, in Mount Laurel, New Jersey. Her career history includes an MA in animal behavior, work in behavioral research and as an animal care and training professional at several zoos and aquariums. She has more than 25 years, combined, training horses and dogs using force free training methods.

What better way to enjoy your reptilian family member than to display and maintain it in one of the most natural indoor habitats: a terrarium! Many reptile hobbyists are no longer satisfied with a tank containing a few pieces of rock work and a plastic plant or two. It has become more of a trend and practice for herp hobbyists—and even for novice reptile owners—to “step up their game” by creating a living habitat of live plants, mosses and natural or mixed substrates.

These mini rainforest or desert habitats not only look great, but they also create a more natural environment for customers’ scaled and tailed friends. Even better, the more natural the environment, the more likely pet owners will have the opportunity to witness natural behaviors from these charismatic creatures.

Per Aqualand Fact Sheets, a few of the easiest terrarium reptiles to keep

include water dragons, green anoles, house geckos, fire bellied toads and green vine snakes, just to name a few. Pet store owners may be limited in the diversity of reptile species they keep on the sales floor, but there will always be the need for accessories and add-ons to complete their reptile terrarium microcosm.

T-Rex Products co-owner David Hanono has honed in on retailers’ growing demand for natural reptile habitat components and has observed that reptile hobbyists like to create their own semi-custom substrates and landscapes, or “Terra-scapes.”

“At T-Rex Products, we feel the trend is leaning towards terrariums being decorated with natural products to mimic how the animal would be surrounded in their natural habitat,” Hanono said. “In nature, environments are not made up of only one substrate and a couple of plastic plants. There are multiple substrates, rocks, bark,

moss and all sorts of natural ‘décor’ that animals use to climb, hide and bask. Therefore, T-Rex Products introduced our TerraScapes series of natural décor items which includes the Terra-Accents and TerraMix Substrates.”

Hanono wants retailers to understand, however, that these habitat components must be set up in their stores to represent the final product. It is important to exhibit the pieces together to successfully seal the deal.

### Prioritizing Accessorizing

Speaking of accessories, Zoo Med also carries Eco Earth Coconut Fiber Substrate. This product—which comes in brick form or loose—is not only natural in color and texture, but it is also eco-friendly. Together, with Zoo Med’s Hydroballs underneath the coconut substrate, a drainage layer is created for optimum plant growth and humidity. Add to this a Repti Rapids LED Waterfall in either rock or wood, a few recommended live plants as well as the requisite heat, UV light and temperature management features and BAM! You have satisfied herp-centric customers who, with the help of reptile-savvy retailers, will be proud of their ingenuity in putting together the perfect herp habitat.

Stephen Ayer, owner of Jabberwock Reptiles in Winchester, Massachusetts, not only sells an eclectic collection of reptiles, but also the accessories to create an ideal habitat for them. His store offers a limited variety of live plants for terrariums and the lesser known “fawnariums,” yet Ayer said his customers “desire a simpler, more user-friendly, habitat setup.”

However, Ayer offers substrate drainage components such as Zoo Med’s Hydroballs, which help with humidity levels, and Exo Terra, which manufactures Monsoon misters.

### Feelin’ Hot, Hot, Hot

Reptiles can only thermoregulate by positioning themselves in or on a rock or platform. In nature, this is accomplished by basking in the sunlight. In

a home or indoor setting, this requires providing our scale-covered pals with a raised basking surface/structure as well as access to artificial light and heat sources. Pamela Morisse of Zilla, run by Central Garden and Pet, points out that Zilla is a source for both items. The company features a Light and Heat Combo Fixture, which provides UV light, visible day light and infrared heat all in one fixture, and a Basking Platform that allows them to position themselves and soak up some rays or escape the “elements” by going underneath the platform.

“Zoo Med’s PowerSun High Intensity Discharge Metal Halide UVB Lamp and fixture emits UVA, UVB and heat all from one lamp; this High Output UVB lamp is perfect for large habitats,” said Ashley Rademacher, animal care and education coordinator for Zoo Med Labs, Inc. “The proprietary Zoo Med lamp construction creates a true flood-lamp effect, eliminating dangerous UV ‘hot-spots’ common to other metal halide reptile lamps and is covered by a full one year warranty.

“These lamps and fixtures are a great choice for large reptile terrariums, as the UVB can reach a greater distance than any of our other UVB lamps to date,” Rademacher added. “The Integrated ballast in the fixture makes these products easy to install and use.”

Not all reptile enthusiasts have the extra time and resources to invest in delicate selection of

items to produce a terrarium of their own creation. Enter the “Starter Kit.”

Customized for the species of reptile they will accommodate, starter kits contain an enclosure (tank, screened item), substrate, synthetic plants, rocks and or platforms, etc., and can be purchased as a single unit—all in a box—for quick assembly at home.

Zilla offers a Tropical Starter Kit that, said Morisse, has a “reflective dome light fixture; a day blue Incandescent bulb for daytime basking and a heat mat that provides low, constant heat.”

Whether catering to the reptile newbie or the seasoned herp hobbyist, pet store owners can be prepared to satisfy their needs with the abundance of product options. And satisfied customers often means return customers. **PA**





# STAFF TRAINING REDUX

These best practices in motivating staff will keep your store in tip-top shape.

BY JOHN MACK



John Mack is the founder and CEO of Reptiles by Mack, is on the board of directors for PIJAC and is also on the PIJAC Zoonotic Diseases Committee. His Ohio-based company is widely recognized as one of the largest reptile breeders and suppliers in the U.S. today.

There's a fundamental truth in life that many have to come to accept over time: people can't be everywhere, and they can't do everything. Even the owner of a small, mom-and-pop-style store is going to want to take a day off at some point. For that, they have their staff.

The staff represents the machinery that keeps a store running, regardless of whether the owner is in the building, out in the city or even out of state. While owners must be personable and treat their staff with respect—they are people, after all—there is some merit to thinking of staff members as interchangeable parts. If one staff member calls out sick, another should be able to step in with the knowledge and ability to perform the sick staffer's job with the same meticulousness and care.

This “drop-out, drop-in” concept stems directly from a manager's ability to train the staff in a redundant manner. While a store may have a head cashier or a warehouse chief, every member of the staff should be able to perform the rudimentary duties of every other staff member. For example, a stock person should know how to run a cash register, should something happen to your cashier on staff. And should the regular reptile-care specialist need to call off, another staff member should be able to pick up the slack to keep those pets happy and healthy.

## Educate The Staff

One of the best ways to reinforce the “drop-out, drop-in” concept is through staff meetings. Meetings with all staff members should occur at least bi-weekly, if not weekly, to keep staff members up to date on new promotions, new animals, new products and upcoming events.

At these meetings, the staff should receive any new care sheets in addition to the copies that are kept within the store. All staff members should have to handle new animals during this time so that they can get used to the presence of animals that they may not normally consider as pets.

A staff represents the store. Further, staff members represent the store owner. The message that those staff members provide to customers should remain consistent regardless of with which staff member a customer interacts. This is not to say that staff members cannot communicate their preferences to customers; rather, a personal approach often shows expertise on their part. However, it should be made clear that their opinions are exactly that: opinions. The final say on a store's view on an animal or product is yours, and your staff members should communicate that information at all times.

