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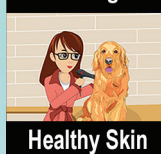
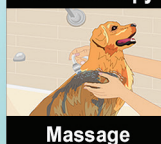
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HEALTHY DIETS FOR HEALTHY DOGS

Canine nutrition options more numerous, healthier than ever.

It was nutritionist Adelle Davis who said, “You are what you eat.” And there’s no question that this maxim applies to our pets too.

A proper, balanced, nutritional diet is the key to good canine health. The end goal? For every dog to live a longer, healthier life.

Eat Well, Live Well

Wellness Natural Pet Food recently published what it terms the Five Signs of Wellness: a clear skin and coat; good digestive health; clear eyes along with strong teeth and gums; a strong immune system; and “enough energy to keep up with the family and give that over-the-top greeting when you walk in the front door,” as stated on the company’s website.

The goal is to educate pet owners about the hugely important role nutrition plays in overall good health. Pet retailers can play a key role in furthering this message.

While pet food manufacturers may have the same end goals of pet wellbeing, there has never been a more varied approach than in the recipes and trend-supported products currently vying for shelf space in today’s competitive market.

“Wellness Complete Health recipes are all carefully formulated to provide whole-body nutritional support across all stages of a pet’s life, explained

“Interest in ancestral canine diets is on the rise as pet parents seek ways to feed their dogs as they may have eaten in the wild”

– Mark Sapir

Chanda D. Leary-Coutu, the senior marketing communications manager at Wellpet, manufacturer of the Wellness, Holistic Select, Eagle Pack and Old Mother Hubbard brands.

“Across the brands, the recipes are de-

signed to be easily digestible so the body absorbs food’s vital nutrients to support a pet’s overall wellbeing,” Leary-Coutu added.

Food of Their Ancestors

Freeze-dried raw food is quickly gaining traction in the marketplace as manufacturers are looking to the future by focusing on ancestral diets.

Merrick Pet Care Inc. produces a nutrient-rich, ancestral canine diet selection called Merrick Backcountry.

“It’s an all-natural, grain-free ancestral diet that includes four kibble recipes featuring freeze-dried raw pieces, as well as seven canned recipes,” said Mark Sapir, vice president of marketing for Merrick Pet Care.

“Interest in ancestral canine diets is on the rise as pet parents seek ways to feed their dogs as they may have eaten in the wild,” said Sapir. “We consider it to be the ultimate ancestral diet that brings together many of the mega trends in the pet food aisle, from freeze-dried raw to exotic protein blends to grain-free, high-protein recipes made from real deboned meat.”

Freeze-dried raw products from Orijen, Nutrisca and Stella & Chewy’s, among others, continue to gain consumer interest. Many pet retailers are considering installing refrigeration units to house the increasing number of raw frozen products in the marketplace from brands including Bravo and Nature’s Variety.

New from Stella & Chewy’s are Meal Mixers, a freeze-dried raw meal supplement hailed by the company as “an easy and convenient way to mix raw food nutrition into any meal, whether it a dog’s favorite kibble or canned variety from competing brands.”

The meal mixers are 95 percent meat, cage-free poultry and wild-caught fish with no grains, artificial preservatives, added hormones or antibiotics.

Expanding Options

Among the many manufacturers that have introduced new recipes to existing brands is Halo, Purely for Pets, which has added to its Vigor line with recipes that include buzzy ingredients like quail, kelp, kale and quinoa.

“We consider the Vigor line a true health food for pets,” said David Yaskulka, the company’s vice president of marketing communications. “In fact, many of the ingredients in Vigor dry and wet foods can be found in health food stores and featured in food magazines for their nutritious benefits.”

Filling out the food category alongside freeze-dried raw and raw-frozen options are more standard food varieties, including single-ingredient diets and high-quality grain-free kibbles and cans, as well as dehydrated products such as the new Revel recipe from The Honest Kitchen.



Revel is a whole-grain, free-range-chicken recipe with organic barley, flax, carrots and green peas. It is being marketed as ideal for dogs at all life stages. The Honest Kitchen is positioning the new product as a well-priced, healthy dehydrated food alternative meant for pet owners who are currently serving their dogs kibble but would prefer to transition over to a different type of diet, in this case a new dehydrated food

option.

Also new in the nutrition aisle are healthy food enhancers from Vegalicious and manufactured by fofou BRANDS. According to the company's vice president, Lina Franco, the grinding action releases the natural flavors of the food's vegetable ingredients, which range from sweet potatoes and carrot flakes to pumpkin seeds and blueberries, ginger root, fennel, thyme and oth-

er extracts.

The product is designed to entice picky eaters back to the food bowl and is also considered to be a way to transition pets from one type of diet to another.

For pets as well as people, good nutrition is one of the pillars of good health. Dog owners now have more healthy options than ever before for healthy canine diets.

LOOKING GOOD AND FEELING GOOD

Skin and coat products support canine health inside and out.

