

Pet Age

A man in a blue shirt and jeans is holding a yellow ball, standing in a grassy field. In the foreground, the back of a Weimaraner dog's head is visible, looking towards the man. The dog is wearing a black collar with red embroidery.

Nov. 2015

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Pet Age

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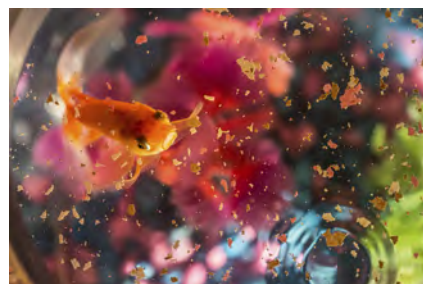
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Publisher's Letter



Put Your Best Paw Forward

It's never too early to start thinking about 2016.

It may still seem distant, but 2016 is only two short months ahead. Devoting some time now to strategize before the stresses of holiday retail set in can be a huge help a little down the road.

Think of the New Year as the perfect opportunity to make adjustments. Whether the changes you decide to enact are big or small, you're likely to keep regular customers interested while grabbing the attention of new ones in the process.

Take a look at the trends that will be big in the near future before you try out new tactics. Pets are living longer than ever as a result of better nutrition and healthcare. Take this into consideration and place orders for some of the many new products that cater specifically to seniors and their unique needs.

Additionally, choosy shoppers increasingly like to know that their purchases are green choices. If you carve out a special section for inventory that is made from organic, sustainable, or all-natural materials, they will have no problem picking out treats, toys and accessories that are good for their pets and the planet.

More pet owners are traveling with their furry companions, so provide plenty of items to make the process simpler

and more enjoyable. Calming dietary supplements, warm jackets and sweaters, car safety add-ons and portable playthings can be placed together to streamline shopping trips for those customers on-the-go.

Simply shifting the placement of your stock is one of the easiest ways to alter your store's look and feel. A quick rotation can swing sales, but calculated moves based on studies of foot traffic and quantities can have an even greater effect. If you're feeling inspired, you might go so far as to change your entire store's layout. For more tips about how merchandising can help you make money, turn to "Maximize Profits with Retail Displays."

Let the New Year bring on a new you. But first, be sure to step back and build a plan that helps you and your customers get exactly what you want in 2016. Then watch your profits pick up.

You can thank me later!

Craig Rexford

Publisher

craigr@petage.com



Pet Age

VICE PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

Craig M. Rexford
craigr@petage.com
732-246-5709

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Ariyana Edmond
ariyanae@petage.com
323-868-5038

Becky Graziano
beckyg@petage.com
732-246-5706

Lorena M. Leggett
lorenal@petage.com
312-218-8557

Ric Rosenbaum
ricr@petage.com
914-643-1193

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Tom Mazorlig
tomm@petage.com
732-246-5734

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Nicole Gifford
nicoleg@petage.com
732-246-5739

COPY EDITOR

Emily Bader

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Karen M. Alley, Steven Appelbaum, Andy Black, Stephanie Braun, Dan Calabrese, Sarah Julian, John Mack, Stacy Mantle, Erik J. Martin, Maggie Marton, Joe Olenick, Sandy Robins, RD Webster

ART DIRECTOR

Christopher DeCello

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Damon Cassaro

WEB SERVICES

Joe Barry

BUSINESS MANAGER

AnnMarie Karczmil

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Jessica Perry

PUBLISHED BY JOURNAL MULTIMEDIA

David A. Schankweiler, CEO
Lawrence M. Kluger, President

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: petage@journalmultimedia.com

TO SUBSCRIBE VISIT: www.petage.com

FOR LIST RENTALS:

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Pet Age



Editor's Letter



Here Before You Know It

The busy holiday season is just around the corner. Are you ready?

November is always a busy month for the pet industry but also for life in general. Many of us will have leaves to rake and other outdoor activities to get done before winter sets in. Then there are the holidays on the horizon. It's the start of the season for making lists and checking them twice.

For the brick and mortar pet retailers, the big day is coming soon. Black Friday will be upon us before you know it. There will be no time to indulge in post-Thanksgiving sluggishness for retailers. Black Friday and the following weekend is a make-or-break time for many stores, and pet retail is no exception.

Is your store ready? Do you have all the merchandise you think you will need? Is it priced low enough to be extra enticing? Now's the time to get the last minute orders in. If you don't have an item a customer wants, he or she will go elsewhere. Think of the special holiday products your customers may want, but you also need to keep fully stocked on the staples.

Don't forget that many owners treat their pets as family members and that means giving gifts to their pets. Consider creating a pet stocking stuffer area with small items, such as toys, treats and chews. While gift giving is most common for dogs and cats, it's becoming

more popular for small animals, birds and even reptiles and fish.

Have you scheduled enough employees for Black Friday weekend? What about the rest of the holiday season? If you don't have enough personnel to man the registers and help customers on the floor, those customers will get frustrated and leave. I know nothing drives me up the wall when I'm shopping like there being no one on the floor to answer my question or show me an item. Having enough staff on hand for the holiday rush is definitely to your store's advantage.

And don't forget about Cyber Monday. If you have an e-commerce site, take advantage of all the bargain hunters who will be online in force. Even if you don't, it would be a good idea to put promotions up on Facebook, out on Twitter or on your website.

The last thing I'd encourage you to remember as you gear up for the holidays is to take time for yourself. It's all too easy to get caught up in the rush and forget to relax and enjoy this season. Make sure you spend a little time recharging yourself mentally and physically by doing something you enjoy and spending time with friends and family – both the human and nonhuman ones.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Tom Mazorlig
Editor

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FAVORITE

1



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Andis Groomer
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Thanks for the shout-out, @PetAgeMag! Take a look at our Xplorer Large Animal Clipper feature: bit.ly/1jbNE5V

FAVORITE

1



1:05 PM - 27 Sep 2015



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This is a great article on natural shampoos & conditioners for pets from @petagemag
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Thanks @PetAgeMag for sharing this fun fact about frogs! Prince Charming appreciates it!



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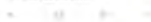
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Look for our Marblehead collection in the September issue of @PetAgeMag!
upcountryinc.com/our-collection ... Thanks Pet Age!



10:44 AM - 25 Sep 2015



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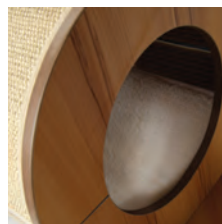
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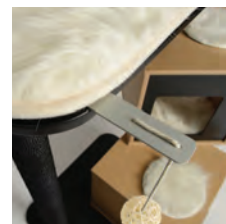
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Petco Explores Merger With PetSmart

Petco Holdings, Inc. is exploring the possibility of being acquired by PetSmart Inc., according to reporting by Reuters. Such a merger would account for 30 percent of U.S. pet specialty supply stores.

A regulatory filing revealed in January that PetSmart decided against a deal with Petco last year because it may not have received antitrust clearance and because the company did not want to disclose confidential information to Petco, its biggest competitor. Instead, PetSmart was sold to

a buyout consortium led by BC Partners Ltd for \$8.7 billion, including debt.

Petco's private equity owners, TPG Capital LP and Leonard Green & Partners L.P., registered the company for an initial public offering last month that could value it at between \$5 billion and \$6 billion, including debt.

They are simultaneously exploring an outright sale of Petco, and are in talks with several private equity firms, including Apollo Global Management LLC and Bain Capital LLC, about such a deal.

TPG and Leonard Green have now started informal talks with PetSmart in the hope of fetching a higher price for Petco, Reuters' sources said. According to those sources, there is no certainty that a deal between the two will be reached.

BC Partners' consortium closed on its acquisition of PetSmart last March. Its ability to integrate Petco so soon after that deal is now seen by the two companies as a bigger concern than potential antitrust hurdles, according to one of the sources.

HABRI Announces 2015 Research Grants

The Human Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) Foundation announced funding for seven research grants in 2015, totaling more than \$225,000 dollars.

Focused on child development, mental health and healthy aging, these grants will advance scientific understanding of the human-animal bond and its impact on human health.

HABRI has funded more than half a million dollars in innovative research projects to scientifically document the health benefits of companion animals.

"As one of the organization's found-

ers, I am proud of how far we have come in only a few years," said Bob Vetere, president and CEO of the American Pet Products Association and president of the HABRI Board of Trustees. "We can put science behind what many of us believe – if we take good care of our pets, they will take good care of us."

HABRI's annual grant program is managed in partnership with the Morris Animal Foundation, a nonprofit organization that invests in science that advances knowledge and improves health for companion animals, horses and wildlife.

Proposals were evaluated on study design, investigator capabilities, adequacy of facilities, cost effectiveness of budget and potential for impact on the way these areas of interest are diagnosed, treated, or otherwise understood by an independent Scientific Advisory Board comprised of experts in the field.

The HABRI Foundation also maintains the world's largest online library of human-animal bond information and informs the public about human-animal bond research and the beneficial role of companion animals in society.

Top Dog Kitchen Launches New Website, Celebrates Ninth Year

Top Dog Kitchen launched a new mobile-friendly website to optimize the shopping experience for their customers. The new website is www.topdogkitchen.com.

The site gives pet owners the ease and convenience of making purchases from an array of mobile devices or laptops. The website has all product offerings from "Naples' Own" Top Dog Kitchen available for purchase such as baked treats, grass-fed and grass-finished jerky,

spa products and antler chews. The site also has a blog series dedicated to holistic pet solutions.

"We have enhanced features on our site to accommodate the ever-changing needs and uses of mobile devices, which are increasingly gaining popularity over computers," said co-owner Frank Menchero. "A continuing strategy in our marketing goal is to capitalize on emerging technologies that enhance the pur-

chasing experience by making it faster and friendlier for our customers."

In addition, the company officially celebrated its ninth year in business as of July 4. Kathleen Menchero started the company in Aventura, Florida, to claim her "Independence Day" from the corporate world in 2006. Last year, Top Dog Kitchen expanded its business and moved into a new retail and production location in Naples, Fla.

Hagen Partners with Universal Pond Supply for Exclusive Distribution Deal

Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp. has announced a partnership with Universal Pond Supply that makes Universal the master distributor to independent pet retailers for Hagen's Laguna brand of pond supplies and equipment.

The companies will work in tandem to offer an extensive range of Laguna water gardening products to independent garden centers, pond supply stores, and pet supply stores nationwide.

Rolf C. Hagen Inc. is a leading in-

ternational manufacturer of pet care products. Its Laguna brand offers pond enthusiasts and water gardeners all the needed tools to make an outdoor oasis. With over 300 SKUs, Laguna offers extensive options to meet varied outdoor needs.

Universal Pond Supply is a national wholesale distributor of quality pond and water gardening supplies.

"Due to our long-standing history with Universal Pond Supply and their great reputation in the business, we are

happy to announce the company as our sole Laguna distributor to independent retailers," said Tony Hartian, VP of sales for Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp. "Our channels for and the availability of Laguna will expand due to Universal Pond Supply's vast retail relationships."

"Laguna is a top-quality, well-established brand that retailers and consumers love and trust. We are thrilled to expand our business with Hagen," said Dan Berg, general manager of Universal Pond Supply.

Soggy Doggy Expands Partnership with Phillips

Soggy Doggy Productions, LLC will expand their partnership with Phillips Pet Food & Supplies.

For over a year, Soggy Doggy and Phillips have worked together through PFX/Gardner on West Coast distribution. This new expanded partnership will bring the Soggy Doggy brand to customers throughout the states managed by Phillips nationwide.

"Phillips recognized that our brand

was the originator of innovative, yet practical 'wet dog solutions,' and we couldn't be more excited about what this expanded partnership will mean for our company and customers," said Joanna Rein, president of Soggy Doggy.

Soggy Doggy distribution in Kansas, Missouri and Texas will continue to be overseen by Bark to Basics, and sales in the Ohio Valley will still be

managed by Wholesome Pet.

The brand is most famous for award-winning products including the Soggy Doggy Doormat, Super Shammie, Slopmat, Super Snoozer and Slobber Swabber. Soggy Doggy's wet dog solutions are made of a super-absorbent and machine washable microfiber material that absorb up to five times more water and dirt than a typical cotton towel or standard doormat.

Good Deeds

Wellcoin Partners with Halo Pet Food to Feed Shelter Pets

Free fitness app Wellcoin has partnered with Halo, Purely for Pets to give meals to dogs and cats in shelters across the U.S.

Users of the app can help the cause by completing healthy activities like running, walking, and getting seven hours of sleep per night.

To help feed hungry shelter pets, people need to create an account on Wellcoin, earn Wellcoins by reporting their healthy activities and then redeem their Wellcoins for Halo pet food.

Members can generate a donation of 10 pet meals for just 1,000 Wellcoins – an amount that can be earned by logging healthy activities for just a few days.

"We are proud to be working with Halo to give back to the community in this way," said Glenn Laffel, MD, PhD, a Wellcoin founder.

The food is donated on their behalf to shelters including SPCA of Westchester County (Westchester, N.Y.), Humane Society of Central Oregon (Bend, Ore.), San Francisco Animal Care and

Control (San Francisco, Calif.), Arizona Animal Welfare League (Phoenix, Ariz.) or ASPCA (New York, N.Y.).

Up to 15,000 meals will be donated on behalf of Wellcoin members to feed hungry dogs and cats.

"We think Wellcoin has enormous potential as a tool that enhances charitable giving," said Laffel. "Not everyone can participate in charitable runs or walks that are held on specific days, but everyone does at least some healthy activities every day. Wellcoin can turn those healthy activities into donations."

Continued on p. 13

Bradley Caldwell Holds Annual Showstoppers Trade Show

Wholesale distributor Bradley Caldwell, Inc. hosted its annual Showstoppers Trade Show at Harrah's Waterfront Conference Center in Atlantic City.

Over 2,000 attendees had access to more than 400 vendor lines. The trade show offered low pricing, cash-back incentives, giveaways and ample opportunities to branch out into a new category with low risk.

Additionally, participants were able to attend a concert by Grammy-nominated country artist The Eli Young Band, held in Harrah's concert venue.

Headquartered in Pennsylvania, Bradley Caldwell, Inc. serves 16 states throughout the East Coast and is family owned and operated. It offers over 23,000 stocked products from top manufacturers in categories including pet,



home and lifestyle, pest control, tools and fencing, lawn, garden and pond, wild bird and wildlife, barn and veterinary supplies, and equine and livestock.

Movers and Shakers

Pet Palette Promotes Michael Dagne to President and COO

Michael Dagne, formerly director of operations for Pet Palette, will now serve as the company's president and chief operations officer.

Dagne will now oversee Pet Palette's marketing, sales, inventory management and warehouse operations.

Dagne joined Pet Palette, a Sykesville, Maryland specialty pet products

distributor, in April of 2015. Prior to Pet Palette, Dagne was with Moochie & Co., a chain of upscale retail pet stores that he founded in 2004.

"Since he joined our team, Michael has been instrumental to the day-to-day operations of Pet Palette," said Bruce Herwald, VMD and CEO of Winnie Co LLC, dba Pet Palette.

"It is his strong leadership skills and analysis that have helped us improve our sales and operations in 2015."

Launched in 2011, Pet Palette distributes more than 50 specialty brands nationally to mid-to-high end retailers in the pet, hardware, lawn and gift industries.

Continued on p. 14

Hartz Named One of Most Trusted Brands in America

Hartz has been named as the Most Trusted Brand in the pet category in the new Reader's Digest Trusted Brand Survey.

The survey of more than 4,500 Americans nationwide awarded the title of Reader's Digest Trusted Brand to winners in 40 product categories, including pet brand. These are findings from an Ipsos Connect study conducted for Reader's Digest from March 5 to March 20, 2015. For the survey, a sample of 4,503 U.S. adults was interviewed online. More information about the Trusted Brands

Survey appeared in the October issue of Reader's Digest.

"We are thrilled to receive the Reader's Digest Most Trusted Brand in the pet category," said Gumpei Futagami, president and CEO of Hartz. "Hartz has a rich history in the care of America's pets; it's an honor to be recognized in this way."

The survey revealed that trust plays a major role in consumer decision making, with 79 percent of survey participants reporting that they would choose a brand that's been identified as "trusted" over

another brand when product quality and price are similar. More than 40 percent said the Reader's Digest Trusted Brands seal would likely have an effect on their trust or decision to purchase a product or service.

"Trust has always been an integral component of the fabric that makes up Reader's Digest," said Liz Vaccariello, chief content officer and editor-in-chief. "This survey allows us to help shed light on why Americans gravitate toward certain brands."