While staff training can be time consuming, a store owner may be able to cut down on lesson planning by using mandatory video or online training methods, especially for new staff, for whom much of this information may be foreign. Animal Care Technologies has a wonderful series on YouTube, AnimalCareTV, which features basic veterinary techniques. While many of its videos are meant for veterinary students and vet technicians, they are just as applicable for pet store employees who must be on the alert for disease and must be vigilant in their care for animals. HowCast also has a large video series on YouTube which specifically covers reptiles. When training new staff, these may serve as a quality baseline for all staff to understand.

## Make It Fun

One concept that any store owner could implement in staff training is the concept of a merit-based gamification. Gamification—the act of turning a task or process into a game—has been shown to have increased success when measuring student retention and progress through material. Consider offering employees tangible rewards based on how many independent training modules they complete. Any owner may consider tying this system to potential pay bumps, preference for promotions, staff discounts on store materials or even outside prizes like gift cards or the like.

Coupled with this, owners may consider implementing a “leveling” system within various specialties in the store. These levels of proficiency provide an easy-to-understand method for incentivized learning.

It’s easy for an employee to say, “OK, I need an additional eight hours of reptile training, plus this online quiz, to reach Level 4 Reptile Mastery. If I do, that increases my staff discount to 30 percent!”

Store owners who implement a gamified training procedure should consider posting progress in a visible area, like a staff break room, and openly praise staff members for taking the initiative to train on their own. This reinforces both the importance of cross-department training and provides a positive atmosphere for employees.

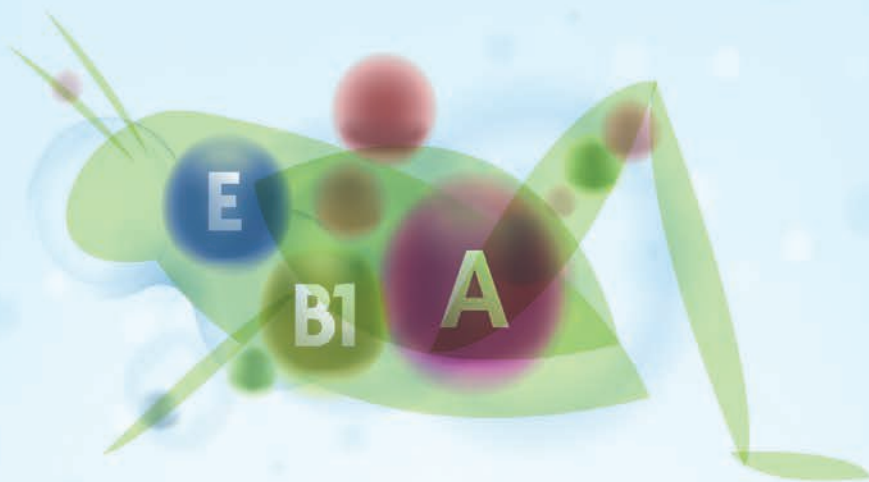
### Stay Flexible

Unfortunately, as with all professions, one of the biggest threats to staff development and training is turnover. Regardless of how welcoming a store might be, how well an owner pays or how hospitable the work environment is, a store eventually loses employees. If or when an employee quits (or, heaven forbid, is fired), the onus falls upon the store owner to ensure that an adequate replacement is found quickly and trained up with all possible haste.

In these difficult times, flexibility remains key. Consider giving remaining employees a chance to move into other areas, demonstrating their proficiency in an area of need.

If a specific team member steps up, a good store owner should praise them and even consider some sort of bonus for them. Letting employees know that everyone is in this together often results in it becoming less likely that the store owners will have to deal with staff turnover on a regular basis.

Simply put, a well-trained, well-vetted staff makes a store better. The more knowledge that passes from owner to employees, the more knowledge that they can pass to the customers. And that means repeat business. **PA**



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## BEYOND THE NORM

Today's bird owners seek cages that are bigger and better.

BY ERIK J. MARTIN

Erik J. Martin is a Chicago area-based freelance writer whose articles have been featured in *Cat Fancy*, *WebVet.com*, *AARP The Magazine*, *Reader's Digest*, *Costco Connection* and other publications.

They say the cure for feeling cooped up is to spread your wings and fly. But many bird product retailers are content to confine sales of cages—the most crucial avian commodity that bird owners purchase—to a limited supply and a small selection.

That's an opportunity missed, say the experts, who recommend expanding your offerings to cater to consumers increasingly seeking larger, higher-quality enclosures for their feathered friends.

### Spacious and Superior

"Trends today are toward larger cages—enclosures that not only give the bird more active interior room but prevent seed debris from spilling out and which offer additional play area outside the cage," said Rick Savitt, director of product development for Prevue Pet Products in Chicago. "Additionally, manufacturers are paying more atten-

tion to customer feedback and better engineering by improving features such as door locks, spill-proof cup containment doors, and ease of assembly."

Examples of the aforementioned include Hagen's Vision cage series, which employs features like a debris guard and deep base to curb air currents and prevent debris from escaping the cage; A&E Cage Company's new line of roomy flight cages for parakeets and finches, available in green, blue and purple; MidWest Homes for Pets' Grande Playtop cages; and Kaytee's Treat Play-n-Learn parakeet cage with a convertible playtop.

Chris Luberski, manager at Todd Marcus Birds Exotic, a pet store in Delran, New Jersey, says his customers' insistence on better-built cages in recent years prompted the retailer to partner exclusively with a single reputable manufacturer who happened to be local: King's Cages in nearby East Brunswick, New Jersey. High-quality welding, cage style variety and durable powder coatings factored into the store's decision to choose this cage maker.

"It's important to offer a superior cage brand that provides many sizes, models and materials," Luberski said. "We stock 30 different cages, each fully assembled and on display in our store, priced from \$49.99 to over \$2,000—from smaller plastic colored cages to powder-coated aluminum cages to high-end stainless steel cages."

Mary Wyld, CEO/owner of Norfolk, Virginia-based Wyld's Wingdom, Inc., a pet bird product distributor, agrees that it's smart to provide a variety of cage sizes and styles to accommodate various breeds and needs.

"If you do not have a healthy selection to offer the bird owner, they naturally will search elsewhere, which means their other purchases may drift to other sources," Wyld said.

Savitt recommends choosing manufacturers who assure quality and safety of construction and components used, including laboratory testing of all materials used, such as powder coating. Customers should have the reassurance

of some form of product warranty or guarantee on the cage they purchase.

### Daytime Domiciles

Wyld says retailers also need to tap into a rising trend practiced by many bird owners: providing both a large daytime cage and a smaller nighttime cage.

“Most, if not all, of our bird friends are originally from near the equator, where day and night hours are relatively equal,” she said. “Providing a smaller sleep cage in a room away from other activities and putting the bird to bed there enhances their quality of life and health. Simply covering the cage while still in the midst of human activity does not give them the peace they need.”

Educating patrons on this fact and recommending the purchase of a daytime and nighttime cage can reap cash register rewards and lead to more satisfied repeat customers.

Also, consider carrying uniquely shaped cages that provide visual appeal and possibly even space-saving features. Two examples include the Triple Roof bird cage, sporting a unique three-roof design, ideal for small- to medium-sized birds, and the Penthouse Suites curved front bird cage, boasting a unique wall-hugging flat back and curved profile—both by Prevue Pet Products.

Pet store owners need more of this out-of-the-box thinking to compete with internet retailers who have contributed to the shrinking of in-store sales margins on cages, according to Wyld.

“Emphasize to your shoppers that many cages they order online arrive damaged from shipping,” Wyld said. “When they shop for a cage in store, they can see the exact condition and style of the cage.”