The goal of pet specialty retailers should be to find a broad range of skin and coat health products from which to build a dedicated category. These selections may include an assortment of well-researched and science-based supplements in liquid, powder and chew form, and a myriad of maintenance products such as shampoos, conditioners and grooming tools.

Supplements for Shiny Coats

According to Matt Ryherd, national sales manager for HealthyCoat, which produces and markets a bacon-flavored liquid nutritional supplement for dogs, a deficiency in essential fatty acids is often the cause of excessive non-seasonal shedding, hot spots, overeating, immune system deficiencies, as well as bald spots from scratching.

"Because your pet does not naturally produce these acids within their bodies, they must obtain them from an outside source," Ryherd said.

Freedom Pets, which produces and markets a naturally derived Canine Skin and Coat formula, also relies on a liquid delivery system.

"Liquid formulations are absorbed more quickly and often effectively than competing chews," said Dr. Jeffery Brooks, chairman of Freedom Pets. "Our product is a dog coat supplement made using nature's ingredients as it contains concentrated amounts of vitamins and vitamin E, omega-3 and omega-6 fat-

ty acids, biotin, linolenic acid, oleic acid and horsetail grass. These ingredients assist in preventing dry skin, itching and dull coats."

The product has a pre-measured spray-pump system that dispenses a consistent, accurate dose.

Natura Petz Organics manufactures and markets a variety of single and multi-blend pet formulas in capsules, powders, tablets, tinctures, syrups and serums to address any skin and coat issue, and the company sources many of its ingredients from the Amazon rainforest, the Andean cloud forest and the Andean highlands, according to its website.

"Some of the most powerful plants in the world containing the highest concentration of nutrients and life energy found on the planet are found in these regions," said Heidi Nevala, founder and president of the company. "Herbs and supplements contain natural adaptogens, like 'body readers' that help prevent oxidative damage, help to identify disease and dysfunction, and go to work to help repair your dog from the inside out."

The company recently added a range of new products, including Vitamin Ninja, a multi-level nutritional vitamin blend that contains both marine- and

plant-based adaptogens, formulated to help fight oxidative damage and support whole-body canine wellness. Other Natura Petz products for skin and coat issues cater to wounds, infections, cuts and hot spots.

Vets Plus Inc. has added several new soft chews for dogs to its Probios line, including a skin and coat chew that contains yogurt and is fortified with probiotics and prebiotics.

"The new products contain the same research-proven strains of beneficial bacteria as other Probios products for dogs," said Dale Metz, director of com-



panion animal business at Vets Plus.

"Pet parents recognize that yogurt and probiotics have the same benefits for pets as they do for people. And, by adding in these other functional ingredients, we're able to offer more convenient all-in-one supplement options," he said.

Topical Treatments

For topical applications, the Royal Treatment Italian Pet Spa line includes a dry shampoo called Organic Chamomile and Shea Butter Instant Dry Bath Powder with chamomile and shea butter as the key ingredients. It is suited to clean dirty spots, ideal for in-between professional grooming sessions. It also is suitable for elderly dogs, or those recovering from surgery and unable to get wet, as part of their grooming routine.

The line was previously exclusive to the Home Shopping Network but Royal Treatment is now focusing on building brand recognition with pet specialty retailers. The products are formulated in Italy and contain seven certified organic ingredients, namely shea butter, honey, virgin olive oil, oatmeal, coconut, chamomile and almond, according to the company website. The ingredients collectively are designed to brighten, soothe and moisturize a dog's sensitive and delicate skin, creating a silky, glossy

and shiny coat.

"I couldn't get any manufacturer to supply me with all seven ingredients in this country. That's why I went to Italy to get it made," explained Prince Lorenzo Borghese, founder and president of Royal Treatment.

"Pet parents recognize that yogurt and probiotics have the same benefits for pets as they do for people."

- Dale Mertz

The Showsheen Hot Spot Spray from W.F. Young contains chloroxylenol, a broad spectrum antimicrobial, as the active ingredient for controlling bacterial and fungal skin conditions.

"It also contains diluted tea tree oil, which has been used traditionally as a human remedy to help heal skin conditions," said Kenneth Oh, general manager of W.F. Young's pet care division.

Healthy Hydration

Apart from essential fatty acids and nutritional supplements, proper hydration is crucial to keeping the skin healthy while supporting a glossy, shiny coat.

"Very often, dogs, as with people, do not drink the amount of fluids that they essentially need to stay well hydrated,"

said Greg Olson, a principal of River City Pet Products, which manufactures Rehydrate Active Hydration tablets.

"The effervescent tablets dissolve into a dog's drinking water to create an isotonic solution that mimics the ion levels found in the blood stream. It rebalances the system referred to as fluid osmolality," added Olson.

The target market for the hydration tablets, which are infused with electrolytes, vitamins and minerals, are dogs that walk, hike, run or jog with their owners, as well as working dogs. However, all dogs can benefit from proper hydration.