Good Deeds

Continued from p. 11

Tomlyn and DFW Rescue Me Partner for Adopt-A-Shelter-Dog Month

Tomlyn, a North Texas based pet health company, is partnering with DFW Rescue Me in October to bring awareness to pet adoption and the importance of keeping new pets healthy in honor of Adopt-a-Shelter-Dog Month.

Tomlyn will be distributing goodie bags to new pet owners throughout Octo-

ber to spread information about pet health.

DFW Rescue Me is a foster-based, volunteer-run nonprofit rescue group that has found homes for over 2,000 dogs to date. The two organizations announced their new partnership at the State Fair of Texas.

"It is a great opportunity to introduce new adopters to some wonderful products

that will help keep their new pets happy and healthy," said Jim Wenger, DFW Rescue Me volunteer and board member.

Each goodie bag will include a selection of Tomlyn's most popular products, including bacon-flavored Pill-Masker Paste, Joint & Hip Chews and Relax & Calm Chews.

Continued on p. 14

Gray Muzzle Holds Senior Department Contest

Ark Naturals brand Gray Muzzle will challenge pet retailers to create their own senior department for a chance to win prizes and publicity.

From September to December, stores can submit photos of their senior department with Gray Muzzle products to newsletters@arknaturals.com. Stores who submit will be entered to win prizes

including a Kindle Fire HD 7, \$250 of Ark Naturals products and a \$50 Amazon gift card.

All photo submissions must be entered by the 30th of each month. Winners for the previous month will be chosen on the fifth of each month.

2013 winners of the senior department contest included Chow Hound

Pet Supplies in Grand Haven, Mich., Felix & Oscar in Springfield, Va., Concord Pet Food & Supplies in Elkton, Md., and Old Dogge Inn in Albion, N.Y.

Gray Muzzle, launched in 2013, is a product line dedicated to the needs of senior animals and the support of their cognitive, physical, and dental health.



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Good Deeds

Continued from p. 11

Cats Against Cancer Raises \$8 Million

The Cats Against Cancer Campaign has raised nearly \$8 million dollars to date to help the Multipole Myeloma Research Foundation (MMRF) drive advancements in cancer research and find a cure.

When Kathy Elsey was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, she and her husband Dr. Bruce Elsey, co-founders of Dr. Elsey's Precious Cat, founded the interactive Cats Against Cancer campaign. It will run through February of 2016.

The campaign spans across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, enabling

users to share their individual experiences and support the campaign's mission. Last year, the Cats Against Cancer campaign reached more than two million people over the span of five months.

As part of the campaign, users can download a coupon that allows them to save three dollars on their next purchase of a 40 pound bag of Precious Cat Ultra Litter. For every three dollars saved, Precious Cat will donate three dollars to the MMRF.

"The Elsey Family and the Cats Against Cancer campaign have been a total game changer," said Walter Ca-

pone, CEO of the MMRF.



Continued on p. 17

Coastal Pet Products Launches New Website

Coastal Pet Products has launched a new and improved website with easier navigation and updated product content.

The new site features lifestyle imagery showcasing how Coastal Pet Products enriches the interactions between pets and their owners. Links to demonstrational videos educate consumers while social media links keep them engaged.

The website features product attributes, allows users to easily search all pages, and gives customers the ability to place

orders with one login. It also includes access to downloadable images and catalogs.

"Having a website that is user friendly is vital to us," said Donna O'Connor, Coastal Pet Products' marketing data coordinator. "We want our customers to use coastalpet.com as a resource to educate themselves about the proper use of the products they sell every day. I believe getting this information to the retailers to use will create a better consumer buying experience."

Movers and Shakers

Continued from p. 12

Pets Global Hires Neil Thompson as Director of Sales

Pets Global, producer of Zignature and Fussie Cat pet foods, has brought on Neil Thompson as the company's new director of sales.

Reporting directly to Pets Global President Daniel Hereford, Thompson will manage the sales team and oversee Zignature and Fussie Cat sales nationwide.

Prior to joining Pets Global, Neil

was the district manager in the Southern Idaho and Utah district for Animal Supply Company. He also spent seven successful years at RJ Reynolds.



Continued on p. 19

Look Who's Happy Enlists Fetch Partners and A.C. Graham Company

Big Creek Foods will partner with A.C. Graham Company, Inc. and Fetch Partners to expand the presence of the Look Who's Happy treat line in the West Coast and Northeast markets.

The two manufacturer representative organizations will educate independent pet store owners and personnel about the product lines as well as helping with promotional planning and merchandising programs.

Fetch Partners serves the West Coast and specializes in the representation of pet products to the wholesale and retail markets.

A.C. Graham Company, Inc. covers the Northeastern region of the U.S. The company has represented pet industry manufacturers and importers since 1974.

Petco to Go Public After Filing for IPO

Petco Holdings, Inc. is to become public again nine years after the pet store operator was purchased by two private equity firms.

The company filed an amended S-1 form with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). No terms were given in the filing, and Petco has not yet announced what exchange it will file on or the symbol it will file under.

The company will not receive proceeds from the offering, which will in-

stead go to the selling stockholders. The private equity firms and other investors are to retain majority voting power after Petco's IPO.

Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, JP Morgan, Morgan Stanley, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, Jefferies, Wells Fargo, TPG Capital, Piper Jaffray, Stifel, Cantor Fitzgerald, Guggenheim and Nomura are the underwriters for the offering.

There are approximately 1,400 Petco stores in the U.S. and 13 in Mexico, which are run through a joint venture.

The company says it earned \$75 million in net income during the latest fiscal year.

While Petco's profits have decreased over the past two years, they improved during the first half of the current fiscal year.

When the company was acquired by TPG Global and Leonard Green & Partners in 2006, they paid \$29 per share and \$1.68 billion in total. Petco's stock had lost half of its value during the 18 months prior to the deal's announcement.

Correction

The location of Matrix Partners was listed incorrectly in the Pet Age Icon

Awards section of the September issue. Matrix Partners is located in Chicago.



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Madra Mór Recognized for Support of Military Dogs

Madra Mór's founder and president Jacqueline Hynes has been recognized by The Military Working Dog Team Support Association (MWDTSA) for the company's donations.

Madra Mór Canine Spa Treatments have been a regular addition to the care packages sent to U.S. Military Working Dog teams deployed in combat areas overseas. MWDTSA packs and mails the boxes and supports both active duty and retired military K9s. The packages are the centerpiece of its support of "both ends of the leash."

Madra Mór has donated nurturing mud treatments for the group's care packages for the past two years. Madra Mór, based in Palm Beach Gardens, offers a line of nourishing and hydrating mud treatments that help prevent dogs from itching and scratching, all while promoting bonding time in the grooming process.

In recognition of this vital and generous support, the MWDTSA recently pre-



sented Hynes, a certificate of appreciation and a numbered Challenge Coin. Only 37 challenge coins have been presented over the nine years since the nonprofit's founding, said Col. Dick Baumer, USA (Ret.), 1st vice president of the MWDTSA.

"Military Working Dogs protecting our freedoms absolutely deserve a pampering, spa experience," says Hynes. "Due to the hostile geographic locations they often work in, we are pleased to be able to offer this support. Madra Mór muds help keep their first line of defense, their skin, nourished at bath-time."

Baumer made the presentation to Hynes at Lap of Luxury Dog Spa in Delray Beach, Fla. The spa's managing partner is Jonathan David, star of Animal Planet's "Dogs 101" and "Groomer Has It." He is ranked among the top five groomers in the USA.

"We are grateful for Jacqueline's generosity to these American K9s who are deployed around the world to protect other soldiers," said Baumer. "Too many people forget that we have substantial forces still overseas who need the unique 'force protection' skills of Military Working Dog teams."

Nulo Pet Food Partners With IRONMAN

Nulo Pet Food and IRONMAN have formed a multi-year partnership, making Nulo the exclusive pet food partner and sponsor for all U.S. IRONMAN events through 2016.

"IRONMAN athletes understand the role quality nutrition plays in fueling a healthy, active lifestyle. We believe triathletes seek the same superior qualities in their dog's or cat's nutrition too," said Michael Landa, CEO of Nulo Pet Food. "Nulo's partnership with IRONMAN allows us to educate fellow athletes and pet

parents about the benefits of Nulo's ingredients in an atmosphere that is fun, inspiring, and celebrated by so many pet lovers."

"The IRONMAN organization is thrilled to partner with such a unique pet food company like Nulo," said Andrew Messick, CEO of IRONMAN. "Their dedication to pet nutrition and promotion of healthy lifestyles breathes a new perspective into supporting our entire IRONMAN community. We look forward to helping them activate their brand across our many race venues and in inspir-

ing IRONMAN competitors everywhere to take greater care of their extended families."

"For so many athletes, our dogs are our best friends and sometimes training partners. Just like our own diets, the types of protein, carbohydrates, and ingredients that we feed our dog or cat matter to their health and recovery," says Landa. "We thank IRONMAN for aligning their brand with Nulo and for teaming with us to become evangelists for better pet nutrition."

Dog is Good Launches New Website

Dog is Good has launched a new e-commerce website that will also include blogs and user-generated content.

A California-based pet, gift and home décor company that is concerned with the emotional side of the dog-human relationship, Dog is Good sees the site as an opportunity to provide the features that dog lovers crave.

"This is just another step in our progression to be recognized internationally as a lifestyle brand for dog lovers," said Jon Kurtz, co-founder and CEO of Dog is Good. "The new site allows dog lovers to interact with our brand and with other pet lovers."

Additionally, Dog is Good is rolling out a new interactive initiative entitled #Where's Bolo? Visitors to the new website are encouraged to print out an image of Dog is Good mascot Bolo and photograph him participating in their own adventures.



"#Where's Bolo? was created to discover how people and their dogs are making a difference in the lives of others," stated Gila Kurtz, co-founder of Dog is Good. "There are so many great stories about the dog-human relationship around the world. This initiative allows us to experience them through photos and to share with our audience of pet lovers."

Good Deeds

Continued from p. 14

Dr. Harvey's Founds Project Potcake

Dr. Harvey's, a New Jersey based all-natural pet food company, has founded Project Potcake to support the indigenous dogs of the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos.

A pet health food producer for over 30 years, Dr. Harvey's support of animal rescue and animal welfare causes has consistently been important to the company's mission.

"We became aware of the difficult and serious situation of the potcakes in Abaco, Bahamas, where a fearless handful of rescuers are valiantly fighting to protect these indigenous dogs," said Dr. Harvey's president Wendy Shankin-Cohen. "The rescuers work tirelessly, with very little outside support and no government funding. We thought we could make a difference."

Dr. Harvey's began to raise funds and awareness for at-risk potcake dogs through their website and social media. The company later started a GoFundMe campaign.

In July, Shankin-Cohen traveled to Abaco, Bahamas with supplies for the dogs including food, treats, supplements and medications. She also presented the Abaco Shelter and the Abaco rescuers with the funds Dr. Harvey's raised.

"So many people have come forward to help save these wonderful dogs. We have received donations from around the world," Shankin-Cohen said. "We have already seen the impact that Project Potcake has had on the welfare of the animals and the rescuers that love them."

Continued on p. 18

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Sleepypod Introduces New Crash Test Cat

Sleepypod has introduced CLEO, an innovative crash test cat for testing pet safety in cars.

CLEO features a camera that records video footage from the pet's point of view. It is the next member of Sleepypod's family of crash test pets designed to help the company gather safety data for the development of pet travel products.

This new crash test technology signals the future of pet safety in cars by recording video footage of crash tests. With footage from CLEO, Sleepypod designers can see what a pet sees and record how a pet moves during a car crash.

"As Sleepypod explores new approaches to pet safety in cars, recording the movements of CLEO in simulated car crashes allows our designers to peer from behind a pet safety restraint and view a crash from a pet's point of view," said Michael Leung, Sleepypod's lead product designer and co-founder. "This is a step forward for pet safety in cars because until now we have only been able to observe the ef-



fects of car crashes as onlookers."

To view CLEO's crash test footage, visit <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2t9swGuON-TBEBHEoNq-SuYI1u83cAc5P>

Hagen Hosts 60th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee Celebration

More than 50 American pet retailers attended the Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corp Canadian National Trade Show and 60th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee Celebration in Hilton Lac Leamy in Gatineau, Quebec.

The pet product manufacturer and distributor hosted the two-day retreat for representatives from pet retailers across Canada, the U.S. and 23 other coun-

tries who won Hagen's Diamond Jubilee Contest held earlier this year.

"Our Diamond Jubilee was a stunning success," president and CEO Rolf Hagen, Jr. said. "Our guests traveled from near and very far away. It was an honor to celebrate such an important benchmark with friends and colleagues who have supported our business, getting us to where we are today."

Hagen's Canadian Trade Show featured new products from All For Paws, ZEUS, New Tropicana TropiMix and Nutrience Sub Zero.

Dealers also attended a gala dinner and seminars about Hagen's new bird and reptile care products and Hagen's new online dealer portal, which enables retailers to view specials, place orders and see their order history.

Good Deeds

Continued from p. 17

Three Dog Bakery Holds Veteran's Day Promotion

Three Dog Bakery will donate to Food Industry Serving Heroes (FISH) an amount equal to 15 percent of the total product sales it takes in on Veteran's Day through its bakeries, retail outlets and online store.

FISH is a non-profit organization designed to engage the food industry in serving military veterans. With the donations from the Three Dog Bakery Veteran's Day promotion, FISH will

purchase service dogs to distribute to veterans in need.

In addition, the company will contribute a year's supply of its dog food and treats to the recipients of its service dog initiative to further lessen the financial burden on America's veterans.

Three Dog Bakery co-owner Aziz Giga says the health and well-being of returning servicemen and women is a subject that is close to his heart.

"I've always been humbled by the sacrifices the men and women of our military make on behalf of American freedom, and I recognize the struggles they have returning home," Giga said. "It's so important for those of us who have benefitted from their sacrifices to do what we can to help. For many, there is no greater need than simple, daily assistance – the kind that can often be provided with a service dog."

Movers and Shakers

Continued from p. 14

Scott Ragan Named Three Dog Bakery President

Scott Ragan has joined Three Dog Bakery, LLC as the new president of the all-natural dog treat manufacturer and national bakery franchiser.

Ragan is returning to Three Dog Bakery after serving as partner, president and CEO from 2006 to 2012. He plans to expand the company's network of retail franchise bakeries throughout the U.S. and the world.

"I'm excited to again work closely with our passionate dog-loving associates and awesome franchisees to serve pets and their families," Ragan said.

His appointment follows the company's 25th anniversary and the addition of new investors in 2014.



Ragan's expertise in the pet industry beyond Three Dog Bakery includes the formation and sale of Petwell Group, Inc., a pet industry brand development company focused on treats supplies segments. Most recently, he served as a partner and CEO for Heart United.

Continued on p. 21

Professional Pet Groomers & Stylists Alliance Releases Care Standards for Groomers

The Professional Pet Groomers & Stylists Alliance (PPGSA) has released standards for safety and sanitation in the grooming industry. The group released the standards at Barkleigh Productions' Groom Expo, which was held September 17-20 in Hershey, Pa.

PPGSA formally released the results of a year-long initiative to develop comprehensive safety and sanitation standards that will serve as the grooming industry's standard of care for pet grooming. These industry-wide standards are the first of their kind and a significant milestone in the grooming industry.

Teri DiMarino, PPGSA spokesperson and president of the California Professional Pet Groomers Association, announced the release of the standards to a receptive audience of groomers, stylists and allies.

"All across the country, thousands of pets are entrusted to our care every day," said DiMarino. "We have a responsibility

to pet owners, their pets and our fellow groomers and stylists to provide the highest level of safety and care when grooming a pet. These standards of care reflect that."

The document includes sections addressing pet housing standards, equipment standards, general professional standards and work standards and demonstrate responsible grooming practices within the industry. These standards establish industry-wide guidelines that pet owners can rely on when entrusting their pets to the care of a professional groomer or stylist.

PPGSA members must incorporate these standards into their training and/or certification programs, ensuring that groomers and stylists are taught and held accountable to the same standards.

The standards were unanimously adopted by the founding members of the PPGSA and will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect the most up-to-date safety and sanitation practices.

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Fetching Communications Expands Client Roster

Fetching Communications has added Veterinary Practice Partners; VetSpecialists.com; Yabozi Products, LLC; and Voyce Pro to its client roster of business within the pet and veterinary industries.