### Catch the Eye, Close the Sale

The key to better sales of aviaries is pre-assembly within the store.

“They should be put on the shelf already set up and ready to go,” Savitt said.

But showcasing a diversity of aviary options brings up a challenge: how should they be grouped and where should they be displayed? Luberski’s answer is to group cages together by size and then smatter them throughout your store to avoid visual monotony. Then, encourage customers to explore more of your real estate.

In addition, Savitt says that affixing point-of-purchase materials to the cage front “can be quite effective in allowing the potential customer to make a more informed purchase decision for the species of bird they are housing.”

Including sold-separately accessories within the cage and offering bundled discounts can be another clientele builder and profit-padding tactic.



“Maintain your margins by offering a toy package with the cage, and encourage owners to change out the toys regularly and to continue shopping with you, as you know birds and their caging needs,” Wyld said. “This also means being sure your staff is knowledgeable, too.” PA



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## SMALL ANIMAL ABODES

With four walls and no ceiling on opportunities, small animal cages cater to cute and convenient.

BY ERIK J. MARTIN

Erik J. Martin is a Chicago area-based freelance writer whose articles have been featured in *Cat Fancy*, *WebVet.com*, *AARP The Magazine*, *Reader's Digest*, *Costco Connection* and other publications.

The days of the all-purpose aquarium serving as a surrogate for a proper pet rodent residence are long gone. So is the era of the flimsy plastic domicile that functioned more as a disposable chew toy that could be gnawed through faster than you can say “chinchilla.”

Indeed, the good news in 2017 is that there's no shortage of quality-built, brand-name small animal abodes on the market that can add breadth and variety to your set. Many, of course, are modular, chromatically eye-catching and expandable thanks to a seemingly endless array of interconnecting accessories tailor-made for the Lego and Minecraft generation.

### Bright Ideas and Concepts

Kaytee helps lead the pack with its relatively recent introduction of two inventive CritterTrail products: the Quick Clean Habitat and the LED Lighted Habitat. The former is the first enclosure of its kind to include a disposable bedding tray cartridge designed to make cleaning easier and help control unpleasant aroma. The latter includes a pair of battery-operated LED Bubble Plugs (one for nighttime use, the other for anytime use) that increase visibility within the cage and particularly excite kids.

“These LED Bubble Plugs actually connect to any CritterTrail habitat or Fun-nel tube accessory to improve pet parents' ability to see their pets. They have fully protective lens covers to safely keep animals away from the battery and light inside, and the light won't harm their eyes,” said Mary Ann Loveland, senior associate brand manager for Kaytee Hard Goods in Chilton, Wisconsin, adding that it won Best in Show for the small animal category at Global Pet Expo in 2016.

Third place in that category went to Ware Manufacturing for its new Critter X Connect 360 enclosure, a modular enclosure that boasts a detachable ball for outside-the-cage adventures. Ware has also made a splash in this space with Critter Universe products, like its clever three-level AvaTower and its three-wall mouse and hamster home that's now bundled together with Healthy Pet's care-fresh Complete food and care-fresh colored bedding.

Other players capitalizing on fantastic plastic include Penn-Plax, makers of the Dingo Home for dwarf hamsters and mice, Rainforest hamster homes, and the Home & Traveler with Carrier and Starter Kit, which comes with a removable mini-travel cage on top; Hagen's Habitrail line of products, like its OVO series and its Crystal Hamster Habitat; and Prevue Pet Products, producers of the brightly hued Hamster Haven.

Large species don't get short shrift, either. Midwest Homes for Pets still makes its Critter Nation habitat with interlocking panels; Prevue manufactures a wrought iron model (no. 495) with a powder-coated hammertone finish; and a&e stands out for its multi-level, 35-inch-high wire cage with removal base available in platinum and black (model 13221-SA).

“The 13221-SA is perfect for a variety of small animals—it's easily movable, has extra storage on the

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bottom and has three levels,” said John Lance of Burlington, New Jersey-based a&e Cage Company LLC.



**House Rules**

When it comes to merchandising habitats, Jane Morehouse, product research and development manager for Hayward, California-headquartered Kordon LLC, has a failsafe philosophy: refer customers to the largest cage available for its specific breed.

“That means carrying cages in alternative sizes that offer more options for consumers,” Morehouse said.

The most important retail consideration when choosing which habitats to stock in your store is appropriate size and species needs, Morehouse insists.

“For example, guinea pigs should never be housed on wire floors, such as those used for rabbits, as they have tender skin on the bottoms of their feet and can suffer sores, severed toes or fractures when housed in the wrong cage,” she said.

Hence, selling the right enclosure to the customer requires properly training your team about which products are safe and appropriate for particular species. Getting closely familiar with cage brand features and product amenities and then spreading that gospel of good information to your clientele will not only likely result in the customer purchasing a safe and suitable small animal dwelling, but it also makes you appear as a responsible, knowledgeable and caring retailer who’s worthy of repeat business.

Also remember that “it is hard for some consumers to visualize a habitat if it only exists in a cardboard box on the shelf,” according to Jane Wasley, head of consumer marketing for Ferndale,



Washington-based Healthy Pet, makers of carefresh small animal bedding. “Instead, make the effort to set a habitat endcap with assembled enclosures displayed, which not only gets the customer’s attention but entices them to purchase additional accessories, such as bedding, food, treats and toys.”

Loveland says her golden rule for better habitat sales is to first focus on selling the animal itself, assuming you stock mini mammal pets. The problem here, however, is an olfactory one: in-store enclosures housing hamsters, mice, cavies and their cousins can smell pretty ripe if they’re not cleaned and maintained regularly—which can be challenging for a retail operation that may carry dozens if not hundreds of small animals for sale.

“For these reasons, we often see retailers today choosing to no longer display live animals within setups of the habitats they also sell,” said Loveland, noting that a strong odor can leave patrons with a bad impression of the cage as well as the store.

To prevent this problem, consider showcasing your small animals for sale within large specialty cases built for display only or segregate them to a back area of the store where odors can be better controlled. **PA**



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For some, there is a light that appears at the toughest moments of being a doctor. Dr. Dani McVety found that light early in her career, and it sparked an idea that has become one of the most unique and fastest growing businesses in the veterinary space. Lap of Love Veterinary Hospice, a service that has visited the homes of over 50,000 families, is now a nationwide network of over 90 passionate doctors and a full time interdisciplinary support staff dedicated to making the end of life experience for pets, and the people that love them, as dignified and peaceful as possible.

She proudly graduated from the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine and is the youngest recipient of both the college's Distinguished Young Alumni Award (2013) and the Florida Veterinary Medical Association's President's Award (2014).





## SUPPLEMENTING PETS' HEALTH

Supplements can help keep pets healthy by bringing the animals back to basics.

BY ERIC STENSON

Eric Stenson is a veteran journalist with 25 years of experience as a newspaper writer and editor. He's also spent more than 15 years as a corporate communications professional. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, children and a 13-year-old Newfoundland named Luna.

Just as people are increasingly relying on supplements to alleviate specific symptoms as well as improve overall health, that trend is expanding to how they treat their companion animals.

According to the report "Pet Supplements in the U.S.," published by market research firm Packaged Facts, sales of pet supplements are expected to increase from \$541 million in 2014 to more than \$697 million in 2019.

One of the biggest drivers, according to the study, is "premiumization" in relation to organic and natural products. People are growing more and more concerned with what they put in their bodies, and that inclination tends to include their pets as well. In fact, the study cites that the percentage of natural and organic pet supplements nearly doubled as a share of the market, rising from 6 percent in 2008 to 11 percent by 2014.