The finishing touch to a healthy coat and skin is proper grooming, and the Andis Co. has recently released a new line of Premium pet grooming tools. While billed as professional grooming tools, they are designed for home grooming as well. The range of products includes a deshedding tool with specially designed curved teeth to help avoid scratching the skin, and a two-sided brush featuring pins on one side to loosen tangled hair and fine bristles on the other to promote a shiny finish.

All of these products for canine skin and coats will keep dogs healthy inside and out – and looking their best, too.

DE-STRESSING DOGS

New products beat canine stress in a variety of ways.

Canine behavioral issues, usually initiated by stress and anxiety, are problems that many dog owners face on a daily basis. To make matters worse, the situation on the home front is often exacerbated by boredom.

Veterinary behaviorists such as Nicholas Dodman, section head and program director of the Animal Behavior Department of Clinical Sciences at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, endorse using swaddling wraps – vest-like cloaks that apply lateral pressure and are shown to be comforting for

some pets. One well-known brand, the ThunderShirt from ThunderWorks, has an 80 percent success rate as reported by thousands of families, veterinarians and trainers, according to the company website.

This category aimed at calming pets' anxieties is growing beyond more traditional clothing items and plug-in diffusers and sprays to include a variety of chews, doggie teas and toys infused with essential oils, and even



a hemp supplement for unnerved animals.

CannaVet is a fully organic hemp supplement for pets that was developed and manufactured by veterinarians.

"CannaVet comes in capsules and flavored chews and is suggested as a calmativie for pets suffering from restlessness and as an aid in end-of-life comfort and care," said Sarah Brandon, DVM, a co-founder of the company.

Calming from Pet Naturals of Vermont is a fish-shaped supplemental chew that contains a colostrum calming complex, as well as L-theanine and thiamine (Vitamin B1) designed to alleviate canine stress-related behavior.

"When dogs cannot adapt to stress, it can lead to anxiety, nervousness, hyperactivity, excess barking, abnormal urine marking, trembling or shivering, and destructive or aggressive behavior," said Pet Naturals' strategic brand manager, Sara Phillips.

"We prefer to call them supplements and not treats," Phillips added. "And the product is also available in a liquid form."

Rescue Remedy, a natural calming agent containing five flower essences, was formulated for humans by Dr. Edward Bach in England more than 75 years ago and is now available for pets branded as Nelson's Rescue Remedy. The product it is versatile enough to be rubbed directly onto a pet's ear, nose or paw, or added to the water, food bowl or treats.

The Pet Health People's Licks line of supplements includes Zen, a holistic calming remedy for dogs designed for on-paw application or introduction to water or food.

"The calming effect kicks in after 30 minutes," said Amy Paris, founder and CEO of the company. "And the effects can last up between four to six hours."

Another original product in this category is a stress-calming kit from Calm My Pet that offers a relaxing music CD along with a calming spray. The kit also includes a pet pendant, which, according to the company's founder and formulator Dr. Pamela Fisher, DVM, "is designed with a special electro-magnetic frequency

protection bead and gemstones to balance, protect and help pets feel calmer."

"When dogs cannot adapt to stress, it can lead to anxiety, nervousness and destructive or aggressive behavior."

- Sara Phillips.

Smounds is a dog toy infused with essential oils marketed as a pet anxiety solution from Aromadog. The chew

toy is infused with a calming blend of aromatherapy oils that are released as the dog chews and plays.

Other strategies used to combat pet anxiety include filling dog puzzle games and balls with calming chew treats. In addition to the variety of proprietary blends in calming treats and supplements, the toys themselves offer dogs both mental and physical stimulation, keeping them engaged and thus reducing boredom and stress. anxiety when they are left alone.

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Pet Age

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

New diet and exercise options fight feline obesity.

More than 57 percent of cats are overweight and nearly 27 percent are clinically obese, according to a 2013 survey by the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention. Sadly, those statistics appear to be on the rise.

With pets, as with people, a combination of diet and exercise is the proper way to address the problem, and pet product manufacturers are lending their support with healthy options.

Weighing Options

Weight issues also lead to feline diabetes. Recently, the Glycemic Research Institute certified the Dry Dinners for Cats from Spring Naturals as low glycemic and suitable to diabetic pets.

"Receiving such approval from this influential organization is very gratifying," said Rob Cadenhead, vice president of sales and marketing for Spring Naturals. "But it's especially good news for parents of older and overweight cats."

"Cat foods with a high glycemic index lead to elevated blood glucose levels," Cadenhead added. "This in turn can increase the risk of epilepsy, hypothyroidism, allergies, yeast infections, cancer and diabetes. Diets formulated with low glycemic ingredients are digested slower than high glycemic foods, allowing all of the nutrients to be properly absorbed. When food is digested slower and the nutrients are properly absorbed, pets will remain fuller longer which helps maintain weight control."