Veterinary Practice Partners is a professional practice management company that purchases ownership stakes in veterinary practices and partners with the DVMs to help manage and grow their practices.

VetSpecialists.com was developed in 2015 as a partnership between the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and the American College of Veterinary Surgeons to provide education about diseases and conditions affecting animal and to increase awareness of veterinary specialty medicine.

Yabozi Products, LLC is a pet-focused company that designs luxury pet products and accessories.

The Voyce Pro Wellness Monitoring Program allows veterinarians remote access to canine patients' key vital signs, including resting heart and respiratory rates, and other important wellness indicators using the Voyce Health Monitor.

The public relations and marketing agency was founded in 2003 and partners with in-house marketing and executive teams to plan and execute tactics that drive brand awareness.

The Company of Animals Moves U.S. Headquarters, Expands Team

The Company of Animals has moved their U.S. headquarters to Davenport, Fla.

All of the company's U.S. inventory has been transferred to the new CenterPoint Enterprise warehouse from their previous location in Bridgeport, Conn.

The CenterPoint facility is located underground, offering over 550 surface acres and 4.2 million square feet of storage, specializing in providing third party logistics (3PL) and full-service, client-specific shipping solutions. The massive quarry was originally created through the mining of a 250 million year old limestone deposits and was later repurposed as an eco-friendly industrial resource. Outfitted with state-of-the-art technology, including Warehouse Man-

agement Software (WMS), the smart warehouse is abundant with scalability.

"We've experienced consistent year-over-year U.S. sales growth," comments Larry Cobb, vice president of U.S. sales, marketing and operations. "This move is meant to strengthen the brand and establish The Company of Animals' stateside operations as an integral hub of our overall international business."

Founder, Dr. Roger Mugford, just recently spent a week in-state to open the new office. Frequent visits from the U.K. team are expected to assist in daily business needs.

Kerri Griffin and Brenda Dolan have been hired to support the international brand's U.S. in-office matters.

New hire Griffin is a Florida native whose background includes working within the accounting departments of Natural Growers, Bolthouse Farms and Tropicana, specializing in receivables and audit control. Her passion for maintaining exceptional business standards is being eagerly accepted by The Company of Animals as they transition and will prove useful as they continue to grow the U.S. division.

Dolan comes with over seven years of experience working with KONG Company. There she assisted in everything from sales support to quarterly reporting to presentation preparation. She looks forward to continuing her volunteer work in the Davenport community.



Pet Age

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Holistic Pet Source to Distribute EzyDog Products

EzyDog, manufacturer of canine products for dogs and owners who love the outdoors, announced the start of a southeast regional distribution partnership with Holistic Pet Source.

Holistic Pet Source is a Nashville-based wholesale pet product distribution company that has been serving independent retailers for over a decade. They supply products in Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana.

“We are excited to be involved with Holistic Pet Source,” said John Hatcher, president of EzyDog. “Retailers in their territory will now have easier access to our products.”

EzyDog is the manufacturer of the Original Shock Absorbing Leash, combining sports technology with the durability dog owners demand. EzyDog’s leash systems are designed for comfort, control and safety, catering to dogs that pull or that are in training.

EzyDog To Be Distributed in Mexico

EzyDog, an Idaho-based manufacturer of outdoor canine products, will now be distributed by Hospital y Farmacia Veterinaria Zamora in Mexico.

Farmacia Veterinaria Zamora is a pet product distribution company that has been serving independent retailers for over 31 years. Based in Mexico City, they supply products throughout the entire country.

“We are excited to be involved with Farmacia Veterinaria Zamora,” said John Hatcher, president of EzyDog. “Retailers in their territory will now have easier access to our products.”

Movers and Shakers

Continued from p. 19

Vital Essentials Names Kevin Malnor New Vice President

Kevin Malnor will join Vital Essentials as the raw pet food and treat company’s new vice president of sales and marketing.

“Vital Essentials allows me the opportunity to apply the many key learnings I have acquired over the past 30 years to help further develop what I believe to be the highest quality raw

pet food and treats brand available anywhere in the world,” Malnor said.

Malnor has a background in sales and marketing spanning over 30 years in the Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) industry, most recently spending 11 years with Nature’s Way.

“I have great faith and belief in Kevin’s ability and determination to

help us get better, grow faster and help deliver on our promise to do whatever is necessary to ensure that any pet parent, anywhere in the world, who wants or needs us, will have a convenient and effective way to access and acquire our world class pet products,” Vital Essentials CEO Larry Viegut said.

Continued on p. 22



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FriendshipCollar Launches New Boutique Collection

FriendshipCollar, makers of vegan fashion accessories for pets and their owners, announced the pre-order launch of its new luxury Boutique Collection. Sold in matching sets, each collar comes with a matching bracelet to symbolize the special bond between pet and owner.

The Boutique Collection also offers a new line of gold-plated charms engraved with phrases and designs so that pet owners can personalize their FriendshipCollar ensembles.

The Boutique Collection's dog collars feature fashion-forward patterns and buckle closures with gold-plated hardware. The gold-plated D-ring on collars also serves as an attachment for

leashes and charms.

The new Boutique Collection for cats also offers exclusive high-fashion designs and charm attachments. The cat collars feature safety break away clasps.

FriendshipCollar's careful construction ensures a comfortable fit and all products are made from animal friendly vegan leather materials.



Movers and Shakers

Continued from p. 21

APPA's Sarah Bopp Receives IAEE Rookie of the Year Award

Sarah Bopp, associate manager of booth sales and operations at the American Pet Products Association (APPA), has received the 2015 International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE) Rookie of the Year Award.

The Rookie of the Year Award recognizes excellent professional performance by an IAEE member with three

or less years of full-time exhibitions and events industry experience.

"The trade show staff is truly extraordinary and to see one of our up-and-coming, rising stars honored for her contributions is fantastic," said Andy Darmohraj, executive vice president and COO of the APPA.

This year's award winners were selected after review by the IAEE Awards

Committee and approval by the IAEE Board of Directors, following an open call for nominations earlier in the year.

"We were very impressed with the nominations we received this year and congratulate these very deserving honorees," said 2015 IAEE Awards Committee chairperson Randy Bauler, CEM.

Continued on p.25

Pet Business Solutions to Partner with SMARTCOOKEE and TickEase

Pet Business Solutions, a consulting agency focused on expanding businesses in the pet industry by providing strategic marketing and sales planning, added SMARTCOOKEE Company and TickEase to their client roster.

SMARTCOOKEE, maker of all-natural, high quality dog treats, contracted

with Pet Business Solutions for the redesign of their website. The company aims to increase sales of their chia seed-based dog treats and further develop their private label offering for pet-focused businesses.

The agency was also hired by TickEase to develop their business plan by

conducting a thorough analysis, assessing current and future needs to gain market share in the tick removal category. TickEase is the only dual-tipped tick remover available on the market.

Pet Business Solutions carries out consultation for pet industry entrepreneurs at all stages of the business process.

Petmate Launches New Website

The newly relaunched Petmate.com website intends to teach pet parents about the best ways to care for their pets.

It includes spaces where users can interact with the site, offering a personalized experience that will provide them specialized information and products for their pet.

Petmate will also provide current events content and the Petmate Academy, which offers educational articles written by the company's own experts and expert partners. The Petmate Academy portion of the site will be continuously updated with timely articles.

The pet product manufacturer hopes that the new site will educate consumers about its brand and drive traffic and businesses to their retailers.



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Petland Discounts Celebrates Its Fiftieth Year



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Petland Discounts, a full-line pet retailer with stores in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, celebrates 50 years in business this October.

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Petcurean Breaks Ground on New Manufacturing Facility

Pet food company Petcurean Pet Nutrition will open a new manufacturing facility in partnership with Elmira Pet Products to meet the growing demand for the Canadian brand's products.

The new facility will feature state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment for its pet foods made with fresh meats, vegetables, fruits and berries.

"At Petcurean, we have a deep-seated commitment to providing the freshest, highest-quality premium pet food for our customers and their four-legged family members," said Rick van Schagen, president and general manager of Petcurean. "Ownership in this new facility allows us to ensure a secure sup-



ply for our growing customer base and provides us with a solid foundation to continually innovate the best, premium pet food recipes that our customers have come to know and expect."

Petcurean will continue to seek ingredients used in their recipes from carefully vetted farmers, ranchers and producers. The majority of the meat

proteins, grains, cereals, fruits and vegetables in Petcurean's will still be sourced from North America and as close to the production facility as possible.

The facility will be run by Elmira, one of Canada's largest dry pet food manufacturing plants, with an experienced operations staff.

Invisible Fence to Open New Wisconsin Dealership

Invisible Fence Brand will open a new dealership to serve the southern and eastern Wisconsin region, which includes Madison and Milwaukee.

The dealership, Invisible Fence of Southern Wisconsin, will be company owned by Invisible Fence Brand's Tennessee-based parent company Radio

Systems Corp. It will serve the customers of a former independent dealer and retain several members of its original local management and staff.

Invisible Fence is the original electronic pet containment system, sold nationwide by authorized dealers who provide Perfect Start Plus Pet training

and custom installation.

"Our team of pet management experts have a passion for keeping pets protected and take pride in providing the very best in customer care, training and technology," said Luke Olson, the new store's associate general manager.

Pestell Group Inc. Opens Expanded Warehouse

Ontario-based Pestell Group Inc. celebrated the grand opening of their warehouse expansion on September 23.

The company welcomed their additional 65,000 square feet of new space with a ribbon cutting ceremony and barbecue. The extra room is intended to support the growth of Pestell Pet Products and Pestell Minerals & Ingredients.

The expanded 130,000 square foot distribution facility is HACCP, Feed-Assure and Safe Feed, and Safe Food Certified. It serves as the home base for the distribution of over 500 products.

This is the third facility expansion Pestell Group Inc. has undergone in the past 10 years at their New Hamburg,

Ontario location.

Founded in 1973, Pestell Pet Products offers an extensive selection of small animal bedding and cat litter products. Pestell Minerals & Ingredients specializes in the supply of feed ingredients including macro and trace minerals, specialty feed additives and bird food ingredients.

P3 Pet Trade Show Opens Registration, Searches for Seminar Speakers

Taking place on August 24 and 25, 2016 at Navy Pier in Chicago, the new P3|Progressive Pet Products trade show has opened advance online attendee registration and initiated a call for speakers for its educational seminar series entitled "Focus on the Future."

"We've been very pleased with the positive response and industry feedback we've received since announcing the new P3 show," said Stacey Barrett Brooks, P3 Show Director. "Top distributors, manufacturers and industry newcomers are already reserving space on the show floor and we're now moving into full gear with show promotions and programming."

To ensure ease of attendee registra-

tion and entry, P3 will offer ExpressPass registration to credentialed retailers involved in pet-related businesses. Rather than receiving a badge in advance by mail, retailers can receive an ExpressPass via email to scan with onsite readers when they arrive at the show.

To qualify for and receive the ExpressPass, retailers can visit www.p3petshow.com and complete the online application.

P3 will accept speaking proposals until November 15. For complete details on the application and selection process, potential speakers can visit the "Education/Events" section of the show website, www.p3petshow.com.

PetEdge Takes Over Pethealth's Petango Store

PetEdge, a Massachusetts-based provider of wholesale grooming and pet products, will now operate pet insurance company Pethealth's Petango store, the animal adoption search engine's online shop for purchasing products including flea and tick treatments, leashes and pet beds.

"Pethealth, Inc., is committed to supporting our shelter partners and the animal welfare community," said Michelle Cole, senior vice president of customer success at Pethealth. "As we prepared for the closing of the Petango Store, we began discussions with many companies to find an alternative partner that could offer great prices on pet supplies and highly supportive, knowledgeable customer service. From those we spoke with, PetEdge stood out, with its shared dedication to animal welfare and commitment to great

customer service."

"Working with Petango's community of shelters and animal welfare organizations is a natural fit for PetEdge, and we look forward to serving their needs as they carry out the vital work they do," said Andy Katz, president and CEO of PetEdge, Inc.

PetEdge's Profits for Shelters Program has enabled 200 shelters to earn revenue by promoting their retail businesses.

"Founded nearly 60 years ago, PetEdge has grown by building a business that focuses on presenting top-quality products at competitive prices, combined with exceptional customer service," Katz said. "Working with this business model, we are certain we can be a valuable resource for the shelter community."

Movers and Shakers

Continued from p. 22

David Nelson Named Vets Plus President



David Nelson has joined Vets Plus, Inc. as the animal health and nutritional supplements manufacturer's new president.

Nelson will be responsible for ensuring production execution and operational excellence at Vets Plus and will report directly to Raj Lall, founder and CEO.

"I am proud to join the team of technical experts and product innovators at Vets Plus and continue the Vets Plus mission of improving global animal health," says Nelson.

Nelson has over 25 years of relevant industry experience, formerly serving as president of Great Lakes Calcium Corporation. Nelson also worked for Dairy Business Innovation Center and White Clover Dairy, and he remains active on the Board of Directors for the American Feed Industry Association.

"We welcome David's leadership and experience to Vets Plus," says Lall. "His proven ability to deliver results and think strategically will be a key asset in our continued growth as a company."

Editor's Pick

Jackson Galaxy Toy Marinater by Petmate

Owners can create their own catnip infused toys by adding catnip to the silicone base, inserting toys into the mesh bag, replacing the cap and squeezing the device. Works on all toy materials, including plush, canvas, rubber and plastic. Store toys in the Marinater to intensify scent infusion. www.Petmate.com



Vivamune Vital Health³ Chews by Avivagen

Supplement with OxC-beta benefits immune system, skin, joint and digestive health for dogs and cats. The product's active ingredient is the result of two decades of research into the health benefits of carotenoids. An alternative to prescription medications or older supplement technologies like omega fatty acids and glucosamine. www.vivamunehealth.com



Web Master Pro Dog Harness by Ruffwear

A durable, professional-grade lift-and-assist harness designed for and with input from professional avalanche and search and rescue teams. Features all-metal hardware, an oversized handle for gloved hands and two points of leash connection. Two low-profile pockets have weather-proof zippers that retain function in snow, ice and dirty environments. www.ruffwear.com



Heggies Holiday Plush by Petmate

The Heggie extra soft and cuddly plush toy now comes in festive, holiday themed costumes.

Squeeze the toy for a grunting sound that drives dogs wild. Available in three different reindeer, Santa, and snowman characters that make for ideal stocking stuffers. www.Petmate.com

Stockroom New Products

AGV-08L Gravel Vacuum by Aquatop

Easily extract unwanted waste with this instant siphon pump tool. Quickly remove detritus from the aquarium to a bucket or drain. The gravel head features a fish guard an intake chamber to sift substrate. Comes with a seven foot hose that allows plenty of slack for taller tanks.

www.aquatop.com



Pulse ZR Detachable Blade Clipper by Andis

A heavy-duty, lithium-ion clipper that provides the power of a corded tool in a convenient, cord-free design. Delivers up to two hours of continuous cutting without losing power. Features five-speed rotary motor for improved cutting control. Comes with replacement blade drive, charger stand, charging adapter and blade oil.

www.andis.com



Humunga Bling by Moody Pet Inc.

Made of a durable, gummy-pink rubber material, this ball is bedecked with gold grillz and a shiny fake diamond. For non-aggressive chewers, the bouncy fetch toy is hollow to fill with treats. Ideal for a funny photo op.

www.moodypet.com



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www.petedge.com

Master Grooming Tools 4-Piece Slicker Brush Kit by PetEdge

Slicker brushes are the go-to grooming tool for brush outs and mat removal. Each kit includes an extra-small, small, medium, and large ergonomic slicker brush. The handles are molded and double-coated with rubber to fit hands perfectly, provide greater control and prevent fatigue and repetitive motion injury.