America's increasing waistlines extend to Tabby and Fido as well. With concerns over obesity growing, the study predicts a burgeoning demand for supplements that assist pet owners with controlling obesity and encouraging weight management for pets.

Age, too, is becoming a bigger point of interest, with the study citing that a third of cats and dogs are seven years old or older. Almost half of all pet owners in Packaged Facts' 2015 survey reported they were buying age-related food and nutritional products for their pets. The study forecasts that this is only going to become an even bigger segment of the market as more pets enter their Golden Years.

### Back to Nature

Retailers see the trend in a "back to nature" approach when it comes to supplements, according to the Mike Edly, owner of Pet Asylum, with locations in Howell and Brick, New Jersey.

"We've seen a shift in more natural, holistic, made-in-the-USA, organic and non-GMO products," he said. "We were ahead of the curve on that, and people seem to be catching up."

His store carries such items as Scoot Bars from Essex Junction, Vermont's Pet Naturals, which takes "a pumpkin approach to digestive health." He also carries Nupro products, from Manalapan, New Jersey, for joint-related issues.

"They take a natural approach with protein, amino acids, to aid joints and tendons," Edly said. "We've seen significant improvement within 60 days."

Janis Gianforte, president and owner of Nutri-Pet Research, which manufactures Nupro, started the company in 1989 after seeing how well horses she trains were responding to nutritional supplements.

"It made them feel better, so they could do their jobs better," she said.

The main idea in developing supplements is to fill in gaps that animals can be experiencing in their diets based on commercially made food.

"It brings them back to how they would have lived thousands of years

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ago,” she said. “It mimics what they would have outside.”

Her company makes a Joint and Immunity Support Formula, a Custom Electrolyte Formula (which she described as “a Gatorade for dogs”) and general nutritional supplements for dogs, cats and even ferrets. The company’s newest product, Lyfe-Spyce, is a vegetarian formula with antioxidants intended to support a strong immune system and inflammatory response.

### The NASC

Her company is a member of the National Animal Supplement Council (NASC), and she carries the seal on the company’s website. Her facilities are subject to inspection by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as well as the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

“Purity and quality—ingredients need to be sourced from the highest quality,” she said, mentioning such

items as Norwegian kelp, which grows in deep, cold waters. “Minimal processing—we’re just giving these animals what they need.”

John Phillips, owner, president and CEO of Wholistic Pet Organics in Medford, New Hampshire, is also a member of the NASC and displays the seal.

“It ensures customers that they can have confidence in that a supplement was tested by a third-party, independent audit and the label claims are 100 percent true,” Phillips said. “It’s difficult to get. Anyone making supplements would aspire to get that seal.”

Wholistic Pet makes a variety of products for cats, dogs and horses. Ingredients are certified organic and produced from whole foods.

“We should feed our animals the way we feed ourselves,” Phillips said. “It’s got to be human-grade.”

His company’s products are tasteless, so palatability is not an issue, he says.

“You want medicine,” he said of consumers shopping for supplements. “You want stuff that works.”

### A Natural Fix

Canine Matrix of Carlsbad, California, bases its products on medicinal mushrooms, according to Jeff Hacker, the company’s director of sales and marketing.

“Before we had drugs, we had food,” Hacker said. “Mushrooms are one of the biggest superfoods of 2017.”

Different mushroom species have unique nutritional properties, Hacker indicated, with each having its own set of benefits. Some have natural biotin or glucosamine, some encourage oxygenation for circulatory benefits, while others have antihistamine properties.

“Pet parents are looking for solutions to fix problems,” Hacker said. “These allow the body’s immune system to help repair itself.”

Canine Matrix has no taste, but adapts to whatever is being mixed with it. The product line has formulas for joint, skin and coat, general health and immune support.

Hacker anticipates that the trend toward organics will continue to grow in the pet-supplement category.

“Ten years ago, you couldn’t find an organic section in the grocery store,” he said. “Animals follow human trends. Today, people care more about what they’re putting in their pets’ bodies.”

Ara Bohchalian, president and CEO of International Veterinary Sciences in Anaheim, California, makes Lipiderm, a skin and health supplement that enhances overall health, and Arthramine, for bone and joint support.

“We’re one of the originals,” he said. “Our products have stood the test of time.”

To Bohchalian, retailers can best assist customers when their staff approaches products from an informed perspective.

“It has to go beyond just a familiar name,” he said. “A retailer has to be able to look at that label and really know what it means. And that [education] is up to the manufacturer.” **PA**

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# CARING FOR THE SKIN

There's a skin care product on the market to meet every pet's needs.

BY MAGGIE MARTON

Maggie Marton is a freelance writer and pet lifestyle pro. She lives in Bloomington, Indiana, with her husband, three dogs and a cat.

Skin care products need to do two jobs: prevent problems and solve problems. Consumers need an array of options to meet those disparate demands. And, as demand for transparency and accountability in the human health and beauty aid industry rises, the same sentiments are trickling into the pet industry. Pet owners demand the same quality and results from their pets' skin care products as they do for their own.

"Consumers are looking for skin care solutions for their pets that are... effective, convenient and luxurious. As pet parents consider their dogs and cats members of the family, they seek out the highest quality products to pamper their pets," said Stephanie Boone, CEO of Wondercide. "Wondercide's pet shampoo bar meets consumer needs because it's a true soap with a coconut oil base that cleans effectively without harsh chemicals or detergents."

PL360's Lori Lefcourt, director of sales and marketing, reported similar demand among her brand's customers. According to the company's website, PL360's mission is to create products that keep "pets healthy, happy and clean in the simplest way possible."

For the company, "that means using natural ingredients that are safe for pets. It also means finding innovative ways to make pet care easier so

[owners and their] pet can get back to doing the things that [they] love."

"People have learned that what you put into your body will reflect in the appearance of your hair and skin, and it is no different for our pets," she said.

She also said that the consumer trends driving product innovation include "the level of education on the harmful effects of certain chemicals in many of the products they are using. They will continue to look for safe, natural alternatives that perform at the same level of what they have used in the past."

PL360's complete product line is plant-based, and Lefcourt said that its bestsellers in skin care are grooming wipes, Shed No More vitamins and the itch relief shampoo.

"Our grooming wipes are truly unique," she said. "Not only are they the most durable on the market, but the cold-pressed seed oil blend nour-

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“The official symbol and/or certifier statement tells you that the USDA has maintained clear oversight of the production and bottling of this product through inspections and testing.”

**Jason Riccardi,  
Pura Naturals Pet LLC**

and are gentle enough for sensitive areas like the eyes, ears and mouth.”

Pura Naturals Pet LLC is dedicated to delivering the highest quality products using only the best materials the Earth has to offer, and its president, Jason Riccardi, says that consumers are becoming mindful of the ingredients in products, driven by an increase in allergic reactions and skin irritations.

“The data is all around us as well,” he said. “Natural and USDA Certified Organic food and beverage sales are up 10.7 percent in 2016. As pet parents, we worry about our four-legged friends as well. A visit to the vet with a skin problem is going to be a long and expensive one. There are so many causes including food, allergies and topical reactions. Thus, our in-house research shows natural grooming for pets is up 12.97 percent in 2016, versus a 7.3 percent increase in the general grooming category.”