The company's dry formulas certified as low glycemic and diabetic friendly are the Grain Free Turkey Dinner, Grain Free Turkey & Salmon Dinner, Grain Free Chicken Dinner, Grain Free Tuna & Chicken Dinner and Grain Free Tuna Dinner.

The new feline Holistic Select Natural Pet Food diet line from Wellpet also has a weight management focus. The Holistic Select Indoor Health/Weight Control Turkey, Chicken and Herring Meals are dry cat food recipes that have

30 percent less fat and higher fiber than the traditional adult health chicken meal recipe to support indoor cats' less active lifestyles.

"They also contain our proprietary Digestive Health Support System, which includes active probiotics, healthy fiber and digestive enzymes," explained Chanda D. Leary-Coutu, senior marketing communications manager for Wellpet. "As a result, our feline companions will look and feel healthy from the inside out."

Within the Hill's Pet Nutrition Ideal Balance product line, an ideal choice for weight reduction and management for cats is the Slim & Healthy Natural Chicken & Peas Recipe adult cat food.

This product is designed to burn calorie and show signs of weight loss within a 10-week period.

"Fresh chicken is the first ingredient which helps maintain muscle mass for a slimmer pet," said Brian McCall, the company's marketing director for the Ideal Balance line. "Yellow peas provide energy for active play, while natural fiber from carrots and peas keeps pets feeling full and satisfied. The product also has no corn, wheat, or soy, artificial colors, flavors or preservatives. It's also available in cans," he said.

Encouraging Exercise

Keeping overweight cats active can be a challenge. Pet owners are encouraging exercise by engaging their felines in wand games, and feline puzzle toys and balls are gaining popularity because they make cats work for their food and simultaneously keep them active.

Petsafe has a selection of treat balls such as its Slim-Cat Cat Food Dispenser. Products such as the

pronged feeder from The Company of Animals, various puzzles from the Nina Ottosson line and maze-styled feeders from Outward Hound offer mental and physical exercise simultaneously to cats willing to work for their meal.

One of the biggest issues facing pet

Puzzle toys and balls are gaining popularity because they make cats work for their food and simultaneously keep them active.

owners of both single and multiple cats is calculating the amount of food each pet eats.

The new Wireless Whiskers smart feeder from the Encaya Corp. measures and records how much each pet eats and can be programmed to accommodate up to eight pets. A lightweight tag worn on the collar allows the pet to access the food bowl, and when a particular pet has reached its daily allowance, the bowl will not open.



A GOOD SCRATCH

Cat scratchers are important for feline wellbeing.

Cats resort to scratching surfaces for a variety of reasons: to sharpen their claws, to mark their territory, to reduce stress and to exercise. It's a completely normal, instinctive feline behavior. They will scratch their claws on anything that feels good, which is why there are so many innovative scratching choices available to deflect felines away from their owners' favorite chairs.

Petstages recently incorporated a full line of scratchers within their new Environment line. The company's top-selling scratch items include large scratchers that suit both single- and multi-cat households.

"The EmeryCat Scratcher uses a patented process that infuses corrugate with a natural sand coating. Its abrasive surface helps groom nails and enhances nail health," explained Jennifer Crotty, the company's director of marketing.

"The Easy Life Hammock & Scratcher and the Fold Away Scratching Tunnel are successful scratchers because they satisfy multiple needs for more than one cat," Crotty added. "They offer cats a place to scratch and mark their territory, as well as a place to rest or hide. The Easy Life Hammock has a unique, interlocking 'X' design that can be taken apart and stored when not in use. Its extra thick, corrugate panels help support kitty as she rests and provide ample scratching surface. The Fold Away Tunnel also provides sturdy corrugate sides for stretching and scratching and a cozy spot to hide and rest with a soft, flannel floor for comfort."

With the overall acceptance of a cat's scratching needs, manufacturers are accommodating consumers by offering stylish shapes that make scratchers a decorative feature in the home, as the trend is to have more than one in different rooms.

The scratchers from the new kathy ireland Loved Ones line have been specially designed as home décor accents.

"These pieces have been created with

the same sense of stylish and functional design that you will find throughout the kathy ireland Loved Ones line," said Kevin Fick, CEO of Worldwide, which produces the line. "Further, all cat furniture scratchers feature similar triangu-

lar bases so that the pieces can be fitted together to create the ultimate feline playground. They all use the same dark stain and muted fabrics, so they coordinate with each other and with all types of interior styles."



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The new Vesper line of feline furniture from Rolf C. Hagen won accolades at the recent Global Pet Expo in Orlando, Fla. It took second place in the Cat Category of the New Products Showcase. The line is described on the company website as “elegant yet practical cat furniture that satisfies the daily activity needs of fussy felines and the aesthetic tastes of cat lovers.”