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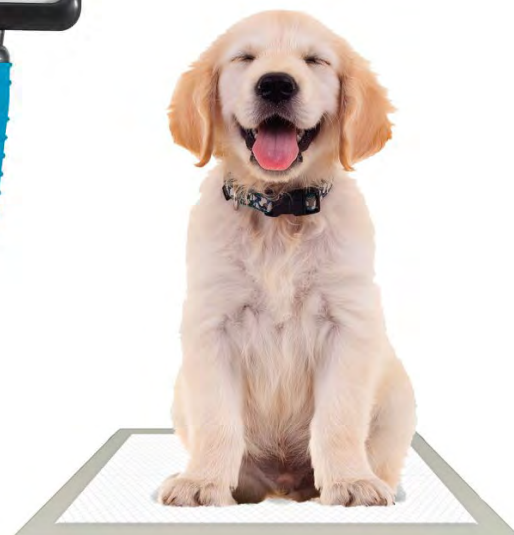
www.petremedy.com



Gray Muzzle Brushless ToothPaste for Seniors

Formulated with dentally helpful human-grade ingredients like cinnamon, clove, spearmint and Stay-C 50, it features a light, airy structure that is easy for a senior dog to chew. It controls plaque and tartar while promoting fresh breath and is ideal for dogs with missing teeth and gum tenderness.

www.gray-muzzle.com



Bamboo Training Pads by The Green Pet Shop

Each puppy training pad has an ultra-soft woven top sheet and a tough, waterproof backing, containing a super-absorbent sustainable bamboo core that makes them virtually leak-proof, quick-drying, and odor neutralizing. They're also treated with a naturally scented canine attractant to encourage puppies to use them.

www.TheGreenPetShop.com

Stockroom New Products



Therabis Pet Wellness Products by Dixie Brands

Targeting the common pet challenges of separation anxiety and itching and improving joint mobility and flexibility, these supplements combine key cannabinoids with other all-natural ingredients such as hemp powder and zinc. All three formulations will come in size and pet-specific pre-measured sachets, which can be added to any food product.

www.Therabis.com



Groomer's Helper Tub Insert System

The new Groomer's Helper Tub insert has two levels for both small and large dogs. Intended to keep both groomers and pets safe, the Tub insert was developed in conjunction with PetLift. The new Groomer's Helper Tub insert is available to order for different sized tubs.

www.groomershelfer.com

Pro-Training Quicker Clicker by Starmark

The first vertically operated clicker with a belt clip, the easy-to-press raised dome makes for faster clicking. It can be clipped to a pocket, belt, or almost anywhere, freeing hands for precision attention training. Produces a clear, crisp sound to create a consistent marker allowing you to shape positive behavior.

www.starmarkacademy.com



Kitty Litter Claw by Scoop Claw

Designed to ease the process of cleaning a cat's litter box, it features a durable, lightweight and rustproof body. The 32 inch ergonomically designed handle eliminates the need for bending and stooping when scooping. Simply position the claw over the waste, twist, and squeeze the handle to lift.

www.scoopclaw.com

Stockroom New Products



Skinneez Extreme Triple Squeak Dog Toys by Ethical Products

Each stuffing-free shark, crocodile or snake features Ethical Products' Rip Stop mesh lining for extra strength. The 25 inch toy also includes two reinforced layers for increased durability and three jumbo squeakers that will squeak even if they are punctured.

www.ethicalpet.com

AquaGrowth Soil and AquaShrimp Powder by ProDibio Soils

Now available in the U.S. via HYDOR, ProDibio offers new ready-to-use natural soils for fresh water planted aquariums. A high temperature treatment allows them to be free of harmful parasitic species. AquaShrimp Powder features thinner grains with the same chemical composition.

www.prodibio.com



Neutricks Soft Chew

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www.neutricks.com

Back Bay Leash by Kurgo

Strong, stretchy and lightweight, the 48 inch dog leash is made of colored, braided ribbon that covers a core made with recycled fabric. It comes in a variety of new fall colors and patterns that don't sacrifice fashion for function.

www.kurgo.com



Dog Snood by Gold Paw Series

A double layer, reversible neck scarf made from Gold Paw Series' signature super-soft and stretchy fleece, which is seven percent spandex. The snood can easily be slipped on and off over the head, is available in four different colors and protects dogs' ear tips and necks from cold winter weather.

www.goldpawseries.com





Tahoe Puffer Dog Jacket by Petrageous Designs

This water repellent quilted puffer jacket with black binding offers full chest coverage and an adjustable Velcro belt. It features a wide collar with a leash opening and is appointed with two functional zippered pockets.

Available in either aqua or pink.

www.petrageousdesigns.com



EZ-WEIGH PetProPlus by Proactive PetHealth

This in-home combination feeding bowl, pet scale and health monitor for both dogs and cats incorporates a feeding mat, self-operating pet scale and a built-in spill-proof feeding bowl, enabling pet owners to receive information about weight and weight change at mealtime.

www.proactivepethealth.com

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Stockroom New Products

Hachiko Smart Collar Sensor and Mobile App

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Window Play Center by Caitec Corporation

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www.caitec.com



ProClip Excel Super 2-Speed Detachable Blade Clipper by Andis

A new addition to the professional grade ProClip line, the metallic black clipper has a rotary motor and delivers up to 5,000 strokes per minute. Its size 10 EGT Charcoal Blade smoothly removes even dense, matted hair and its ergonomic shape reduces hand fatigue.

www.andis.com



Cat 'n Around Snake Duo by Imperial Cat

These stuffing-free toys come with Velcro closures that allow cat owners to easily refill their pet's plaything with fresh catnip. The snake duo is available in assorted colors and comes with a bag of certified organic USA-grown catnip for filling after purchase.

www.imperialcat.com



Powder Hound Dog Jacket by Ruffwear

Combines the warmth of synthetic insulation with a breathable, technical stretch fabric for range of motion. Sleeved jacket provides full coverage and performance fit with zipper closure. This weather resistant and packable insulated jacket is ideal for cold weather activities. Available in three colors.

www.ruffwear.com

Stockroom New Products

Zogoflex Air Boz by West Paw Design

Bouncy and soft enough for dogs' mouths to catch. While human hands can't typically squish Boz, dogs can compress the ball between their teeth for a satisfying endorphin release. Unlike tennis balls, Boz is durable, squishy and doesn't contain toxic glues or lead. Available in three colors and two sizes.

www.westpawdesign.com



Bamboo Line by Pet Buddies

A durable, eco-friendly collection of mealtime accessories for pets. The line boasts two sizes of bowls and a treat canister all made of organic renewable bamboo and high quality stainless steel. The bowls, available in two cup and six cup varieties, have hygienic stainless steel inserts for easy cleaning and non-skid feet.

www.petbuddies.com



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www.tasmanpet.com

Bark-B-Q and Mutt-n-aise by Petchup

These pet-friendly condiments enhance the flavor of your dog's kibble. They offer a tasty addition to dry food while providing a healthy portion of vitamins, minerals, glucosamine, omega 3, 6 and 9 to a pet's daily diet. All sauces are made from natural food-grade ingredients.

www.mypetchup.com



Corbin's Cable Dog Sweater by Petrageous Designs

This heavy gauge sweater is made of super-soft flecked yarn in a thick fisherman-style cable knit. Available in teal, cranberry or gray, it has a fold-down shawl collar embellished with a decorative toggle button and has a European cut at the belly.

www.petrageousdesigns.com



Pro-Training Treat Pouch by Starmark

Durable nylon pouch has a neoprene opening for quick access that also prevents treats from falling out. Treats can't hide in the corners as the bottom of the pouch is rounded. Also features a zippered front pocket, belt clip, adjustable belt and side webbing to attach a clicker, keys and more.

www.starmarkacademy.com

Stockroom New Products



Bungee Leash by Coastal Pet Products

The new bungee leash is shock absorbing for gentle stops and minimized pulling. It also features a cushy neoprene handle for increased comfort. The four inch black with gray leash will make walking more enjoyable for pets and owners alike.

www.coastalpet.com



Dog Rocks

Now available in 600g bulk packs, 100 percent natural Dog Rocks were discovered in Australia and have been selling in the Aussie and U.K. market since 2000. When placed in a pet's water bowl, they stop urine burn marks from ruining the owner's grass and plants.

www.dogrocks.co.uk



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www.coastalpet.com



Dino Pet by BioPop

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www.biopop.com



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www.viachemllc.com

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www.americanpetproducts.org

Stockroom New Products

Grillers and Sizzlers Dog Treats by Nudges

Dog owners can share the tastes of summer with their canine companions with these wholesome treats that look, taste and smell like they came straight off of the grill. Made in the U.S.A. with farm-raised beef or chicken as the primary ingredient. Contains no artificial flavors, colors or preservatives.

www.nudgesdogtreats.com



Bone Broth with Turmeric by The Honest Kitchen

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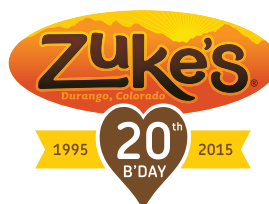
www.thehonestkitchen.com



PupPot by Doggy Cooking Network

Kit contains everything conscientious owners need to cook nutritious meals for their dogs. Includes a two-handled stainless steel pot with glass lid, paw shaped serving base that doubles as a water bowl, two collapsible silicone serving bowls with clip-on lids and a downloadable e-cookbook of easy recipes is available.

www.puppot.com



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Seeking Seamless Shopping

The millennial shopper wants a simple but flexible shopping experience.

BY DAN CALABRESE

There are a number of things that we've been told by the media about millennials over and over again. We're past the point where we need to be told that millennials do more of their shopping digitally and less in the brick-and-mortar environment than the preceding generations. Right?

So it is a known fact that one must optimize the market potential of mil-

lennial customers by offering online purchases and having a presence on Facebook and Twitter.

Instead—in considering the best approach in marketing to millennials—let's consider some of the presumptions millennials seem to make about what the shopping experience should be like, and how pet retailers can operate in a way that is responsive to them.

What They Want

It's often said that millennials are looking for a “seamless” shopping experience, which I suspect leaves a lot of retailers nodding their heads and agreeing, “Of course! A seamless shopping experience!” But they're thinking to themselves, “What is that supposed to mean?”

Think of it like this: You've got a customer who was thinking about

purchasing a bag of dog food while sipping his or her coffee this morning, and consequently set up an account on your website. Later that afternoon, while running errands, the customer wants to actually place an order for pickup. That requires finding your app on the Google Play Store or on iTunes, which the customer doesn't mind. But once the app is downloaded, the customer wants to be able to log in using the same user name and password already set up via the laptop that morning.

Assuming that's a snap, the customer also wants to make a choice. Maybe it would be more convenient to have the food delivered, so he or she wants the freedom to make that choice. But today the store is nearby, and it would be easier to just pop by and pick up the order. That begs a question: When the customer walks in the store to pick up a purchase pre-ordered online, will the staff know what to do and be able to do it quickly? Or will the customer have to look around for someone who's trained to handle these strange things called "Internet purchases"?

Getting all this right is part of what leads to a truly seamless shopping experience.

Another aspect of catering to millennials involves simplifying their lives by putting certain things on autopilot where possible. Dollar Shave Club has done a very good job of this, simply by recognizing that most men use about four razor cartridges per month; feel that they pay too much for them; and don't like the hassle of having to run to a drug store every time the last set of blades in the drawer is getting dull.

So Dollar Shave Club has given men a way to put a predictable pattern of purchases on auto-pilot. Four fresh razor cartridges arrive in your mailbox once a month without your having to do anything, save for the one-time setup of the process.

What Pet Retailers Can Do

How much potential is there for pet retailers to offer customers a service like that? Do customers follow a pat-

tern in how much food they buy? How much litter? How could technology make it easy to automate that process so the customer receives the product according to a regular schedule? How many customers would gladly pay for that convenience, giving you a repeatable revenue stream and built-in customer loyalty? And because millennials understand that they need to give you their e-mail addresses to set up their accounts and receive confirmation e-mails, how much could you take advantage of having that contact information to push other specials and offers to them?

Much of traditional retailing worked as it did because there was no alternative. People came into the brick-and-mortar store or browsed a catalogue that came in the mail because there was no other way to find out what was available and purchase it. Millennials came of age in an era when those limitations did not apply, and it seems antiquated to them when

retailers offer only a tertiary nod to the digital methods that they and their peers simply take for granted. Indeed, they're looking to form relationships with retailers who not only understand the technology, but are looking for ways to use it to simplify their lives and deliver them greater value.

Anyone can set up an online shopping site, develop an app, or start a Facebook page—or pay someone to do it for them. As we consider the challenge of marketing to millennials, those things are necessary, but not sufficient. What really brings you success is when you understand how millennials think and learn how to use these tools to deliver them value that reflects that thinking.

Keep in mind: No generation that comes after the millennials will think in the old way. The desire for seamless shopping is here to stay. As you develop strategies designed to bring you success beyond the next year or two, that's worth remembering.

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When Is a Sale More than Just a Sale?

Done right, holiday sales generate repeat business.

BY ANDY BLACK

December and January are traditionally the bestselling months of the year for pet retailers. It always amazes me that so many retailers approach the holiday selling season so casually, without a detailed plan to take advantage of this important profit boosting period.

In my travels detailing stores, I've heard some smart ideas from those retailers who do gear up for holiday sales. I'm going to share their insights in the hope that this year will provide independent pet retailers a chance to make some significant profits by offering their customers more than just a discount.

Successful Sales

No one runs a sale to make their customers upset, so why would anyone just tag an item as on sale when they are actually charging the usual price? Well, apparently some do. There have been news reports on television of major retailers doing just that—and getting caught doing it by customers. To assume that your customers won't catch a sharp practice like that is to underestimate them and it is also a business ethics no-no. Even if the savings is no more than 10 percent, always be sure that a sale is a really a sale, or you'll alienate a portion of your customers who will in turn spread bad vibes to people they know about your business.

If you can't discount a lot due to cash flow, it is ethical to not compare the regular price with the sale price and say "On sale at \$27.95", even though the everyday price might be \$29.95. It isn't compulsory to point out that the savings

is only \$2. It is enough that there is a savings and it allows you to highlight a product or service during a peak selling season.

Everyone knows that the bigger the display the more confidence the consumer has in the products and therefore you'll sell more of the sale items. That having been said, the best sale offers the consumer variety, such as offering all of a particular fish food line at 15 percent off. This type of sale allows the customer some choice and builds your brand—one that you want them to come back to and buy from again. That example could be used for dog food, apparel or just about any category.

Distributor Deals

A better idea to make your sale sizzle is by taking advantage of your distributor's holiday promotions. This idea may at first glance seem counterintuitive, but if there is a hot deal on your favorite aquarium water pump, don't just buy what you need for the week. Invest and make a real display on the shelf and pass along the savings. If you offer a great sale price on items that are popular, customers will remember and be less critical of future offerings and more likely to come back to your store for future promotions.

There are always a few retailers willing to go out of their way to talk to their distributor about out-of-the-box ideas. An example of this is finding a distributor who has overstock or discontinued items that might fit your needs, such as building out a puppy starter kit or a 15 gallon aquarium gift set. Many times

items don't sell for distributors for reasons other than quality. Even though it is policy to only include consumables that you stock in a kit, (because you'll want customers to come back and buy more) a food dish or aquarium heater (a one-time sale) doesn't have to be your normal stock to fill out a package. You might be able to get a huge discount to clear out a distributor's stock on slow or discontinued items.

Social Marketing

Finally, don't just run a sale that only customers who cross your threshold will see. Take advantage of social media. Facebook is becoming a powerful tool for any retailer. For as little as \$5 a day you can advertise your sale to new potential customers. Check out Power Editor and build your Facebook following. If you use Facebook's paid advertising program—even if your Facebook page following isn't large—you can target all the zip codes around your business and reach thousands of Facebook users in your neighborhood, making your holiday sale more successful than in past years and adding more followers to your Facebook page at the same time.

Using some of these ideas will hopefully make the demanding holiday season even busier for your store.

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 Facts and Fictions of Cat Training

Savvy retailers can profit from feline training.

BY STEVEN P. APPELBAUM

No one questions whether dogs are trainable, as evidenced by the thousands of products that are designed to assist owners in doing so. However, whenever a discussion about training involves felines, skepticism abounds.

Fact Versus Fiction

Owners know from experience that their cats are intelligent and immanently capable of learning. Still, many people believe that cats are not trainable.

Popular portrayals of the two animals reinforce this belief. Dogs are portrayed as loyal, dependable, stalwart members of the family, bravely willing to place themselves in harm's way to protect loved ones. They are used by our military and police departments and as guide dogs. Conversely, cats are usually depicted as selfish, independent and rarely loyal. In addition, cat owners have different goals than dog owners. Most have no reason or desire to take their cat for walks on a leash or have their feline listen to obedience cues. For most, the very notion strikes them as silly and a waste of time.

Contrary to what this common perception suggests, cats are highly trainable. It is worth noting that dogs and cats learn differently and are motivated by different things. Dogs tend to be more praise- and attention-oriented compared to cats. Cats have a variety of motivators, including food, play and/

or scent like catnip and pheromones.. Of course, some dogs don't care about pleasing their owners at all and some cats are willing to work for a scratch behind the ear. In training, the key is to find what motivates an individual cat or dog and use that to teach the desired response.