However, Riccardi said that the prevalence of chemical cleansers with artificial ingredients and preservatives has made it difficult for consumers to

find healthy options. Plus, marketing problems—like inaccurate use of terms “natural” and “organic”—make it difficult for consumers to understand what they’re purchasing.

“Pura Naturals Pet was created to solve that problem. We have gone through the full USDA certification process to ensure our customers that what we produce is safe, non-toxic and effective,” he said. “The official symbol and/or certifier statement tells you that the USDA has maintained clear oversight of the production and bottling of this product through inspections and testing. It guarantees the integrity of the product from farm to store. This product has met incredibly high standards in ingredients and manufacturing. It allows customers to have a brand they can trust, knowing that any product they choose is guaranteed to be safe and effective.”

Topical products, like wipes and shampoos, aren’t the only

solution to skin care problems. Bill Chilian, marketing vice president of Barkworthies, advocates for an inside-out solution. His company makes treats and chews that “are completely digestible and contain absolutely no preservative, chemicals or additives,” as per Barkworthies’ mission.

“Omega-3 Fatty Acids are known to be ideal for helping canines maintain supple skin and a glossy coat,” he said. “However, because the canine is unable to produce Omega-3 Fatty Acids on its own, it’s important to provide them with supplemental nutrition.

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“PL360 Shed No More has been our top seller every year for a decade,” Lefcourt said. “It’s a complete fatty-acid solution that supports a healthy skin and coat and reduces seasonal shedding by addressing the key cause of it: lack of omega 3s and 6s in the diet. These vitamins are a proprietary blend of safflower oil, sunflower oil, borage oil, evening primrose oil, fish oil and flaxseed oil.”

Whether it’s a bar, a wipe or a spray, skin care products attract customers looking to prevent as well as solve problems. For those who are seeking prevention, make the most of shelf space with clever cross-marketing. Include an array of skin-specific treats, along with vitamins, chews and even food, to round out your skin care offering—there’s something for every customer. **PA**

from Barkworthies that are jam-packed with Omega-3 Fatty Acids. Plus, these treats contain healthy fats

that are also good for the heart and can help boost immunity. PL360’s vitamins are another example.



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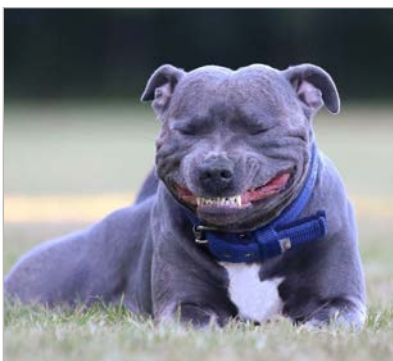


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Ramsey Blue Staffordshire Bull Terrier from England. Showing the true nature of the breed.



When people first see Ramsey, they'd never guess that the stocky, muscular Staffordshire bull terrier was the runt of his litter. But he was, according to Jason Ashley, who bought him from a breeder in September 2012, when Ramsey was 7 weeks old.

"I saw his dad and loved him," he recalled. "He was well behaved for a dog his size, and he was very intelligent as well. When I got Ramsey, the blue was considered a unique color at the time."

Ashley, who lives in Surrey, England, acknowledges that he's always been a fan of Staffordshire bull terriers, and his passion for the breed started when he watched a film called "Jock of the Bushveld." He first owned a staffy mix (a rescue dog named Bam) when he was 12 and living in Greece.

It was obvious to Ashley that there was something special about Ramsey. With plenty of exercise, training and a diet that included only raw dog food and treats from Nutriment, the blue staffie has filled out into an impressive, if not imposing, show dog and model.

Little did Ashley know what he was starting when he posted photos of his 4-month-old staffie on his Instagram account at the end of 2012. A little over four years later, a glimpse of Ramsey on Instagram reveals that he has 170,000 followers.



Wet Food: **Raw Dog Food from Nutriment**

Dry Food: **N/A (Does not eat dry food)**

Treat: **Dried Liver from Nutriment**

Toy: **Chuckit! Balls**

Collar/Harness: **Fleece Lined Collars by El Perro**

Bed/Crate: **Silent Night Supreme Dog Bed**

Yet it's easy to see what makes him a social media influencer and a celebrity in and around London. People can't seem to get enough of watching his muscles flex as he sprints across a field in a video or seeing him wear an ear-to-ear grin as he stares into the camera for a photo.

"He appeals to so many people in America," he said. "He's got something for everyone. He's got the masculine body, so that appeals to health fanatics. He has a cute face and a good smile. He even looks really cute when he's wrapped up in bed."

Whether he's playing with a Nerf or Chuckit! toy, donning one of his Hurtta outdoor jackets or rolling around the floor in a Dogrobe dog drying coat, Ramsey exudes personality. It doesn't take long to realize there's not just one side to Ramsey. There's an emotion in his eyes, ranging from contentment to curiosity or innocence to youthful exuberance.

In fact, the staffie's profile image is a cartoon likeness of the staffie wearing a shower cap. That might be why companies such as Dyson, Natures Menu and Silent Night have had Ramsey endorse their products. He's modeled for web ads for Crufts, EzyDog and BarkBox.

Ramsey's even had an impact in the animal welfare sector, becoming an official ambassador for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

"He helps out the image of pit bulls," Ashley said. "We do a lot of work with the RSPCA, which is the biggest animal charity in Europe."

Ramsey and his owner were invited to the 2016 Animal Heroes Awards, which was attended by many



celebrities, including Queen guitarist Brian May and British comedian Paul O'Grady.

"I was in awe that they felt he deserved to be invited to such a prestigious event," Ashley admitted.

He has big plans for Ramsey's future, including one that involves the staffie making a difference in the lives of people.

"He's not certified as a therapy dog, but I hope to start the process when he's older," Ashley said. Based on Ramsey's current popularity, he is sure to flourish in that new role.



Dental Product/Treat: **Antlers by Nutriment**

Shampoo/Conditioner: **Scruffy Chops Shampoo**

Grooming Product: **Nail Clippers by Crufts**

Leash: **EzyDog Road Runner**

Clothing: **Hurtta Winter Coat**

Fashion Accessory:  
**Kennel Club Dog Bandana by Crufts**



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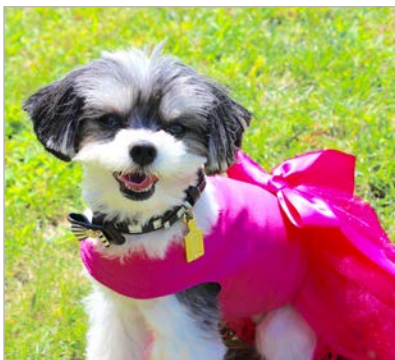
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Her name is Tinkerbelle, and the 5-year-old papitese (a mix of papillon and maltese) has been photographed with top fashion models, designers and countless celebrities. Her fur, which shines thanks to being bathed with Burt's Bees shampoo, is meticulously groomed on a regular basis. And when in public, she will always be wearing top-of-the-line accessories, such as a Henri Bendel collar and a Mendota Products leash.

However, the precocious pup's story began in 2012, when Sam Carrell, a professional dancer and actress, adopted the cute canine from a Long Island, New York, animal shelter when it was just 2 months old. Or as Carrell would describe it, "she picked me."

"She was my first animal, because of allergy reasons," recalled Carrell, who admitted she was immediately smitten with the pup that weighed less than a pound. "But I knew we belonged together. After she came home with me, I'd walk her through the city to socialize her. One day, an animal agent stopped me and asked if she could work with Tink."