The pieces are available in dark wood and cherry-colored hues and feature cubby caves for snoozing, padded platforms for relaxing and scratch zones made from rattan and banana leaves.

It's also important to address a cat's preference to scratch vertically or horizontally, according to Kevin Krueger, a partner at PetFusion. The company's new-

est large triangular scratcher stands 2 feet tall in its vertical position and can also be placed at a different angle to accommodate horizontal scratching felines.

A company fast expanding its presence in pet specialty stores nationwide is Pet Tree Houses, based in Sanford, Fla. The company bills itself as “Purveyors of Natural Feline Fun.” Its cat tree house designs incorporate natural bark on different height levels along with sisal, which is proving to be another firm favorite in feline scratching surfaces. The numerous designs feature branches of silk leaves which, while offering cats an opportunity to play hide and seek indoors, also add a pleasant decorative touch.

Performing natural scratching behavior helps cats stay mentally and physical-



ly healthy. These products allow cats to do this in owner-acceptable ways.

JUST KEEP SWIMMING

Quality food and the right habitat are key to fish health.

The fish world, like other pet categories, is following the human trend toward healthier food and treat options. There is a greater variety of food types and products enhanced with nutritional supplements.

Food flakes remain the most popular type of fish food purchased, according to the 2015-2016 National Pet Owners Survey published by the American Pet Products Association.

Baby boomer-age fish owners primarily use flaked foods, according to the survey, while Generation Y-age fish owners bought more pellet food. Further, saltwater fish owners are the most adventurous in the fish food aisle, purchasing a variety of food types including freeze dried, live food and frozen food.

Cobalt Aquatics' line of frozen foods includes CA Mysis shrimp gathered from Canadian glacier lakes. With a natural gut load of phytoplankton and other amino acids, these shrimp are further enhanced with vitamins to create a highly nutritious food option. The food cubes are flash frozen to preserve freshness and nutritional value. They are also triple sterilized to eliminate harmful

bacteria and parasites.

Eheim Foods' latest line of flaked food has optimum ratios of proteins and fats, which produces a minimal amount of indigestible material, according to Jenny Georgiopoulos, a company spokesperson.

“When food is easier to digest, there is less excreta and thus the water is less polluted and less clouded,” she said.

Fish enthusiasts who are transitioning from beginner status to more serious hobbyist will need to make quality choices in upgraded aquarium acces-



sories. These accessories promote the health of the aquarium inhabitants. The surest way to keep fish, corals and other aquatic pets healthy is to provide a clean, species-appropriate habitat. This need for in-tank extras is information you can use to educate customers on why they should purchase various aquatic gadgets.

The full-featured Fluval Premium Aquarium Kit from Rolf C. Hagen Inc. can make such a transition easier. The kit includes a low-profile LED light that generates 630 Lumens and 8,000K and is highly suited to planted aquariums. A second light strip may be added for customized or enhanced viewing. A submersible M heater features shock-resistant glass and mirror technology that creates an inconspicuous introduction the layout. The kit consumes little electricity and offers easy set-up suited to

both beginners and advanced owners.

The new Mag-Float magnet aquarium cleaner from Gulfstream Tropical Aquarium has a gripper-shaped outer design for confident maneuvering and

Fish hobbyists run the gamut from young children enjoying their "starter pet" in a fish bowl to more serious enthusiasts with an exotic array of tropical species. But irrespective of the type of owner, when it comes to food and accessories, convenience and quality are paramount.

a scraper attached to the large in-water glass cleaner to keep algae under

control and maintain a pristine water environment.

The lifestyle aquatics brand Aquatop recently introduced Clear Magic, a water clarification additive that can be used in both fresh- and saltwater aquariums. The company's new Nitro-Boost product is designed to accelerate the nitrogen cycles in new aquariums, and naturally reduces ammonia and nitrite to create a safe and healthy environment.

Fish ownership has steadily been on the rise in recent years and, of the 79.7 pet owning households in this country, 12.3 million own freshwater fish while 1.3 million own saltwater fish. The latest technology and foods combined are designed to keep them healthy and thus low maintenance in both home and office environments.

SCALES, TAILS AND TERRANIUM SALES

Habitats, accessories and supplements help owners keep herps healthy.

The latest innovative designs in terrariums and advancements in related technology are yielding significant improvements in the health and general wellbeing of reptile and amphibian occupants.

Healthy Habitats

Rolf C. Hagen Inc.'s new Exo Terra Habisphere is a compact glass terrarium designed for desktops or countertops. It features a curved front window that offers an enhanced view of the terrarium interior to better highlight its inhabitants, which may include ground-dwelling geckos, other small lizards and frogs.

"The unit has an integrated, energy-efficient Day and Night light that's controlled by a simple touch button," explained Damian Hall, senior marketing manager for Rolf C. Hagen Inc. USA. "It also has a top lid for easy access to your pet and a removable back panel for convenient maintenance, and is ideal for small ground-dwelling and

IS YOUR PET ITCHING OR SHEDDING?