Cat Training and the Pet Retailer

Why should pet retailers care about cats' trainability? Well, if more owners know they can train their cats, you increase the potential to sell them related cat products, which in turn can boost your bottom line.

There are 85.8 million cats in 42.6 million households the United States, according to the APPA 2015-2016 National Pet Owners Survey. This means nearly 35 percent of all American households have on average two cats. That translates into huge opportunities for retailers. While some will point out that cat owners don't spend as much as dog owners on their pets, that doesn't mean cat owners won't spend money.

Case in point: The most recent APPA survey shows that dog owners spend an average of \$269 a year on food annually and cat owners spend \$246; that's only a \$23 difference. Two years ago, difference was \$36.

Cat owners are also closing the gap on food treat spending.

The 2013-2014 APPA survey showed a \$65 to \$36, dog to cat split in

annual treat spending. The current survey reports that dog owners are spending \$61 annually and cat owners are only \$10 behind, at \$51.

You can help bridge the treat-spending gap even further by promoting cat treats as training aids.

Food treats can be helpful in teaching and reinforcing acceptable feline behaviors, such as proper litterbox use and using a scratching post instead of the couch. Treats can also help train cats to associate guests with positive things, which over time will make them more sociable. Owners can use treats to teach cats to come when called and to go into carriers on command. This last behavior is important as it makes it easier to take a cat to the veterinarian for regular checkups.

As a pet retailer, you obviously have a great deal more to offer to the cat-owning public besides food treats. Scratching posts, litterboxes, clickers, catnip, odor neutralizers, pheromone diffusers, carriers, toys and cat trees are just some of the products that can be used to teach cats desired behaviors. The potential growth of cat product sales to interested, educated cat owners is practically limitless.

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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**Interactive toys
benefit pets mentally
and physically.**

By Stacy Mantle

The industry is filled with fun, purpose-driven toys for pets and they are available for any species – from educational bird toys to battery-operated cat toys and even puzzle feeders for dogs.

Whether you call them “interactive toys” or “purpose-driven toys,” there are many benefits to keeping pets mentally and physically stimulated, including fewer behavior problems, easier weight management control and a happier pet.

"Interactive games and feeders, like the GREEN or Buster DogMaze lines, engage the pet mentally and physically because they simulate a hunter-gatherer type activity that's equally challenging and fulfilling," said Dr. Roger Mugford, pet psychologist and founder of The Company of Animals. "They can be used to support a healthy, active lifestyle and can help prevent boredom, especially when weather prevents extended outside activity. For eager eaters, interactive games and feeders can be used to serve the pet's regular meal, which helps slow them down and prevent bloat."

While shopping for food and treats can become mundane, shopping for pet toys comes with an air of excitement. Retailers should capitalize on this excitement by keeping their toy aisle fresh with new, innovative product. Stocking a wide variety of pet toys can also bring a much needed boost to end of year sales.

According to the 2015-16 American Pet Products Association (APPA) National Pet Owners survey, over two-thirds of dog and cat owners purchased gifts for their pets last year. This is definitely the time of year to push pet toys.

Going to the Dogs

"Interactive dog toys continue to dominate growth in the dog toy category," said Sarah Bell, director of marketing for Hyper Pet. "This is primarily driven by the inherent desire for pet owners to have creative opportunities and tools to bond with their pet."

"Hyper Pet specializes in providing the ultimate experiences related to fetch," said Bell. "We have a complete line of award-winning tennis ball launchers that not only enhance fetch, but also offer solutions for pet parents that might not otherwise be physically able to throw a tennis ball. The patented K-9 Kannon tennis ball launcher is a perfect example. It launches a tennis ball with ease for parents with shoulder issues or who simply have a dog that never tires of fetching a ball! Hyper Pet K-9 Kannon is available in two sizes suitable for all types of dog breeds."

While it's a well-known fact that

tired pets have fewer behavioral issues, it's often difficult to tire out a high-energy dog. That's where technology comes in. GoGoDogPals is a remote control toy outfitted with an advanced system that allows for long range operation and advanced maneuvering. This lets owners take a rest while their dogs exercise.

In a similar vein is iFetch. This is an automatic ball launcher that allows dogs to keep themselves entertained once they are taught to use the product. The iFetch was originally designed to work with standard miniature tennis balls, but now it is available with standard size tennis balls.

Mental stimulation counts for at least as much as physical stimulation. Puzzle games and feeder toys are excellent to recommend. Some of the most well-known puzzles for pets come from the Nina Ottosson line of interactive toys. Ottosson's range of durable interactive games were among the first to market years ago, and ongoing innovation has resulted in a collection of puzzles and interactive feeders that will keep even the smartest pets interested.

"Cycle Dog's 3-Play interactive toys feature treat hiding belly, squeaking head and superfloat water toy," said Lanette Fidrych, Cycle Dog president. "We have heard from many customers about how well the treat hiding aspect of our toys work with their dogs. When the belly is filled with kibble, dogs must figure out the best way to get to their treats. Some constantly flip the toy over, others squeeze the belly so the kibble crumbles, providing intellectual stimulation that dogs need."

"Our 3-Play toys come in sizes for standard as well as smaller dogs," said Fidrych. "Smaller dogs need the same intellectual stimulation as larger dogs. Cycle Dog 3-Play toys include Hippo, Turtle and Dino in both standard and mini sizes."

"Dog trainers have been saying for years that mental

exercise tires out your dog, sometimes more than physical activity," said Amanda O'Brien, director of marketing for Planet Dog. "We have two very popular interactive toys, the Orbee-Tuff Maze and Orbee-Tuff Snoop. Both toys can be filled with kibble or treats and provide hours of fun for your dog and for you!"

One of the more common features requested by consumers is that the toy be long-lasting and durable. Brands like Bionic and the Wubba line of toys from Kong are known for their ability to outlast even the toughest player.

Feline Fun Time

Almost all species can benefit from interactive toys and with the change in attitudes from consumers towards their cats, toys for our feline friends show some of the strongest market changes. Interactive toys can also help prevent obesity in pets. By stimulating instinctual responses, these toys can help get cats more active, thereby supporting weight loss.

"Based on our research, exercise is the number one attribute sought in a cat toy and scratching is the number one problem that prompts a cat toy purchase," said Nicole Haefke, Coastal



Pet Products. "Interactive toys provide exercise and stimulate the natural urge to scratch."

Coastal offers two scratchers that give cats more than just a place to sharpen claws.

"The Turbo Scratcher is the number one selling cat toy," said Haefke. "Cats love the interactive track ball, scratch pad and smell of catnip. The Mega Turbo offers two interactive sides for twice the fun and features a larger, 14-inch scratch pad. This collection also offers replacement pads for a repeat sale of two or three per month."

Stores that understand why cats and other animals need toys will be better able to sell those items.

"Education is key," said Aimee Diskin, director of innovation and product development for Worldwise, Inc. "Helping both your staff and your consumers understand that playtime can satisfy many needs for pets, not just the need for fun."

"For cats, play often provides exercise, excitement, bonding and serves as a much needed outlet for their curiosity and instinctual behaviors," said Diskin. "For example, our Petlinks Flitter Fly electronic cat toy satisfies a cat's need for independence. It allows them to explore, stalk and satisfy their endless curiosity."

Wand toys are also very popular in the cat market, and they are becoming more advanced each day. DaBird utilizes a specialty hook (similar to those used by fishermen) that helps the lure

accurately mimic the flight of a bird. NekoFlies uses a sturdy, expandable rod and lifelike bug lures to help stimulate cats to action.

"Keeping pets active is very important," said Ellen Tsuyaki, owner of Neko-chan Enterprises. "Senior cats often need more encouragement to become active. But our BirBug toy can inspire even the most inactive cat to play because its movement triggers the primal response of hunting."

Not only do wand toys encourage exercise, they stimulate the brain and improve human-pet relationships.

"Vee Enterprises began entertaining pets and pet owners alike under the philosophy that pets should be able to stimulate their mind and body while strengthening an emotional bond with their owners," said Eric Merva, sales manager of Vee Enterprises. "In 1988, Lorie and Steve Viner found their cat Max constantly pawing for their attention and running amuck in their house with endless energy and destruction. Seeking a means to channel Max's energy into a controlled and productive activity, Lorie and Steve created the Original PURRfect Cat Toy. Our Original PURRfect Cat Toy was designed to capture a cat's attention and inspire exercise through play with their owner."

Since most pets in multipet (or even multispecies) homes share their toys with other pets, it makes sense to stock a toy that is effective for more than one species.

"The Jack For Joy Pet Toy is an interactive toy constructed of a very durable SAN plastic," said Samuel

Zimmers, Animo Products. "Made to endure interactive play for many animals. Not only for the tumble play of puppies and adult dogs, rabbits enjoy pushing it over as do chinchillas. The shape intrigues them. Large birds

can be found holding it with their claws and beaks. When the toy isn't being played with, it doubles as a massage tool used to de-stress the animal."

When evaluating toys to stock, look for innovative product lines that allow for mental and physical growth in pets. For example, the Nina Ottosson series comes in several sizes and levels of difficulty for both dogs and cats. Tiered puzzle or toy lines encourage consumers to come back and purchase more advanced toys as their pets mature and adapt to familiar toys.

For the Birds

No species is exempt from the benefits of physical and mental exercise and many stores are now stocking bird and small animal toys. Considering that 60 percent of bird and small animal owners (according to the 2015-2016 APPA National Pet Owners Survey) have bought toys for their pets this year, that can equate to a large return on investment for retailers.

"The Fun-Max Educational Toys made by Zoo-Max offer a variety of very stimulating and challenging puzzle toys," said Mary Wyld, Founder, President & Owner, Wyld's Wingdom. "They teach colors and shapes and provide mental exercise which is so important for these intelligent, gorgeous birds. Also, Caitec makes a number of interactive foraging puzzle toys in which food is placed to challenge the bird and help prevent boredom. Their items are part of the Creative Foraging System line."

"When you 'think bird', 'think child'! Their little brains develop to the intelligence of a two to five year old little human," said Wyld. "If you incorporate that thinking when choosing toys for the birds, you will be doing them a great service. Always keep safety and appropriate size in mind as well."

All species benefit from having interactive toys and the only limit to selection is a manufacturer's imagination. Better quality toys made from recyclable materials in the U.S.A. seem to be the focus in the industry – and consumers are willing to pay for these items.





Maximize Profits with Retail Displays

High quality fixtures help avoid clutter and increase sales

BY MISTY WILFING

No matter what you're selling, a disorganized store filled with cluttered shelves presents an unnecessary barrier to customer purchases. Whether you're looking to clean up your current space, expand, relocate, or increase your inventory, it's important to keep your store organized with high volume, high margin products prominently displayed. A few small changes can have a big impact on your bottom line and offer a pleasing shopping experience for

both your human customers and their and non-human companions. Follow these simple tips to maximize your retail space.

This Way, Please

A common challenge of retail stores is designing an organized layout. Many spaces start with a clear arrangement in mind, but as inventory changes, that organization disappears. Take a moment to consider the path you want custom-

ers to take and which products should be featured on that path. The route should pass all of your products in order to maximize sales, but special offers and popular items should be featured prominently.

Three of the most popular retail layouts are: racetrack, power aisle and free flowing. Before deciding between the three, consider the following to ensure you pick the right layout for your store.

Racetrack Layout: The racetrack layout features a racetrack aisle that circles the entire store. The interior and exterior of the main aisle will feature different sub-layouts, which allows for the maximum exposure to products on perimeter walls.

Free Flow Layout: The free flow layout is the most common type of layout for specialty or small retailers. It also allows for the most creativity, which can generate a unique feeling for your brand that will keep customers returning. In a free form layout, there are no set aisles or straight lines. This encourages shoppers to move freely throughout the store and be exposed to various products and displays.

Power Aisle: The power aisle layout has the fixtures parallel to the walls and is commonly seen in grocery or big box stores. This grid system allows the customer to begin in one corner of the store and navigate each and every aisle while shopping. An added benefit of the grid layout is that end caps and outposts can be used effectively to draw attention to special promotions or sales.

Which Layout is Right for You?

The first thing to consider when choosing a design is the shape and size of your store. Racetrack configurations are generally not effective in small stores, whereas free flow layouts work well with limited floor space. Products that require strict organization (pet food, aquarium chemicals, etc.) are better suited for a power aisle or racetrack design over a free flow layout. Boutique and independent stores can benefit from the free flow layout, as it sets them apart from the larger chain or big box stores.

Once you have settled on a layout, experiment with it so that featured displays or walls are visible in high traffic areas. Most importantly, do not become attached to your layout design, as it may be necessary to adjust the layout based upon the preferences of your customers. For example, if you notice that shoppers routinely pass over a section of the store, it may require you to alter your floor plan to make the flow into the sec-

tion more natural or appealing.

The most important consideration is the experience of your customers. While your products may be better suited for a free form layout, if this set-up hurts the customer experience it is better to rely on a more traditional layout.

Make a Good First Impression

The space directly inside a store's entrance is known as the "decompression zone." It is important to keep this space open and clear of obstacles so customers develop a feel for the overall layout without being distracted immediately by products.

One method for balancing an inviting entrance with a sales opportunity is to place a display 10 to 15 feet away from the front door. The display should be well organized and show customers the types of products they can expect throughout the store. Nesting tables are a great choice for entry displays since they lend themselves to displaying almost anything.



When deciding what products to feature, look for new inventory and sales items that will make customers excited to explore the rest of your space. Premium, unique offerings will set the tone for customers' experience and differentiate you from your competitors.

Don't Neglect the Checkout

The space where customers pay is often overlooked when it comes to layout and planning. It's important to make checkout spaces easily accessible and clear of obstructions to turn browsers into paying customers.

With the right displays, you can maintain organization while still displaying small, inexpensive items that customers are prone to buy impulsively. Frequently purchased items, gift ideas, and small items that might get lost in your aisles are a great place to start. Treats, cat laser pointers and other small toys may work well in a pet store's checkout area.

It is important that a customer has

enough space at the checkout. For example, pet stores may need more space between counters so that two- and four-legged customers all fit comfortably. An unprofessional and cramped checkout counter dissuades purchases and decreases your sales. It also creates a negative lasting impression of your store at the end of the shopping experience and could stop shoppers from returning.

Choosing the Best Displays

Once you've chosen the layout and types of displays that are right for your store, it's time to turn your attention to finding the right product. Below are a few features to consider before purchasing your new fixtures.

Quality Build: Be sure to note the quality of the construction and materials when shopping for fixtures. Your customers will interact with your

displays every day. Choose strong, premium materials to give customers confidence in your products.

Durability: Cheap fixtures can often cost more in the end due to repair and replacement costs. Think of fixtures as an investment in your company that can benefit your store for years to come.

When deciding what products to feature, look for new inventory and sales items that will make customers excited to explore the rest of your space.

Customization: Custom solutions are a great way to gain an edge on the competition. You can choose specially sized and shaped fixtures to fit your store's odd spaces, and match the color to

your existing color pallet. Ask potential manufacturers about what customization options they provide to see what's right for you.

Delivery and Customer Support:

Make sure you find a fixture manufacturer that has a reputation for on-time delivery and strong customer service. Check rating websites like Yelp, Angie's List or even Google when starting out. Asking for a list of references to call can help you understand the experiences others have had when working with a particular company.

Misty Wilfing is the marketing director for Gabriel Logan, which has been designing, building and installing custom fixtures since 2002. Located in Logan, Ohio, the company has worked with companies across the country to deliver high quality, durable products. For more information, visit their website at www.gabriellogan.com.





Keeping Them Moving

Beneficial treats join supplements in providing pet joint care.

BY MAGGIE MARTON

Our pets are living longer, busier lives. Unfortunately, that means more time for them to develop joint damage. To support dogs as they age or as they experience injuries, hip and joint care is a major concern. According to the latest American Pet Products Association's National Pet Owners Survey, among pet owners who give their pets supplements, the most popular category is joint health and mobility. The survey also found that trend holds true among all-sized breeds.

With new products emerging from extensive research and development, dogs who experience joint-related issues can still have a wonderful quality of life.

While supplements drive the joint care category, this niche extends beyond pills and powders. Customers seeking to minimize joint damage or care for an aging dog consider multiple product categories.

While these products often are thought of as being for aging dogs, they extend beyond that into dogs with health conditions like arthritics, competitive or athletic dogs, working dogs and large breeds. Dog beds fill a big gap for those owners: from orthopedic and memory foam options to built-in heating and cooling systems, customers can purchase different joint solutions. Likewise, harnesses can provide owners with

the ability to support dogs who require joint care.