That led to Tinkerbelle being part of Ralph Lauren's "The Dog Walk" fashion campaign with shelter dogs in 2013. According to Carrell, David Lauren (the designer's son) saw something in Tinkerbelle, and he included the dog in nearly every shot. This resulted in the papitese becoming the face of the campaign. Soon, her image was on buses, posters and billboards throughout the city.



Wet Food: **Pasta Bolognese from Doggy Chef**

Dry Food: **Just Right by Purina**

Treat: **Croque Monsieur by maison de pawsZ**

Fashion Accessory: **PochieBoots**

Toy: **Frozen Olaf Squeaker by Disney**

Collar/Harness: **Rose Gold Collar by Henri Bendel**

Carrell created Tinkerbelle's Instagram account in 2013 and, since then, her posts often feature the peppy pup dressed in an endless array of stylish pet fashion—from tutus to bow ties—and posing with stars of the big screen, small screen and music scene. The immaculately-groomed girl has caught the public's attention, accumulating nearly 120,000 Instagram followers. With her newfound popularity, she's taken part in numerous modeling shoots, including those for iconic fashion designers such as Vivian Hu and Christie Raules.

She has also starred in several TV commercials and attended numerous store and salon openings. What's more, she even appeared alongside Tony Award nominee Sally Mayes in a production of "Gypsy" as Rose's dog, Chowsie.

Sam says Tink's most memorable modeling moment came in 2015, when the pup walked the runway at Betsey Johnson's final fashion show after celebrating her label's 50th anniversary.

Tink has even been spotted at several exclusive, celeb-only parties, thanks in part to her winning a 2016 Webby award. When it comes to brand partnerships, Tinkerbelle has been associated with a long list of products, including Purina, Swiffer, Febreze and Rachael Ray's Nutrish.

Carrell's life appears to revolve around Tinkerbelle's busy schedule. If she's not driving Tink around the Tri-State area, such as for recent appearances at New York Fashion Week, Carrell is flying around the country for photo and video shoots. A friend of Carrell's, Gina Naomi Baez, who has appeared in the popular TV series



"Orange Is The New Black," often includes the striking pup in the vocalist's YouTube music videos.

What does Carrell think of owning a pet that she admits is recognized on an almost daily basis?

"I might be a little jealous but I'm accepting of it," she said. "I'd love to be in a film with her. We almost had a chance to do a film together. We

even went to a wardrobe fitting, but then they rewrote the script and we got cut out of it."

But Sam is not giving up hope on it, adding that "it would be an awesome dream come true."



Leash: **Black Rope Leash by Mendota Products**

Grooming Product: **Dog Brush by CHI**

Dental Product/Treat: **Teenie Dental Dog Treats by Greenies**

Shampoo/Conditioner: **Dog Shampoo by Burt's Bees**

Clothing: **Leopard PJ by Fabdog**

Red Carpet Clothing: **Wagwear**



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Rambo the Puppy over 300,000 facebook fans & counting! collabs: emailrambothepuppy@gmail.com facebook.com/rambothepuppy



What's not to love about Rambo? He's not only a handsome 3-year-old dog—thanks to a combination of Petology shampoo/conditioner, JW Pet brushes and regular visits to a groomer every six to eight weeks—he's also renown for wearing a red pet bowtie on his collar as well as some form of stylish apparel from Fab Dog, a high-quality dog clothing line.

Rambo is a pint-sized pooch that lives in North Carolina with his pet owner, who requested to remain anonymous to protect her privacy. He was born to a breeder in 2012 before he was given to his owner by her then-boyfriend as a gift on, of all occasions, Tax Day.

“My ex-boyfriend put this idea into my mind that I needed a puppy, and that it either had to be a yorkie poo or some similar dog,” she reminisced. “So he bought Rams for me.”

Rambo was just 11 weeks old and had that special something, his owner noticed. She decided to share his cuteness with her family and friends in May 2012, when she started a Facebook page for him. By 2014, Rambo's page had more than 300,000 Facebook likes.

“I was so focused on his Facebook page that I didn't invest a ton of effort into Rambo's Instagram account until the end of 2014,” she admitted. “But now his Instagram audience is growing consistently, albeit slow and steady.”



Bed/Crate: **N/A (sleeps in owner's bed)**

Toy: **Hide A Squirrel Puzzle by Outward Hound**

Red Carpet Clothing: **Lake Tahoe Shirt by Dog & Co.**

Treat: **Full Moon Chicken Jerky**

Wet Food: **FreshPet Select**

Dry Food: **Instinct Raw Boost**

Rambo's Instagram followers, which number more than 24,000, are treated to photos of the little lovebug posing with a "baconrita" (a catchy term for a doggy drink created by his owner) or dressed to impress. One key to his Instagram success, his owner believes, is how his posts feature captions that are in Rambo's "voice."

"He sneaks in cute phrases like 'mother pupper' and 'what the pup' into his captions," she said. "Another thing that Rambo's fans and followers like, and what makes his content so appealing, is that I, the 'human,' don't appear in photos or have a voice on his page. By staying anonymous and making his posts all about him, I think I've made his storyline more believable. His page is all about him."

With an owner who is an influence marketing manager, it's no surprise that Rambo is a social butterfly who has been getting noticed by major brands. According to his owner, Rambo regularly attends pet expos and events like the Wayfair Heart Home conference for bloggers and influencers. He's even a member of the Wayfair Pet Squad, an honor that includes his very own profile on Wayfair's website.

He's modeled for several brands and been the subject of digital content and videos, website headers and native ads. His spotlight moment thus far has been his appearance in a TV commercial for Stainmaster in 2015.

"We did a total of three photo shoots with the company," Rambo's owner explained. "They loved Rambo so much that they featured him on the front of their carpet squares box. They jumped at the chance to extend



our relationship into promoting their brand via his social media channels."

However, his owner makes sure to not only keep Rambo grounded—after all, he's still a dog who adores bully sticks and Full Moon Chicken Jerky treats—but to also use his influence for charitable causes.

"Most recently we partnered with Toyota to go on a weekend adven-

ture in a brand new RAV4, which I decided would focus on collecting and purchasing donations for a local SPCA and delivering them to the rescue center," Rambo's owner said.



Leash: **Yark**

Grooming Product: **Grip Soft Slicker Brush by JW Pet**

Dental Product/Dental Treat: **Bully Sticks by Barkworthies**

Clothing: **Snorkel Jacket by FabDog**

Collar/Harness: **Mesh Harness by Bond & Co.**

Fashion Accessory: **Pawz Dog Boots**



## otterthepitbull

Follow

856 posts

15.5K followers

1694 following

**Otter The Pit Bull** A fashionable, ridiculous, rescued pittty from Philly • otterthepitbull@gmail.com



“Otter” is not an ordinary name for a mixed breed pit bull, but that’s appropriate for a dog that is anything but ordinary, according to his owner, Leslie O’Neill. Thanks to his unique qualities, the 8-year-old dog’s become a mini celebrity in the U.S. and overseas, as well.

O’Neill, who is a volunteer with Philadelphia’s Animal Care Control Team, explains that she was fostering kittens in 2010, when she and her boyfriend (now husband) contemplated fostering a dog.

“It was Pit Bull Awareness Day in Philadelphia, and Otter was one of the dogs that they had at the event,” O’Neill said. “That was the day I met him. He was sick and weighed just over 30 pounds. I saw him with a dinosaur hat on his head, because he would wear anything. And I noticed that he fell asleep standing up.”