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burrowing lizards, small ground-dwelling geckos, ground-dwelling or aquatic frogs, newts, salamanders, toads as well as many different species of invertebrates.”

A key aesthetic feature is a stunning natural photographic background. However, consumers can customize their own background using photographs from their own photo library via the company's website.

The new Exo Terra Infrared Thermometer is a high-tech pocket tool designed to measure the temperature of a pet reptile's body and monitor various locations in their habitat, from basking rocks to the leaf-covered corners of their terrarium.

Pitch dark or bright lighting during late night hours are disorienting settings for pet reptiles and amphibians. Exo Terra's new Full Moon light is designed to simulate natural moonlight in terrariums and encourage nighttime foraging and mating behaviors.

The soft light mimics a moonlight shimmer, enabling pets to be observed without disturbing their nocturnal behavior. The low heat emission of the Full Moon also simulates a natural temperature drop inside terrariums.

Supplements and More

Timberline's Original Reptile Lunch Box contains up to 36 fresh crickets and is intended to be an easy-to-store “take-out” for herptile feedings.

“There is no need to feed or water them,” said Bobby Blood, Timberline's

director of sales, of the food source. “Reptile lunch box crickets are maintenance free and rely on both food and water source inside the box. It's simply a matter of shaking out crickets when needed.”

Because Timberline has a comprehensive line of products in its Vita-Bugs feeder insect line, it has produced a useful Who Eats What chart to graphically educate both store employees and consumers about the many live food choices available to add variety to their diet and keep them healthy.

Supplemental vitamins and minerals often are key to herp health. Rep-Cal Research Labs makes several vitamin and mineral supplements, including Herptivite Multivitamin and calcium supplements with and without vitamin D. According to the company website, Herptivite contains vitamin A in the form of beta carotene, posing much less risk of an overdose than regular vitamin A.

Fluker Farms also offers a complete line of reptile and amphibian supplements. Its supplements include Repta-Vitamin powder, Fluker's Liquid Vitamin and Fluker's Calcium with Vitamin D3.

The company also offers Repta Boost to provide additional calories

and nutrition to recently acquired animals, breeding females and convalescing herps.

Vetericyn Plus's new Reptile Wound & Skin Care is the latest addition to its range of skin care solutions. The topical application is nontoxic and designed to treat issues such wounds resulting from heat lamp burn and various skin abrasions and irritations. It contains no alcohol, steroids or antibiotics and is designed to treat all reptile skin types.

With all these products available that promote herp health, it's never been easier for keepers to succeed with reptiles and amphibians.



HAPPY BIRD, HEALTHY BIRD

Mental and physical health goes wing-in-wing for pet birds.

Unlike other pet categories such as dog and cat, where many products are fun or functional but don't necessarily have an overall general health component, almost everything in the avian product sphere contributes to promoting birds' wellbeing. That includes the shape of the cage, the perches, toys, nutrition in the form of both food and treats, and even stress-free

cage maintenance options.

Cage Sweet Cage

Cage styles, whether they are traditional rectangles, dome-topped or play-top designs, now reflect an emphasis on easy cage maintenance such as large access doors, better access to food and water bowls and slide-out litter trays or built-in seed guards. These upgraded

cage designs help prevent detritus from getting caught in hard, out-of-reach nooks and crannies.

Rolf C. Hagen's new Living World Aves Bird Cage includes a removable tray that fits into a patented overlapping base design, ensuring a convenient and mess-free cleaning.

“Cleanliness is vital in keeping a companion bird healthy and happy,”

said Melanie Allen, avian product specialist for Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp.

"If a cage is too complicated to clean, it won't get cleaned properly. And, when proper husbandry suffers, so does the bird," Allen explained. "There are also multiple feeding doors for easy access to the food and water receptacles. It's designed to be a great living space for finches, budgies and canaries, and can also be used as a sleeping cage for cockatiels, lovebirds and parrotlets. They can be assembled in minutes and require no tools."

The Living World Pluma Bird Cage is being marketed as a pet bird retreat, a place to rest during downtime. It can also be used as a temporary home or a starter home for weaning and fledgling budgies, finches and canaries.

"Many avian caretakers find having a night cage or retreat cage and a day cage essential for keeping their companion bird happy," said Allen. "The two-cage system is beneficial when the pet bird, upon maturity, starts to display aggressive behavior associated with hormones. This behavior often becomes a problem for caretakers with single-cage-dwelling birds as the bird begins to defend his cage as his territory. When a two-cage system is in place, the versatile environment is a sure-fire way to curtail this natural instinct."

A night or retreat cage is generally small and is placed in a quiet place in the home so that the bird can rest without stimulation from normal household activity. It should contain basic food and a comfortable perch but no stimulating accessories. A day cage typically should be larger and include an assortment of enrichment features.

Accessorizing Avian Health

Standard wooden perches are making way for more innovative shapes and natural materials, all designed to promote comfort and foot health.