Effective Ingredients

Though those additional market segments are expanding, the liquids, pills, powders and treats still drive growth.

In her Manhattan-based store Petropolis, Tazz Latifi said ingredients matter.

"As a retailer, I train my staff and we have some great products that we love and that work very well," she said.

She recommends Nordic Naturals to help with inflammation, joint care and skin care, and she often suggests Liquid Health because it absorbs well.

"If one of those supplements doesn't



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work, the other will,” she said. “Generally, MSM [methylsulfonylmethane] is what works 50 to 70 percent of the time versus the other ingredients. VetriScience joint products are excellent as well.”

She suggests VetriScience’s pure MSM product.

The key from the retailer’s perspective is to educate clients so they don’t inadvertently overload their pet’s system. Latifi said that while “appetizing is where sales come from, the supplement industry is so unregulated. It’s tough for pet parents. Everyone wants a quick fix.”

She counsels her customers to start with a solid foundation of high-quality, minimally-processed foods, then figure out the right supplement. “I love supplements if used properly. I’m always very cautious with what I recommend,” she said.

“With age and injury, every pet will face some kind of joint related challenge, but approximately 25 percent of all pets will experience significant, degenerative joint issues,” said Heidi Nevala, president of Natura Petz Organics. “Large breed dogs often manifest joint issues in their hips and shoulders, whereas small breed and miniatures experience knee and spine issues. Some dogs and cats have greatest exposure simply due to genetics, like German shepherds, and working and performance pets also are at higher risk due to rigorous training and repetitive actions. Cold weather takes a toll on dogs and cats, creating more aches and pains and conditionally, and the possibility of greater joint problems. Obesity is a related issue to joint problems.”

Natura Petz Organics offers four products that aid joints: Vitamin Ninja, Joint Ease, Body Bliss and Bionic Body.

Healthy Treats

For some customers, treats with added joint care benefits provide an enticing way to both spoil their pet while providing additional benefits. Hip Action, one of Zuke’s three most popular treat lines, provides that type of support.

“Pet owners who are concerned with the health of their pet’s joints are focused

on finding effective solutions that save time and are easy to give. Pills and powders can be frustrating for both owner and pet, but by making the delivery of glucosamine, chondroitin, antioxidants and eggshell meal part of treat time, Hip Action removes the stress associated with administering remedies and instead turns it into an opportunity to bond,” said Chris Meiering, director of innovation at Zuke’s.

“Treats are, in fact, an ideal delivery system for the many supplements that increase the quality of a pet’s life.”

– Chris Meiering

For her customers who are interested in treats as a way to deliver those added benefits, Latifi cautions them about burdening the pet’s kidneys.

“Treats plus supplements plus whatever else—don’t overdo it. Work with a nutritionist. Speak with your vet. Start the process slowly. Take your time; over a couple weeks, slowly build up to the amount for their proper weight.”

Especially for customers who are new to this category or who are unfamiliar with their options, it’s important for retailers to take an active role in helping them make the best decision for their dogs.

“For Hip Action, as well as many other functional treats, retailers need

to communicate to customers the real efficacy of the product,” Meiering said. “They are not only easier to administer than a pill or powder, but they are extremely effective at relieving the pain associated with arthritis, hip dysplasia and other joint issues. Treats are, in fact, an ideal delivery system for the many supplements that increase the quality of a pet’s life. To ensure that a pet receives the full benefit of Hip Action, it’s important for pet owners to read the feeding instructions on the back of the Hip Action package where they’ll find the recommended daily dose based on the weight of their pet.”

Two additional opportunities exist as sub-segments of this category: weight management and natural. Many dogs who experience joint problems are also overweight, so overlapping product recommendations, like low-calorie treats, can be beneficial. Also, leverage the increased demand for natural or holistic products by stocking a selection of those offerings. NaturVet, Pet Naturals of Vermont and B-Naturals are three popular options.

Finally, whether your customers are interested in conventional or natural products, or need weight management strategies, always suggest a trip to the veterinarian before recommending any product solutions.

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



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Strolling the Dog

Pet strollers grow in popularity and variety.

BY SANDY ROBINS

It is hard to believe that it has been more than 25 years since the airline-approved Sherpa bag first appeared in pet specialty stores, changing the way pets travel. It spawned a plethora of spin-off products, such as carriers with wheels and a variety of strollers that have boosted pets' social lives and made it easy for pet owners to take them everywhere.

Recently this category has seen new and improved versions of popular products getting attention.

According to Todd Jakubowski, president of Pet Gear, Inc., the company's patented easy latch gadgetry eliminates the

hassles of closing strollers with zippers as well as the maintenance issue of repairing them. Not to mention eliminating the issue of pet escape artists with deft paws opening the zippers themselves.

The company's NV No Zip Stroller is designed for joggers with its large three-wheel design.

"It navigates rough terrain with ease with a front-locking wheel," Jakubowski said. "Conventional air-pumped tires offer a smoother ride and the stroller also features an elevated paw rest as well as a better view with the newly designed panoramic meshed view window. Other

new features include a weather cover and a plush bolster pad to improve the interior comfort."

The roomy stroller is designed for multiple pets or a single occupant up to 75 pounds. It also has a special one-handed, easy to close mechanism to fold it flat for travel.

Other new additions to the Pet Gear line include two new fabric designs for the single no-zip strollers, namely a black and white Dalmatian pattern and a brown and black jaguar design.

The company also recently debuted a line of totes for small dogs called R

and R Totes. Available in six stylish color combinations, the totes have a removable fleece inner liner and a handy pocket for keys and a cell phone.

According to Jakubowski, the tote design also meets certain airline specifications.

There are also a lot of new features in the line of strollers and rolling pet carriers from Gen7Pets.

"Our Monaco strollers have a new lightweight aluminum frame and now only weigh 17 pounds as opposed to 27 pounds," said Daniel Hawk, sales and marketing director, Pet Gear.

"They also have what we call Smart Features, such as a new auto-lock latching system, which eliminates the use of zippers and a larger removable basket. The idea is that by making the basket removable pet owners don't have to unpack it when folding down the stroller."

Hawk added that the consumer landscape has changed dramatically with regard to pet strollers over the past few years.

"At one stage, strollers were only available from online retailers. Now they are becoming a common stock item in brick and mortar stores nationwide," he

said. "This means that pet owners have more opportunities to examine them firsthand, and this in turn translates into more sales."

Hawk stated that the company's new Roller Carriers also have new smart features. The new level platform remains flat and doesn't tip and tilt pets forward when the carrier is being rolled along. It also has top and front entry access.

"Further, the roller carrier is multi-functional," Hawk said. "It's a roller carrier bag, a backpack, a portable den and also a car restraint as the carrier can be secured in a vehicle using the standard seatbelts. It also has four wheels to ensure a smooth ride for the occupant."

New from LazyBonzz is the Super Star Carrier made from vegan leather with a removable interior pad and a tether for additional safety.

"The star design offers pets a mesh lookout in addition to the mesh ventilated side panels," said Devon Hambrecht, spokesperson for the company.

From Solvit Pet Products comes the Solvit Stroller Conversion Kit that easily converts the company's HoundAbout II Trailer into a versatile, all-terrain stroller for pets.

"The easy to install stroller conversion kit includes a handlebar, front swiveling wheel, parking brake and cup holder," said Pat Hoffman, president of the Texas-based company. "The conversion from trailer to stroller literally takes a minute."

Finally, Sherpa—the brand that started it all—has tweaks to talk about, too. The Sherpa Ultimate On Wheels, for pets up to 16 pounds, now features recessed castor wheels for an easy-glide motion and a detachable padded pull strap. It's approved for use on most major airlines and the medium size is included in Sherpa's Guaranteed On Board program.

The range of Sherpa carriers now fall under the Worldwide umbrella as a result of the merger of the Quaker Pet Group with Worldwide.

As more pet owners take their dogs with them wherever they go, the growth in the demand for carriers and strollers shows no sign of slowing down.

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.





Feline Fun House

There are stylish, innovative new options for cat furniture.

BY STACY MANTLE

Design for the pet industry is just as inspired as design for humans, and this year cat furniture is getting a makeover with sleek, minimalist designs. Today's consumers understand that a well-furnished home can result in happier indoor cats and fewer behavior problems. For this reason, they are seeking designs that fit naturally with their own décor and that are made from durable, cost-effective materials that will keep any cat content.

For Fashionable Felines

Making an impression is the newly-released, seven-piece Vesper V-line series of cat furniture from Rolf C. Hagen. The Vesper V-line furniture offers a combination of cubes, platforms and tunnels with strategically placed sisal scratching areas to provide comfort and playtime for cats of all sizes and ages.

"We developed Vesper as a new and unique line of cat furniture in a timeless modern design," said Stephan Hagen, marketing director at Rolf C. Hagen. "In addition to its highly aesthetic look, we incorporated high-quality materials and meticulous workmanship for a durable product, sold for a great value."

Luxurious but affordable, Kathy Ireland's Loved Ones from Worldwide is a standout line of furniture solutions for cat owners.

"Kathy Ireland is a true believer that 'our pets are truly members of our family and we want these loved ones to know how important they are to us every day,'" said Aimee Diskin, director of innovation and product development for Worldwide. "With that in mind, she partnered with pet industry leader, Worldwide, to create the Loved Ones line of solution based pet products. The line includes a collection of stylish, modular cat furniture that satisfies your cat's natural needs by providing places for them to scratch, play, groom, stretch and rest. Innovative designs are inspired by home décor trends. These elegant pieces work perfectly on their own, but can also be combined to create a stylish activity center for your cat."

Different Styles for Different Cats

Form follows function, so it's important to help customers understand their cats in order to purchase the proper piece of furniture.

"When designing furniture for pets,

you have two customers, the pet and the pet parent," said Josh Feinkind, owner of RefinedKind Pet Products. "Each has their distinctive needs. We design our products to satisfy each; cats want to be able to climb, scratch and perch, and could care less about the look of the product. However, pet parents who are concerned with aesthetics want not only their pet happy, but pieces that flow with their decor. Our designs address both parties. Bottom dwellers who lay under tables and couches may find a bed on the ground ideal, like our Kitty Ball Bed. Cats who tend to climb bookshelves and armoires may be keener on tall cat towers like our Lotus or wall shelves like our Cat Clouds."

For those who prefer to bring the outdoors in, Pet Tree Houses has developed an inexpensive new indoor treehouse that's sure to engage any cat's climbing instincts.

"Natural means that the cat can engage on an instinctive level," said Shelley DelRocco, vice president of Pet Tree Houses. The company, who recently set the world record for the world's tallest cat tree, uses real trees and synthetic silk foliage to encourage cats to scratch and

stretch on naturally gnarled branches.

"We recently introduced the KIT-TY tree that the customer can easily put together at home," DelRocco said. "The Tree is affordably priced and is the same high-quality and craftsmanship as the rest of the line and includes the real tree, silk foliage, removable carpet and poseable foliage."

Retailers should also consider the types of homes their customers have when stocking furniture for cats. The market is showing innovation in developing products like the space-saving cat shelves or the inspiring Cat Crib, which attaches to virtually any type of traditional chair.

"Our beds blend into the owner's furniture," said Greg Hora, president of Cat Crib. "The cat hammock attaches right to the chair legs. They provide a comfy place where the kitty feels safe while taking up wasted space in the home. We were tired of the bulky cat beds (that our cats didn't use) taking up space on our floor. They were a bit of an eye sore just sitting there. The Cat Crib blends right into the furniture in your home and gives your cat a sleeping area catered to their liking."

Make It Easy

The easy-to-install shelves feature strong metal platforms with faux sheepskin fabric pads that attach magnetically and permit easy replacement.

"Not all cats can jump three feet and you might have an older cat with arthritis or poor balance that you want to provide a cat tree or window perch for," said Rebecca Mountain, president of Mountain Cat Trees. "The design of the cat tree, window perch or shelf should take this into consideration and not be too high, or should have raised sides to prevent a fall."

Another easy to stack and store option is from Catty Stacks, who created the simplest of designs made from a feline friend: high density cardboard. These stackable cubes are a hit with all customers and cats, and allow for an easily modified, cost-effective solution that is environmentally friendly and appealing to both cats and humans.

Another fun product is the collapsible NekoNappers house from Neko-chan.

"Our houses offer many benefits, but most of all they are versatile, unique and compatible with any home design," said Ellen Tsuyuki, owner of Nekochan Enterprises. "I think cats enjoy places where they can have a hiding spot to view what is going on, feel protected as they sleep and still stalk prey passing in front of the opening."

Outside Accommodations

Outdoor cats are even being shown the love this year with specialized shelters that you can place outdoors to help protect them from the elements. These sturdy, weatherproof enclosures also come in an indoor, carpeted version for scratching and lounging.

"Our cat beds are unique because they're designed for inside and outside use, whereas many other brands focus on indoor cats," said Pascale Duff-

ieux-Pierce, executive vice president of Brinsea Products. "The KatKabin has a weatherproof shell to keep outdoor or feral cats dry and cozy in adverse weather, as well as shaded in the summer. The unique dome shape makes it easy to hide in bushes, which cats love, and the removable cat door gives them an extra feeling of security while simultaneously blocking wind and weather. Our Sk-ratchKabin is a great indoor activity center because it's a scratcher and lounge in one, which is a big hit with consumers."

As cats gain a larger section of the pet market, retailers will find that high-quality cat houses, beautifully designed and sourced from environmentally friendly materials, are in high demand.

Stacy Mantle is an award-winning writer and multi-species pet lifestyle expert, author, and spokesperson. She is the founder of PetsWeekly.com and a regular contributor to national publications including Pet Age, Cat Fancy, and Animal Behavioral College.

SPOTLIGHT

GROOM NAILS WHILE SCRATCHING UNIQUE SCRATCHER HELPS ENHANCE NAIL HEALTH

The EmeryCat® Scratcher, made by Illinois-based Petstages Inc., provides a patented, abrasive surface that helps enhance nail health. The surface infuses corrugate with a natural, sand coating to help groom nails as kitty scratches.

The curved design satisfies a cat's natural desire to stretch and scratch and the sturdy platform provides the perfect spot for lounging. The EmeryCat helps stop destructive scratching behavior by preventing cats from scratching other household surfaces such as furniture. A feather toy and catnip packet are included to attract kitty and encourage play.

Refills are sold separately for added life of the product.



- Website www.Petstages.com
- Facebook facebook.com/Petstages
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Catnip: The Perennial Favorite

Customer demand for catnip toys remains high.

BY SANDY ROBINS

Cat owners will agree; a household with cats can never have too many catnip toys. Cats love variety, and this simple nontoxic plant has added health benefits. It revs up a cat's play drive, providing much needed mental and physical stimulation as a result of frenetic play sessions with "nip" toys.

Refill It Up

"Our research shows that refillable catnip toys outsell regular catnip toys two-to-one, which is why it's not surprising that our Petlinks Lil' Creepers three-pack of refillable mice is our number one selling catnip toy in pet specialty retail stores," said Aimee Diskin, director of product development and innovation at Worldwide.

"Our Tea Zing three-pack of catnip 'tea bags' also does well. We believe this is because they're stuffing-free and 100 percent catnip filled, which really allows the potency of our catnip to come through."

Catnip is also an integral part of the company's new Flutter Fly electronic motion toy.

"This whirl-and-catch wind toy blows colorful butterflies and lightweight feathers around a clear bowl with a gentle fan that's safe for cats. Cats delight in poking a paw through the top opening, trying to catch the swirling butterflies,"



Diskin said. "The toy comes with a packet of Pure Bliss organic catnip. The idea is to sprinkle a bit into the bowl to ramp up the excitement of playtime."

Petlinks' new Wild Clawz product combines motion toys and scratchers with a catnip component designed to add a new level of fun and excitement to this typical feline behavior and type of play. An erratically spinning electronic feather and ribbon toy attracts cats to the scratcher. Pure Bliss organic catnip is provided to sprinkle on the scratcher

surface. The sturdy base offers two height options and adjusts to fit a standard corrugate block.

"It securely holds the reusable, home décor inspired scratch box that is refillable with a new Claw Therapy corrugated scratcher, a Scratcher's Choice+ corrugated scratcher or any standard sized doublewide cat scratcher from the product line," Diskin said.

The Wild Clawz also comes complete with replaceable batteries included.