While attending the event, she learned his name was Otter, which was given to him by the animal control team that took him in after police found him wandering the streets of southwest Philadelphia. It didn’t take long for O’Neill to decide to foster him, and she took him home.

She quickly discovered that Otter would sleep nearly 22 hours a day, a result veterinarians told her was due to depression, parasites and injury to his paw and leg. With a healthy diet of Natural Balance dry dog food mixed with Beggin’ Strips treats,



Dry Food: **Natural Balance Potato and Duck**

Toy: **Kong Extreme**

Dental Product/Dental Treat: **Greenies**

Bed/Crate: **Flat Dog Bed by Territory**

Fashion Accessory: **Bow Ties by Luv.A.Bull Designs**

Collar/Harness: **Martingale Collar by Luv.A.Bull Designs**

Otter recovered from his ailments and, although he was briefly made available for adoption while O’Neill fostered him, it didn’t take long for her to fall for the 18-month-old mutt.

“He became my foster failure,” she happily confessed with the humorous term for people who foster a pet that’s being prepared for adoption, but who ultimately adopt it themselves. “There’s something about him. Maybe it’s his facial expression. He’s ridiculous.”

Otter is also gentle, both with people and other pets. He doesn’t jump on the people he meets, an instinct that has gone a long way in O’Neill’s neighborhood. She and her family (she and her husband have a 1-year-old son) have met a lot of people who are wary of pit bulls, but Otter has helped change their attitude, she explains.

“He’s excellent with small children, so much so that kids come over to ask, ‘Can Otter come out and play?’” O’Neill laughed. “He just loves people. He really likes tall men, and he would always sit down when he sees a lady. And he gets along with our cats.”

Although he’s always ready to play with his Kong Extreme, O’Neill describes Otter as a big mush (he presently weighs more than 60 pounds) that enjoys having his nails trimmed so much that he lies down and falls asleep snoring before his grooming session is finished.

“He’s just silly and lets everything hang out,” O’Neill giggled. “He’s a character. He’s derpy.”

It’s on Instagram where Otter’s derpiness is fully on display. O’Neill posts the full gamut of her dog’s



lovability. Photos show Ollie relaxing on his Territory bed or with his human family, posing in one of his Chilly Dog sweaters or taking a bath in the family tub, with eyes that cry out for a hug.

Otter has accumulated 15,500 Instagram followers, and that number is steadily climbing. Thanks to that popularity, he has received several honors, including being named a

positive “Pit Bull Ambassador” by Citizens for a No-Kill Philadelphia. He’s also been the star of reports from Animal Planet, The Huffington Post and Daily Mail, where he was the subject of a piece promoting positive pit bull awareness, which is a big topic in the UK.



Leash: **Luv.A.Bull Designs**

Shampoo/Conditioner: **Jax & Daisy Shampoo and Lotion**

Treat: **Beggin’ Strips by Purina**

Clothing: **Chilly Dog Sweaters**

Wet Food: **N/A**

Grooming Product: **N/A**



# myregalbeagle

Follow

782 posts    100K followers    197 following

**Sid Pizza Dog** Sid, the Austin Dog Mayor  
myregalbeagle@gmail.com

How unique is Sid? Well, better known as “MyRegalBeagle,” the pooch ran for mayor in his home town of Austin, Texas, in 2015. Although he didn’t win, the lab-bas-set-beagle-corgi mix is still considered the unofficial “Austin dog mayor,” claims his owner, Alex Hopes.

“We received an email from the mayor’s office that there would be an event to recognize Sid,” Hopes recalled. “But it never happened.”

That’s not a big deal to Hopes, who feels Sid has changed his life since entering his life while Hopes was attending college in Omaha, Nebraska, in 2010. According to Hopes, a friend of his approached him with the offer to get a 6-week-old puppy that was being forced to live in a business because its owner couldn’t keep him at his apartment.

“He said, ‘I know you’re looking to get a dog,’ which was completely untrue,” laughed Hopes, who added that when he saw the awkward-looking pup, he knew they were meant to be together. “I’ve been obsessed with him since that day. It was his personality that did it. I was 21 and in college, and he was the catalyst for my photography career.”

Hopes started the “@MyRegalBeagle” Instagram account (named after Sid’s “regal” facial expression) in 2013 as a way to share Sid with the world. There were the usual photos of the dog laying on a couch, interacting with other dogs and wearing sunglasses or a cute costume. Then it was one photo—the “pizza shot” as Hopes calls it—that went viral.



Bed/Crate: **Modern Fold-Out Pet Bed by Murphy’s Paw Design**

Dry Food: **Heritage Ranch by H-E-B**

Fashion Accessory: **Augustus Rag**

Wet Food: **Bones and Co.**

Toy: **PrideBites**

Collar/Harness: **Dog + Bone**

“His account had 25,000 followers before it, then it gained another 40,000 from that shot,” he reminisced.

Today, there are 100,000 followers who view and comment on posts that feature the barrel-chested dog with the droopy face. Hopes takes most of his photos of Sid in and around his home in Austin, and is a regular at Austin’s Zilker Park, where he photographs dogs for his business.

However, Sid’s stardom nearly didn’t happen. Life changed for both he and his owner in spring 2014, when Hopes was planning to relocate to Croatia with his dog later that summer. After selling most of his belongings, Hopes was packing his car late one night when he realized Sid wasn’t with him. He soon discovered Sid, lying in the street and covered in blood, apparently the result of being hit by a motor vehicle.

After a passerby drove them to an emergency vet clinic, where Hopes learned that his beloved beagle mix had four broken ribs, punctured lungs, a herniated diaphragm and a cut spleen. The tale has a happy ending, as Sid pulled through and has made a full recovery. The medical bills reached \$10,000, according to Hopes, but some of that was covered by donations from the dog’s social media fans, who watched him recuperate via videos and photos (some of which are graphic) posted on Instagram.

Sid has bounced back since the accident, returning to the form that made him a rising star. He continues to appear in videos with a food item between his lips, be it bacon, a burger, hot dog or even a carrot. He can even be seen in photos with pet



products ranging from PrideBites toys and clothing to Heritage Ranch food products by H-E-B. For a special occasion, he breaks out his pizza bow tie by zee dog.

Sid is starring in a video for Insurance Zebra that’s currently on the main page of the company’s website. His popularity even reached the national level when Sid appeared in a

Domino’s Pizza commercial featuring Sarah Hyland (of “Modern Family” fame) in 2015.

When it comes to social media pet influencers, none are tougher than Sid.