Chicago-based Prevue Pet Products' line of Y-shaped natural perches made from sustainable arabica wood are available in multiple siz-

es and can be easily bolted in place with the relevant hardware. Perches made from Lima root can double as a hanging toy. Naturally shed antlers, apart from being popular dog chews, are also being marketed as attractive cage perches from companies such as Choice Wise in Santa Cruz, Calif. and by Scout and Zoe's in Anderson, Ind.

"Double-door and single-door bird havens from Kozy Pet Products sell well as a practical sleeping space, as well as a play tent," said Mary Wyld, president of online pet bird supplies wholesaler Wyld's Wingdom, which distributes the line. "The foraging toys as well as the new hanging toys from Super Bird Creations have a lovely Mexican, festive feel about them in terms of design and color."

A variety of the toys are also featured on Super Bird Creations' Ultimate Bizzy Bird Center and grass-matted activity walls to keep birds busy and mentally stimulated.

"Cleanliness is vital in keeping a companion bird healthy and happy."

- Melanie Allen

Eating Like a Bird

A popular crossover trend from the dog and cat space, bird appetizers now are being featured in the bird food aisle. The Higgins Group has just added such a range of microwavable bird appetizers to its Worldly Cuisines line of just-add-boiling-water "cookable" bird foods. These items infuse the flavors of nuts, fruits and grains from around the world, giving birds a nutritious variety of food options.

"There are six flavors, offering birds lots of variety," said Dean Reyes, executive vice president and director of marketing and sales for the company.

"Cuisines are meant to be either served alone or mix in or on top of the companion bird's current food (whether seed or pellets). It's great for finicky eaters and provides soft texture and variety to any bird's current diet," he said.



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Songbirds

Janet Marlow, founder and CEO of Pet Acoustics, a Washington Depot, Conn.-based company that produces Bluetooth speakers pre-loaded with species-specific music for cats, dogs, horses and birds, said that while bird owners are very cognizant of ensuring their birds have the right cages, food and toys, they often overlook their birds' audio and general living environment within the home.

"Our pet birds are nature's musicians and thrive in community," said Marlow. "They can't flourish in a home environment that is

predominantly silent."

Thus Marlow, who has a professional music background, has compiled 90 minutes of original bird-friendly music and nature and songbird sounds to keep birds company on what she calls her "avian iPods," which are sold with a USB charging cable and have a battery that lasts five to 10 hours.

Marlow said her company has had positive feedback from bird owners whose birds were screaming incessantly, feather picking and self-mutilating as a result of boredom before they introduced the product.



CRITTER CARE

New choices in housing, bedding, diets and more promote small animal health.

Small animals are considered starter pets in many households with small children. This status makes them no less deserving of proper care than cats and dogs. The key to a mutually beneficial experience is to not only keep the animals healthy but to ensure that these young owners remain properly engaged, encouraging them to evolve into the next generation of committed general pet owners.

Fortunately, there is a broad range of health and wellness products available to promote both the wellbeing of the animal and the interest of its owner.

The Next Level

Multi-level housing has surged in popularity. This type of housing encourages small pets to move around, resulting in higher activity levels and reduced chance of obesity.

Ware Manufacturing Inc.'s Critter Universe AvaTower for hamsters and gerbils is typical of the industry's emerging multi-color trend. The cage, which universally connects to all tubular cage systems, features a tiered design that can be likened to a child's dollhouse in that it is colorful in presentation and compartmentalized for

convenience. It offers the occupants multi-story space that can be divided for food storage, a den and exercise area, a designated place for bodily discharge, and plenty of space that allows the small animals to cultivate burrowing instincts. The cage also has a pull-out tray for easy cleaning.

The multi-story layout also applies in habitats for larger critters such as guinea pigs, ferrets and rabbits.

"Our latest cages also have a scented base that lasts a year and can be refreshed with a spray to ensure the environment remains odor-free," said Brian Kindl, vice president for key accounts for Ware.

Multi-story designs are transitioning to outdoor habitats as well. Adding vertical tiers increases the home space for the animal and improves their general physical wellbeing by allowing more room for exercise.

Hiding Is Healthy

Other new trends include ceramic privacy hideouts in various fun shapes and sizes such as giant cupcakes, hamburgers and multi-colored shoes. They are easy to keep clean as they are dishwasher safe.

At the recent Global Pet Expo in Orlando, Fla., Marshall Pet Products won recognition for its small animal bear rug, an interactive and cozy hangout for small pets. Shaped like a traditional bearskin rug, it offers critters openings to explore and a place to burrow and snooze. It is machine washable.

Their Daily Hay

F.M. Brown's Sons Inc. has introduced a new hay product for rabbits, guinea pigs and chinchillas called Tropical Carnival Natural Timothy Hay.