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Trends & Products Cats

Stuff It

Duckyworld, known for its quirky catnip toys, debuted a variety of new products at SuperZoo earlier this year. The Chubby Mouse is stuffed with catnip and comes in a special jug for counter display. The bright yellow Yeowww! Lady-Krinkle-Bug is a 100 percent stuffed catnip bug for additional play interest. It is also available in a countertop display jug.

The company has a variety of holiday-inspired toys—which make great stocking stuffers—such as the Dreidel Krinkle, Yeowww! Tide Candy Cane and Yeowww! Gift Bundle, containing company favorites like the banana-shaped toy.

According to Pascal Bedard, owner and toy designer behind the From the Field brand, American-grown catnip has a reputation for being ranked among the best catnip grown in the world.

“It sells well both nationally and internationally,” Bedard said. “From a retailer’s standpoint, catnip toys are relatively inexpensive items and we always recommend that stores invest between \$50 or \$100 in new cat toys in order to test a proper response to them in-store.”

The company is known for its biodegradable hemp cat toys and has just released a new toy called Jacques le Sock. It comes filled with its Ultimate Blend, a mix of catnip and silver vine. The sock-shaped toy comes in five colors and is being promoted as a stocking stuffer for the holiday season ahead.

“Our research shows that refillable catnip toys outsell regular catnip toys two to one.”

—Aimee Diskin

From The Field was one of the first companies in the United States to experiment with silver vine, an Asian plant also known as matatabi. It contains three natural chemicals—namely nepetalac-

tone, actinidine and dihydroactinidiolide—that provide cats with a euphoria similar to, but more intense than, catnip.

“The response has been phenomenal,” Bedard said. “Silver vine is great for cat owners who have cats who don’t react to catnip. Although still a niche market, word of mouth through the cat toy market is spreading fast.”

Catnip toys are also becoming an add-on accessory for other cat products, too.

Paige Wheeler, who manufactures feline yoga mats under the brand name Feline Yogi, includes a catnip toy with her product as part of a package.

“The mats, which can be used as sleeping mats or scratching pads, are accessorized with a handmade sisal rope with a catnip-stuffed ball,” Wheeler said. “Its premium catnip and I get a lot of great feedback on how much the cats like the catnip toy, which inspires them to play on the mat.”

Live, Loose and More

Apart from catnip toys, tubs of dried loose catnip are another popular item for cat owners to keep the games going by regularly replacing the product in refillable toys. They are a great impulse buy item, especially if strategically placed near a checkout register.

Imperial Cat’s new Cat ‘n Around Catnip Bubbles provide cats with an alternative fun way to get their catnip fix.

The bubble solution, which comes in an 8-ounce bottle, is nontoxic, dye-free and infused with Imperial Cat’s own brand of catnip. Just like regular bubbles, there’s a wand with a ring in the solution to blow through to create the floating bubbles for cats to chase and pop.



“They can work with scratchers too by directing the bubbles to land on its surface to attract feline interest,” said Kristie Hamilton, director of sales for Imperial Cat.

Real catnip plants are not only decorative, but also equally popular with cat owners whose cats enjoy the herb live. The plant grows well both indoor and outside.

Bell Rock Growers of southern California sell a variety of pet greens popular with cats such as wheat and barley and, of course, its Live Catnip as part of its Pet Greens brand.

“We have seen solid growth in live catnip that has been slightly above industry standards,” said Caleb Barber, marketing director of Bell Rock Growers.

“This seems to be in line with the humanization trend. As more people are choosing to cook with fresh herbs rather than dry, the same is being seen in catnip. More people are choosing live catnip because it is fresher and more potent,” he said.

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.

Fresh and Fun Aquaponics

Grow your aquatics sales with this popular trend.

BY KAREN M. ALLEY

What do you get when you cross aquaculture with hydroponics? Aquaponics! This growing trend in fishkeeping provides great opportunities to increase sales and attract new customers for retailers who specialize in aquatics.

Farming through the use of large-scale aquaponics has been around for quite a while. The practice of growing fish and vegetables within a safe system and creating an environment where each survive and thrive due to the presence of the other is an efficient and productive type of farming. Recently more people have become interested in aquaponics on a smaller scale, which provides a great new opportunity for retailers looking to create a buzz in their aquarium category.

There are many reasons why aquaponics is becoming more popular among aquarists. One is the fact that aquaponics provides a new set of plants to use in combination with an aquarium, increasing the variety over a traditional planted tank that uses only submersible plants. For people who are interested in both fish keeping and gardening, this provides a foolproof way to combine the two hobbies. Also, more people are concerned with recycling, eating and shopping locally, and

taking better care of the environment. With aquaponics, people can grow herbs using their fish tank, which provides safe and locally sourced edible plants. And on the aesthetic side, an aquaponics system can make for an interesting addition to any home's décor.

Aquaponics is also popular because of the benefits that come from growing plants and keeping fish in the same environment. People with experience in planted aquariums know that the plants and their roots act as natural filters, which leads to a cleaner tank that requires fewer



water changes. The fish also play an important role, as their waste is an ideal fertilizer for plants.

Aquarium Kits Make Getting Started Easy

The science of aquaponics can be daunting, but luckily there are kits on the market that can help customers get involved in this hobby.

“People are looking for alternatives to traditional filters that are aesthetically pleasing and also keep the tank clean.”

– Phil Bartoszek

For a customer who wants to set up an aquaponics system with a traditional filter, the Aqueon Aqua Springs aquarium kit—launched this past spring by Central Garden and Pet—is an exceptional choice. The frameless glass tank comes with a potted-plant ring adapter made for growing a plant that lives partly in the water. The plant is placed on top of the filter in a ring adapter and the roots are allowed to dangle down, which aids in filtering the water. In addition to the plant’s natural filtration, the tank also comes with an Aqueon Quiet Flow filter, which removes waste and debris from the water. These kits are available in 8.8 and 11 gallon sizes.

Elive Pet also has aquaponics kits available in 3, 10 and 20 gallon sizes. What makes this system unique is the AquaDuo filter, which can be used with a cartridge like a traditional filter or planted and used as an aquaponics filter.

“People are looking for alternatives to traditional filters that are aesthetically pleasing and also keep the tank clean,” said Phil Bartoszek, research and development product manager, Elive Pet. “The AquaDuo filter is more aesthetically pleasing with a live plant growing out of it, and it makes use of truly natural filtration, which more customers are looking for.”

Aquatop also has a new product line in the aquaponics category with its Nanoponic Aquariums in 3 and 5 gallon sizes.

“There’s a general trend right now for desktop aquariums and we felt small aquariums would appeal to a wider audience, including men, women and children, in a product that could be kept just as easily at the office as at home,” said Eugene Lee, Aquatop project manager.

These kits come with a plant tray, a quiet filtration system with a replaceable cartridge and an LED light for the fish.

Managing the Input

The practice of aquaponics creates a closed system that requires fewer water changes than traditional aquariums, which means it’s even more important to pay attention to what is added to the water.

“You have to be careful that what you put into the tank is safe, because minerals and heavy metals might build up over time,” Bartoszek said. “This is especially important if you’re growing vegetables or herbs that you might want to eat.”

For this reason it is important to look for substrates that provide a healthy growing medium for plants without artificial dyes or added chemical coatings. Carb-Sea’s Eco-Complete and Seachem’s Flourite and Onyx Sand are all good options for aquaponics.

“Eco-Complete is a geologically recent volcanic soil, which means it is full of all the trace elements plants need to grow without us having to add anything manually,” said Betsey Moore, vice president, CaribSea.

Flourite is also an all-natural product, made up of naturally mined clay stone rather than volcanic soil. The Onyx Sand is different because it contains some carbonates, which increase the hardness of the water slightly.

“This can be beneficial for people with soft water or aquariums with African cichlids that appreciate higher hardness,” said Daniel Griffin of Seachem’s technical support team.

Food is another input for aquaponics systems, and Elive Pet’s Fusion Flake is advertised as “aquaponics approved.” Made from whole ingredients such as bloodworms, brine shrimp or mysis shrimp, the flake is five times thicker than traditional flake food, which means you don’t get as many small particles and

dust in the water.

Set It Up and Educate

Nothing increases incremental sales like having something new to offer customers. Set up a system in your store and be prepared to answer questions and talk about aquaponics with your customers. When people see the clean water, healthy fish and vibrant plants, they’ll be ready to try aquaponics in their own home.

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

Traditional Planted Tank Is Still Alive

Even with the emerging category of aquaponics, traditional planted tanks are going strong.

“Planted aquariums are a wonderful combination of aquarium keeping, gardening and art, and the potential for growth in this segment continues as people’s tanks are getting more spectacular, and there are more clubs and magazines dedicated to planted tanks,” said Betsey Moore, vice president, CaribSea.

Stay on top of the category by offering products specifically for planted tanks.

- Aquatop is coming out with a line of high-clarity class tanks in Euro-bow and cube shapes, which are designed to bring out the natural colors of the plants.

- Aqueon’s LED Aqualight can be customized for planted tanks with a combination of 10,000 K, Colormax and Trichromatic LED Tri-Lamps to promote photosynthesis and simulate the mid-day tropical sun.

- The Aqueon OptiBright LED uses a combination of red, white and blue LED lights for plants that require low to medium light levels.

- Plant foods such as Aqueon Plant Food, Kent Marine Pro-Plant and Seachem’s Flourish plant supplements help plants thrive in any setting.



The Way the Fish Flake Crumbles

Understanding your customers, products creates sales of pelleted and flaked foods.

BY JOE OLENIK

Most of us probably don't give it much thought, but the invention of flaked fish food by Dr. Ulrich Baensch in the 1950s was quite possibly the single most important event in making aquarium keeping possible for home hobbyists. From those early days, technology, coupled with our understanding of the specific dietary needs of individual fish species, has resulted in dry fish foods that are state-of-the-art, convenient to use and nutritionally complete. A basic understanding of fish foods, the nutritional needs of the fish and the lifestyles of home aquarists will give independent aquatic retailers a leg up on big box stores and online vendors.

Knowledge and personal attention is what drives most consumers to shop at their local fish store versus mass merchandisers or e-vendors, so your sales staff need to ask the right questions and make sure your customers have the right foods for their fish.

"Take the time to understand the customers' needs and application," said Phil Bartoszek, product manager at Elive

Pet Products. "Ask them about what species they are keeping, what foods they are currently feeding and what they like or don't like about the current foods they are offering their fish. With this information you can make suggestions of new and different foods for them to try and explain why they will be better or different in a way that will resonate with them."

With the variety of ornamental fish available in today's hobby, retailers need to be able to accommodate a wide range of dietary needs.

"Offering a variety of foods designed to feed different types of fish ensures that all shoppers' needs will be met at the store," said Andy Hudson, product validation at Central Garden and Pet.

"The food should be nutritionally balanced for the type of fish that the consumer keeps and also the appropriate size," said Scott Rabe, director of marketing at Central Garden & Pet.

An easy way to introduce new foods to your customers is to let them see them in action.

"Having some store-use samples of the range of fish foods you sell can go a long way. Not only will your employees learn more about the different foods as they feed them in store, but you can show the customer how a food feeds in person before they buy," Bartoszek said. "When a customer is buying new fish you can send them home with the exact same food those fish are currently feeding on. This may not only get them to try a new food, but also ensures the fish will feed well for them at home and improve their success rate."

The first flake and pelleted fish foods were 'one-size-fits-all' products, however, today's product lines are tailored to not only provide the nutritional needs of specific types of fish, but also to accommodate their feeding methods in nature.

For example, Hikari offers a wide range of specially formulated pellet and wafer foods. They come in both floating and sinking formats and are available in a variety of sizes to accommodate any feeding strategy, any nutritional preference and any sized fish. Most Hikari

Trends & Products Aquarium

foods are packaged in small, medium and large pouches, designed to meet the needs and budget of virtually any hobbyist.

The use of probiotics is becoming more popular as well.

"Cobalt's flakes and pellets all include probiotic bacteria that help support a healthy digestive system," said

Les Wilson of Cobalt Aquatics. "In addition, every flavor also features the Cobalt Blue Flake or pellet that is 20 percent of blend. The Cobalt Blue Flake and Pellets have a triple dose of vitamins and immunostimulants that support the fishes' healthy and active immune system above and beyond regular foods."

Another key factor in successful flake

and pellet food sales is effective merchandising.

"Great merchandising can always increase sales," Wilson said. "Consider shifting your merchandising of food from organizing by brand to by flavor or vice-versa to create new excitement in the set. Take advantage of help from manufacturers' reps' willingness to reset the section for you and include POP materials like headers and danglers. Keep shelves well stocked and product fronted. Highlight at chest to eye-level the brands you want to push and recommend, and put other brands that you decide to carry lower in the merchandising set."

Deciding what flake and pellet foods to carry in your store can be a challenge.

"Buyers should consider product features that will appeal to the full range of their clientele, from the first time aquarist to the seasoned hobbyist," Bartoszek said. "Although high-end ingredients and premium features may be important for some advanced customers, they may be unnecessary or too complicated for entry-level customers who just want something easy. By offering a range of products and price points you can guarantee you will have the right combination of performance and features for every customer's feeding application."

When it comes to competing with big box stores and e-vendors, Wilson had some advice.

"Stores should also think about the distribution of the brand and if the consumer will look to them as the source of the food for repeat business," he said.

With proper understanding of fish nutrition, solid staff training, strategic product selection and effective merchandising, retailers can keep their customers coming back to them for all their fish food needs.

Joe Olenick 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.



Ask the Expert



Brent Robinson
Director of Animal Husbandry

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This general information is not intended to provide individual advice. PAID CONTENT

Q: Should I use copper in my display system?

A: Copper (Cu²⁺) has been an effective method to manage various parasites that are common to the aquarium trade for years. It is most effective against marine ich (Cryptocaryon irritans). In display systems it is often more advantageous to have a continuous concentration of copper to proactively control issues rather than reactively dosing to treat outbreaks. Like all treatments, using copper does come with risks. Copper is an essential element in the enzymatic respiratory process for most organisms. However, when concentration exceeds the tolerance of that species, copper disrupts metabolic processes.

In general, fish have a much greater tolerance to copper than do invertebrates. It is this disparity in sensitivity that we are utilizing when treating with copper in your display. Dose is the single most important aspect of copper usage as it is effective in a very narrow range. Do not lose sight of the fact that fish will also exhibit symptoms of copper toxicity and how tolerant they are to it is dependent on species. Understanding these tolerances is paramount to the successful administration of copper in the aquarium. Testing continuously throughout the process is crucial to achieving a successful treatment dosage that also limits impacts to your livestock.



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HEIGHT ON TERRARIUM TOP

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IS EQUAL TO

IS EQUAL TO

BULB LIFESPAN

BULB DURABILITY

HEAT & LIGHT

DOMES UNDERSIDE

Bulky: more than 8.5"

Bulky: 6.5"

Old, inefficient technology

50 to 75 watt incandescent

100 to 150 watt incandescent

500 hours (industry average)

Thin glass, fragile filament

Spread out, less intense

White paint: absorbs heat/light



Better Homes and Lizards

New reptile enclosures offer more features than ever before.

BY TOM MAZORLIG

Reptile enclosures have come a long way from just being repurposed fish tanks. Nowadays, the trend is for herp enclosures to be made specifically for these animals. Additionally, the cages are becoming more specialized for certain species or groups of species. They also now incorporate more of the features that hobbyists want.

Not Typical Terrariums

A lot of design work is now involved in making reptile and amphibian enclosures. Hobbyists want them to look good and provide both easy access to their pets and security for their pets.

These attributes were kept in mind when designing the Tetrafauna Deluxe

ReptoHabitats from Spectrum Brands.

“Our Deluxe ReptoHabitats are designed by the world-renowned herpetologist Ron Tremper, a breeder of reptiles and amphibians for 40 years, specializing in geckos,” said Samantha Spidel, product manager, environments, Spectrum Brands – Pet, Home and Garden Division. “The Deluxe sliding door ReptoHabitats are innovative, premium environments for both terrestrial and aquatic reptiles and amphibians. Sliding glass doors with lockable knobs make front access and closure easy. The glass door track features ventilation notches for improved airflow, and best of all, the built-in, low profile drain system greatly simplifies water changes and reduces dis-

ruption to the environment and, more importantly, its inhabitants.”

For hobbyists who want a cage with a fresh look, there are the Exo Terra Habisphere and the Zoo Med ReptiHabitat Designer Terrariums.

The Exo Terra Habisphere from Rolf C. Hagen, Inc. has a sleek curved front that is bound to attract attention. The compact enclosure fits on any table or desk and is perfect for small species, including dart frogs, geckos, tarantulas and scorpions. It comes with day and night LEDs and a decorative background. Other backgrounds are available for download.