Leash: **Get Wagging**

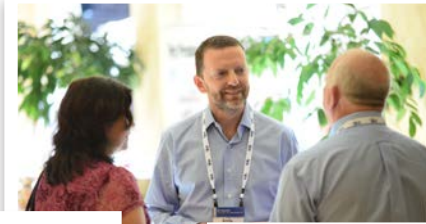
Shampoo/Conditioner: **Shampoo by Petology**

Grooming Product: **Nail Clippers by Millers Forge**

Clothing: **PrideBites**

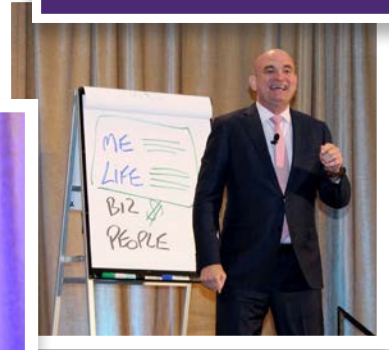
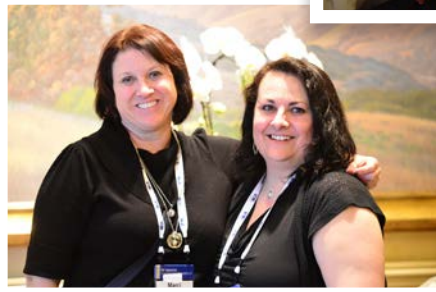
Treat: **Zukes**

Red Carpet Clothing: **Pizza bow tie by zee dog**



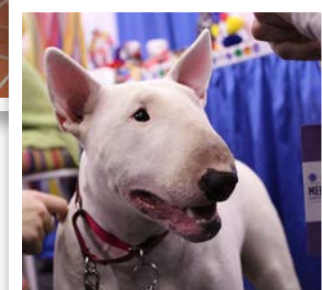
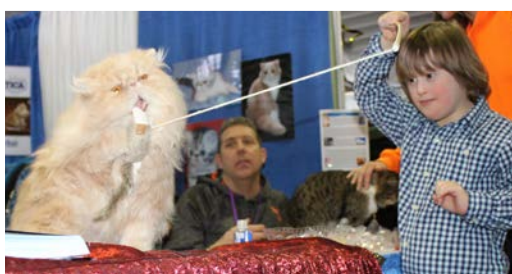
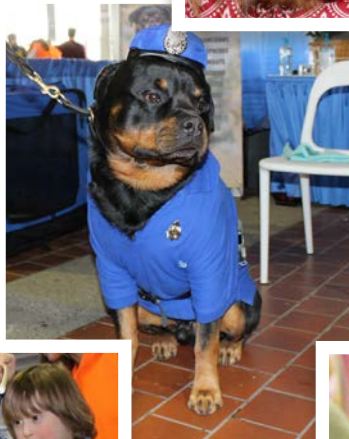
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**March 9-12 Atlanta Pet Fair,** Georgia International Convention Center, Atlanta, Georgia  
www.atlantapetfair.org

**March 10-12 The Long Island Pet Expo,** Suffolk Community College Expo Center, Grant Campus, Brentwood, New York  
www.familypetshows.com

**March 11-12 Cat Camp,** Metropolitan Pavilion, New York, New York  
www.catcampnyc.com

**March 17-19 Super Pet Expo,** Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly, Virginia  
www.superpetexpo.com

**March 18-19 North American Reptile Breeders Conference,** Tinley Park Holiday Inn Select & Convention Center, Tinley Park, Illinois  
www.narbc.com

**March 22-24 Global Pet Expo,** Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida  
www.globalpetexpo.org

**March 30-April 2 AAHA Veterinary Conference,** Music City Center, Nashville, Tennessee  
www.aaha.org

**March 31-April 2 ClickerExpo Animal Training Conference,** Stamford, Connecticut  
www.clickertraining.com

## April

**April 3 Petfood Innovation Workshop,** Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri  
www.petfoodforumevents.com

**April 6-9 Intergroom,** Meadowlands Exposition Center, Secaucus, New Jersey  
www.intergroom.barkleigh.com

**April 20-23 Northwest Grooming Show,** Murano Convention Center, Tacoma, Washington  
www.nwgroom.com

**April 22-23, Calgary Pet Industry Trade Show,** Spruce Meadows, Equi-Plex, Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
www.calgarypetexpo.com

**April 27-28, Food and Feed Drying Technology,** Centre for Feed Technology, Ås, Norway. fie.com.au

**April 28 TTPM Pet Media Showcase,** Metropolitan West, New York, New York  
www.anbmedia.com/events

**April 28-30 America's Family Pet Expo,** OC Fair & Event Center, Costa Mesa, California  
www.petexpoooc.org

## May

**May 1-4 Pet Boarding & Daycare Expo West,** Burbank, California  
petboardingexpowest.com

**May 2 NYC Re-tails and Sales Expo,** Home Studios, Inc., New York, New York  
retailsandsalespetexpo.com

**May 2-4 Pet Food Extrusion Technology,** Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås, Norway. fie.com.au

**May 11-14, Zoomark International,** Bologna Exhibition Center, Bologna, Italy  
www.zoomark.it

**May 16-18, 2017 NASC Annual Conference,** Crowne Plaza New Orleans French Quarter, New Orleans, Louisiana  
nasc.cc/annual-conference

**May 20-21 Mardi Gras Pet Expo,** Doubletree by Hilton, New Orleans, Louisiana  
www.mardigraspetexpo.com

**May 26-29 Aquarama,** Guangzhou Import and Export Fair Complex, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China  
www.aquarama.com.cn/en

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# NEXT-LEVEL NATURAL

Wondercide talks reaching the next level of manufacturing natural cleaning products.

BY GLENN A. POLYN

**P**et Age spoke with Stephanie Boone, who in 2009 founded Wondercide, a market leader in holistic solutions for natural pet care.

**Q** *What is your company's philosophy?*

**A** There is a lot we stand for and a lot we won't stand for, but if I had to sum it up without cliché marketing jargon, I would say that our philosophy is "when you know better, do better." As parents, none of us gets it right all the time, and we all wish we had more time to make informed decisions. Wondercide aspires to be the brand people just know they can trust. They trust that we do the research and work for them, so they can enjoy a healthier, longer life with their pets and family.



**Q** *How has your appearance with Wondercide on "Shark Tank" in March 2016 impacted the company?*

**A** National exposure shines a bright light where there wasn't one before. So now we are on the map, on the radar, of our competitors, of state and federal regulators (everything we make is regulated by someone, somewhere), and also mass retail. It's a next-level game that requires more re-

sources than simply cashing in on the revenue spike resulting from the show.

**Q** *Wondercide has created more than 30 products. Which one has been the best seller and why?*

**A** Our all-time best seller is Flea & Ticks for Pets + Home. I think it's a best seller because it's unlike anything else on the shelf. It's as safe as it is effective and, unlike other brands, we offer fragrance options and no clove oil. Consumers have a problem and we solve it with a great product, so they come back for more and tell everyone they know. We've never spent much on marketing or sales. Our brand loyalists are the reason we've had over 100 percent organic growth year after year.

**Q** *You source all of your ingredients in the U.S. and manufacture everything in Austin, Texas. Why is that important to you?*

**A** It's important to trust the source of the ingredient and the supplier because ingredients come in many grades. Purity and premium quality are essential to accomplishing our mission of improved health and wellness. U.S.-sourced means we are supporting jobs in America and people in [our] communities. We just love how that feels. We manufacture [in house] in Austin, Texas, because I'm a bit obsessed with controlling our product from source to customer. It's just in our DNA—we do everything from customer service to logistics, and I believe my team does it better than anything third party and at a lower cost.



Stephanie Boone

**Q** *What do you look for in a retailer to carry your brand of products?*

**A** We love retailers who are passionate about providing trusted natural products for their customers. A large portion of our retailers started carrying Wondercide because our online customers walked in requesting it and have since fallen in love with the products themselves. We love the personal experiences they share with customers because it feels like we are all part of a bigger cause for the greater good. I also look for retailers who educate their staff because they are the face of our brand when people are looking for safe and effective solutions for various pet care needs.

**Q** *Does Wondercide have any new products in the works?*

**A** We have a lot of products in R&D but haven't committed to any launches in 2017. With all the growth we've had in the past couple of years, we are taking this year to build more infrastructure to support independent retailers and our select distribution partners. Keep one eye open, though—we've got big plans for the future! **PA**

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