"It's a softer, leafier hay that satisfies the need to chew and forage," explained Sue Brown, senior vice president of sales and marketing at F.M. Brown and a fifth-generation member of the family business. "Our hay is harvested at the peak of maturity so that there is a proper seed head and stem to leaf ratio."

Another new product is the Tropical Carnival Natural Timothy Hay Cravings, which contains flaked corn and peas, all-natural oat sprays and dried real fruit and vegetables such as sweet potato, chunky papaya and cranberries.

Cats are not the only animals with hairball issues – other small animals also are susceptible. Marshall Pet

Products' line of healthcare offerings includes Ferret Lax Chews, a soft, bacon-flavored functional treat to reduce hairball issues in ferrets.

The lure of bacon flavor also is present in the company's Furo-Vite chews, a new daily vitamin boost product for ferrets that contains 22 vitamins and minerals.

"The daily vitamin is designed to boost appetite and combat seasonal weight-loss issues as well as promoting a shiny coat and healthy skin," said Linda Cope, the company's global marketing manager.

Healthy Sleep

The importance of appropriate bedding to the general health and welfare of all small animals should not be underestimated.

"After years of research, we have recognized the need for species-specific bedding," said Jim Gorrell, carefresh brand manager at Healthy Pet headquartered in Ferndale, Wash.

Consequently, the company has rebranded its bedding to produce three varieties, namely carefresh Complete, carefresh Custom hamster and gerbil bedding and carefresh Custom rabbit

and guinea pig bedding. All feature the company's new, proprietary Odor Stop Formula to provide 10 days of odor control.

The rebranding includes a new logo and packaging designed to help pet specialty retailers better merchandise the product line, and make it easier for pet owners to address their small animals' individual needs in-store.

"It's also important to avoid assuming small-animal owners only want what is the cheapest product on the market," added Gorrell. "These consumers love their small pets like children and actually want products that cater to their pets' general health and perform well. This, along with educated advice, is what is going to keep small-animal consumers coming back to a specific pet specialty store."



ROOM TO GROW

Renew Biomass changes the game in pet food fibers by going all-natural and locally grown.

By Tom Mazorlig

Pet Age spoke with Renew Biomass chief operating officer Dustin Dover and director of research and development Loren Boender about the company's commitment to providing a wholesome alternative fiber and supporting American farmers.

Tom Mazorlig: Can you tell me about the history of Renew Biomass?

Dustin Dover: "The company was founded by a Midwest farmer-owned cooperative in 2011, which was later acquired by Renew Biomass. The intent of the startup was to provide an

additional cash crop for farmers that would grow on marginal or underutilized ground. Our vertically integrated system allows Renew Biomass to work alongside our farmers from soil preparation and planting all the way through harvest and transportation. This enables us to produce a product with consistency, day after day, at our manufacturing facility in Aurora, Mo."

Tom: Can you tell me about the Miscanthus plant, the source of M-Fiber?

Loren Boender: "Miscanthus gi-

ganteus is a C4 perennial crop grown by local farmers in the Midwest. Miscanthus is propagated by rhizomes. In the spring, growth is initiated from buds on the rhizomes. A mature stand of Miscanthus can grow 10-15 feet in height. In the late fall the plant stops growth and begins to go dormant, this process is referred to as senescence. Harvest is typically delayed until winter or early spring to allow nutrients to move back into the rhizomes for use by the plant the following growing season."

Tom: What makes M-Fiber such a good choice for pet foods?

Loren: "It is a sustainable, non-chemically produced fiber ingredient grown by local farmers and manufactured in the U.S.A. In a time when consumers are demanding human grade ingredients in their pet food products, M-Fiber makes the most sense because it is all-natural, non-GMO, grain free and gluten free."

Tom: Your product is made in the USA. Why is it important for Renew Biomass to work with American farmers?

Dustin: "Renew Biomass is dedicated to rural America. The knowledge our local farmers bring to the partnership has been invaluable in establishing Miscanthus. Working together to bring in a new cash crop to the rural landscape creates jobs and keeps dollars at home. By working in conjunction with local farmers we are able to ensure the integrity of our product every step of the way."

Loren: "American farmers lead the world in agricultural innovation. They

are the cornerstone of a safe food supply chain. That's why we choose to work closely with local farmers in our community."

Tom: What's a typical day like for Renew Biomass?

Dustin: "At Renew Biomass we are dedicated to offering a cost competitive all-natural alternative

to other fiber ingredients on the market today. Bringing our product to market requires countless hours of work to educate potential buyers about the cost-saving benefits of M-Fiber."

Loren: "We are committed to research and development. We continuously work with leading universities to prove the benefits of Miscanthus as a fiber isolate."

Tom: What are the future plans for Renew Biomass?

Dustin: "At Renew Biomass we are dedicated to food safety and healthy alternatives in all markets."

Loren: "We are currently in the process of becoming Kosher and Halal certified as we look toward the human food market."



Dustin Dover



Loren Boender



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