Zoo Med’s ReptiHabitat Designer Terrariums add a splash of color to herp



habitats. These 10 and 20 gallon terrariums trade out the normal black frame for vibrantly colored ones, including Glow-in-the-Dark.

If a hobbyist wants a showpiece terrarium for his or her home, he or she will need to put that terrarium on some type of stand or support for easy viewing. Hagen makes just the thing, the Exo Terra Terrarium Cabinet. Available in three sizes, the Terrarium Cabinet is finished in contemporary black with elegant smoked glass doors. Magnetic latches open easily, allowing storage of unsightly food, maintenance tools and other items out of sight.

Up in the Trees

A number of popular reptiles and amphibians are arboreal and fare best when kept in taller enclosures with plenty of climbing branches.

Tetrafauna's Arboreal Reptile and Snake Cage provides the vertical space these pets need. It has similar features to the Tetrafauna Deluxe ReptoHabitat, including the ease of access. It includes a bulkhead in the back, which enables easy creation of a waterfall or use of a filter for a water feature. It's appropriate for a number of tree dwelling species, including the popular crested gecko.

Some arboreal reptiles, notably the

spectacular chameleons, seem to do best when kept in well-ventilated enclosures rather than when they are boxed in by glass walls. Screen cages are perfect for them.

Zoo Med's ReptiBreeze LED Deluxe is a tall screen cage with a clear acrylic door for excellent visibility. It has an aluminum frame and is rust resistant. A pull-out bottom tray makes cleaning simple. It features built-in, touch acti-

vated LEDs for superior illumination. The LEDs can be set to three different modes.

Zilla's Fresh Air habitat is a screen enclosure with a durable, water resistant PVC bottom panel. The tough black mesh won't be ripped by a pet's claws. It's available in three sizes.

Getting Wet

Aquatic turtles remain among the most



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popular reptile pets. They require a large swimming area, making their housing requirements different than most other reptiles. Manufacturers have responded to this need by creating housing specifically for turtles.

"For those just starting in the hobby, or needing a quick setup for a recently acquired species, Tetrafauna offers 10, 15 and 20 gallon kits that include, filtration, a basking platform, heat lamp, bulb, screen top, food and water care," said Spidel. These kits are perfect for turtles but would also be suitable for other aquatic and semiaquatic species, such as many frogs and newts.

The Premium Aquatic Turtle Kit from Zilla comes in two sizes. It has several interesting and stylish features, including a chamfered front, open top, heat and UVB lighting and a basking surface that doubles as a filtration unit.

Zoo Med offers its ReptiHabitat Turtle Kits in two sizes. The kit comes with a 40 or 20 gallon tank with sliding screen top, UVB fluorescent lighting, basking lamp, Turtle Dock, water conditioner and more.

Additionally, Zoo Med offers the Turtle Tub Kit, which replicates a pond environment. It has a large land section with a ramp that leads to the swimming area. Kit includes a canister filter, lamp stand, UVB bulb, water conditioner and more. The Turtle Tub itself is also available separately.

Selling Reptile Real Estate

One of the best ways to sell these new innovative enclosures is to set some up as displays in your store.

"Setting up a live reptile habitat display in the retail environment is always inspiring for the consumer," said Spidel. "Showing the habitat complete with the heater, lighting, water feature, filter and attractive décor will not only give the consumer great ideas on how the habitat can look in their home, but will help the retailer sell the habitat, the reptile and all of the accessories that go along with it. To keep things fresh, and hold the interest of frequent shop visitors, the complete display can be sold as one unit, and then a new habitat decorated and displayed in the store."



It's All in the Presentation

Great reptile displays will drive livestock and accessory sales.

BY JOHN MACK

Over our past two articles, we've taken a look at the first half of the four basic concepts that drive a successful reptile retailer. With this article, we move from selection and inventory to our third concept: presentation.

In our observation of pet stores throughout the nation, we've seen some phenomenal reptile displays and some displays that simply defy all sense of professionalism. Your ability to create, maintain and present attractive reptile displays has a direct effect on your ability to sell those reptiles.

A well-presented reptile section can easily draw would-be customers into your store. Even those that aren't necessarily interested in reptiles can find themselves making their way through previously-unexplored aisles of your store if they see a display that's pleasing to the eye. By putting in some extra time and effort on preparing your reptile displays, you ensure that your store has its best face forward.

Form and Function

Your displays need to provide three primary functions. First, reptile displays must be attractive. Basic glass cages with little decoration will not capture the eye of potential customers. Fill your cages with light, attractive substrate, hiding places and decorations that not only provide your animals a quality home, but also look great to your customers.

Based on your reptiles' individual needs, you may be able to create themed enclosures. One such cage might be based on the American Southwest, while another might resemble a tropical rainforest. These varied, colorful displays catch the eyes of customers and immediately start them thinking about potential displays of their own.

Second, the location of these cages should factor greatly into your deci-

sion-making. Consider placing these displays to the center or even the front of your store. If you're going to invest the time and effort to make your displays impressive, show them off. That set of eye-catching displays will encourage your customers to move deeper into your store, especially if the elements used to make that display are on sale nearby.

You should show off the products for sale in your store within the displays for your reptiles. If a hide, a water bowl or a type of substrate is on sale within your walls, your customers should be able to see that product in use. In fact, consider utilizing the very cages you already stock for sale when preparing reptile displays. Commercial caging from brands like ZooMed and ExoTerra provide a solid baseline from which you can create those attractive, striking displays.

Think of these in the same manner that you might think of displaying aquarium display elements. When your reptile display can prompt a customer to think, "That would be neat to have in my turtle's cage," it's likely that you've just made a sale.

Third, you must keep the needs of your individual reptiles in mind. While this starts with the basic care requirements of a given animal, think of the animals' habits when placing the display itself. Turtles and tortoises, for instances, should generally be placed closer to ground level. More arboreal creatures, such as tree frogs and chameleons, should occupy higher shelves. Your biggest selling reptiles, such as bearded dragons, are typically best placed on middle shelves so that they can be easily seen.

Your staff should be involved in creating these displays from their very inception. By including your staff in display planning, you gain two vital benefits. You ensure an immediate buy-in from your staff as you

grant them a degree of creative control over the displays. Also, you ensure that your staff is educated about the animals in your care and the items you have for sale.

Maintenance Is Key

Once you've set up your spectacular reptile displays, the difficulty then falls to maintenance. Daily keep up should be part of your staff's protocol, but reevaluate what the word "daily" truly entails. The best, most successful pet stores never allow their displays to fall into disrepair or filth. If a cage is dirty, it gets cleaned instantaneously. If a water or food dish is dirty, it gets scrubbed out and refilled.

Animals in dirty cages are animals that don't get sold. Keep those displays spotless and your sales will stay significantly higher. Again, your willingness to go above and beyond in maintaining your displays can be a make or break factor in selling animals and getting your customers to return.

Signs of Success

Finally, don't forget about signage. Many retailers experience difficulties in selling elements like live food because they don't advertise the fact that they have live crickets, mealworms or the like. Be sure that both your reptile displays and your subsidiary materials have clear, focused signage that directs customers toward those items that aren't available in your local big-box store. When you can clearly dictate the message that your store carries items unavailable elsewhere, you ensure that business returns to your store time and again.

John Mack is the founder and CEO of Reptiles by Mack. He is on the board of directors of PIJAC and a member of PIJAC Zoonotic Diseases Committee.



Choral and Chromatic

Finches and canaries broaden your store's spectrum of options.

BY ERIK J. MARTIN

Let's face it – parrots and parakeets aren't the perfect aviary companions for every bird lover. Countless bird rescue organizations and animal shelters are overloaded with frustrated hardbills and budgies whose owners couldn't meet the needs and prevent the unexpectedly destructive behaviors of these highly social species.

Thankfully, Mother Nature invented canaries and finches. If you aren't carrying them and/or products made for them, you could be missing out on a rewarding opportunity to cater to customers seeking a simpler alternative to popular winged species that ultimately prove to be incompatible with impatient owners.

"Finches and canaries are often lower maintenance and less noisy, and they require less cage space than parakeets or

larger birds," said New York City-based zoologist Frank Indiviglio, former zookeeper for the Bronx Zoo. "They can be pretty active and entertaining, hopping from perch to perch. Also, many species are quite hardy and fairly easy to train, if you have patience. They're actually the easiest pet birds to care for, in my experience."

But what really sets these pets apart from other fine-feathered friends – and can catch the eyes of your patrons – are the vibrant and various colors available today. From the striking brown, black, and white plumage of the tricolor nun to the memorable crimson tones of the red-billed firefinch to the rainbow majesty of the Gouldian finch, the cornucopia of hues and hybrids that breeders are able to create today is breathtaking.

And then there's the musicality fac-

tor. Canaries and other songbird finches instinctively create some of the most attractive and memorable songs in the animal kingdom – without breaking the decibel meter. This is no small selling point.

"The finch and canary market isn't necessarily robust right now, and it probably won't be a major profit center for pet retailers. However, selling these live birds and their supplies could be a good supplementation to any existing bird lines you carry," said Zach Marcus, manager for Todd Marcus Birds Exotic in Delran, N.J. "But you should have a natural love for these birds and enjoy speaking to owners and hobbyists about them before adding them to your supply."

Good Eats for Beloved Tweets

Years ago, canary and finch foods were

offered in relatively few and basic formulations. Nowadays, there are many more species-specific seed mixes, pellet diets, egg foods and other edibles to choose from.

Among the major brands are Kaytee's Exact Rainbow Premium Daily Diet (designed to enhance plumage color); Ecotrition's Grains and Greens Variety Blend – Song Plus; Vitakraft's Vita Prima Canary and Finch Formula; Lafeber's Premium Daily Diet for Finches or Canaries; Harrison's Bird Foods' High Potency Super Fine Maximum Nutritional Formula for Small Birds; Roudybush's Low Fat Daily Maintenance Diet; and LM Animal Farms' Bonanza Gourmet Diet.

One of the newest products to hit the market is ZuPreem Smart Selects for canaries and finches, which features amusing shapes, vibrant colors and an ample supply of oranges, apples, bananas and grapes.

Similarly, treats don't get the short shrift in this category. Popular options include Higgins Sunburst Fruits and Veggies Gourmet Natural Treats for Small Birds, Kaytee's Fiesta Tropical Fruit Treat for Canaries and Finches, and Ecotrition's Juicy Grape Flavor Mineral Treats.

Cage Sweet Cage

When it comes to habitats, it's important to stock the right sizes. Experts suggest canary/finch cages should be at least 18 inches by 18 inches by 18 inches for solo pets and a minimum of 24 x 18 x 18 for pairs.

Generously sized wrought iron flight cages that are built to last, such as those made by Preview Hendryx Pet Products, will work well. Hagen's Vision line of bird cages boasts an array of crowd-pleasing features, including low-carbon and rust-resistant wire topped with lead- and zinc-free paint, wavy-patterned perches with varying diameters to foster better blood circulation and prevent foot problems, low-position feeders and deep bases to reduce mess.

Because finches and canaries exhibit strong nesting and weaving behaviors, you may want to stock at least a small as-

sortment of nesting products and materials that contain string, straw or cotton. In addition, try to opt for sturdy toys equipped with leather strips, string and/or rope. Caitec's Paradise line offers cotton bungees ideal for these species, and Super Bird Creations provides a plethora of toy choices, including the new and colorful Tippy Toes hanging toy. Offering an edible swing ring is not a bad idea,

"Selling these live birds and their supplies could be a good supplementation to any existing bird lines you carry."

– Zach Marcus

either. Vitakraft Vita Prima makes one especially for canaries and finches.

On the Retail Front Lines

Indiviglio advises starting out small and simple by stocking a few major brands of foods, cages and supplies. Consider creating starter kits composed of a cage, water and food dish, cuttlebone for calcium, at least three different kinds of perches, food, treats, and a mirror, swing and toys – all bundled together for a dis-

counted price to entice beginners.

"Also, if you plan to sell livestock, display different species and colors within the same cage, without overcrowding it, to attract attention," said Indiviglio, who adds that many finch breeds are usually compatible within the same habitat.

As colorful as they can be, finches and canaries are smaller than most of the parrots and parakeets, which means that you may need to entice prospective owners with more than the live merchandise.

"I would make and hang posters that include big photos showcasing the assortment of colors and species available and that perhaps answer frequently asked questions about these birds," Indiviglio said.

Above all, educate your staff on proper care of and recommended products for canaries and finches.

"You have to be knowledgeable about these birds and at least know the basics so that customers can trust your expertise," Marcus said.

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.

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Treat of the Moment

Treats for small animals offer new flavors, shapes and textures

BY ERIK J. MARTIN

Want a surefire way to increase basket size and the average ticket? Make more room on your shelves for treats, which are the fastest-growing segment in the pet food category according to a recent study by Mintel.

Today, treats are no longer simply guilty indulgences. They now fulfill a variety of goals, from serving as a training tool or reward to promoting natural foraging behaviors or fostering healthier gums and teeth.

Additionally, giving a treat is a way for owners to show their pets they love them, as indicated by 45 percent of the pet owners who responded to the survey.

The survey also found that:

- 22 percent of pet owners are seeking unique ingredients and flavors in

their pet treats.

- Only 16 percent of owners rely on the same brand for both pet treats and pet food, suggesting that owners possibly hold food and treats to different standards.

- Owners likely evaluate treats based more on flavors and indulgence than nutrition.

Facts to Chew On

There are certainly more options in the treat category than there were five or 10 years ago, “and the overall quality and nutritional value of treats has improved by leaps and bounds,” said Lucas Stock, communications manager with Oxbow Animal Health in Murdock, Nebraska.

Kathleen Kintz, digital marketing specialist for NPIC in Plano, Texas, said

small animal food manufacturers are shifting toward creating more natural and varied treats for small animals.

“They’re focusing much more on the needs of each species, rather than just trying to make a catchall. For example, there are specific foods for guinea pigs and rabbits that might be similar, but are distinctive, and ferret food is becoming even more specialized,” Kintz said. “The focus is now on treat products that will benefit pets beyond simply providing enough calories for them to survive on.”

The treat aisle in 2015 looks less like the junk food rack at the grocery store and more like a showcase for new and innovative products containing wholesome, enriching ingredients that owners can feel good about offering to their pets. These include hay-based treats and treats

made with freeze-dried fruits and vegetables that are naturally sweet without added sugar.

The vast majority of consumers who feed treats seek out products that have strong visual appeal and, most importantly, good palatability, said Lisa Kniceley, marketing and trade sales specialist with Vitakraft Sunseed, Inc., in Bowling Green, Ohio.

“Treats are a great tool for helping to strengthen the bond between the pet and the owner, but this only works if the animal will actively consume the product,” Kniceley said. “Ultimately, offering variety is key, and your treat assortment needs to include all-natural and increasingly nutritious options to satisfy consumers.”

Treat Trends

Treat lines have to be constantly reinvented to prevent consumer fatigue, Kniceley said. Vitakraft Sunseed did exactly that when it recently revised its line of “Grainola” bar treats—a staple of the company for many years—by making nutritional improvements and enhancements to the packaging to increase visual appeal and freshness. Vita Prima’s Grainola Bar with Carrot & Parsley, for instance, has a fresh new look and taste.

High-fiber hay, alfalfa and fresh grains remain key ingredients in many treats, but sweet vegetables like carrots, corn, beets and sweet potatoes are dominating many recipes, too. F.M. Brown’s Tropical Carnival Natural Sweet Potato Yummies and Higgins Sunburst Veggie Stix Gourmet Treats (featuring crunchy beets) are good examples.

While crispy and crunchy nibblers are popular sellers, more soft and chewy treats are emerging. Case in point: NPIC will soon introduce N-Bone Ferret Soft Treats, a grain-free snack available in chicken, salmon or bacon, and formulated with omega-3 and -6 fatty acids to help maintain healthy skin and coat.

In addition, more treats today contain yogurt, such as Kaytee’s Fiesta Mixed Very Yogurt Chips, Ecotriton’s Yogies and Vitakraft’s Yogurt Drops.

Treats that resemble the shapes of human foods are also capturing consumer

attention, as evidenced by products like Wild Harvest’s Glazed Donuts small animal treats, Ware’s Willow Critters Pretzel Sticks small pet chews and Vitakraft’s Small Animal Raviolos.

Shelf Logic

As items that are not necessarily a staple in most purchasing situations, treats rarely get the merchandising focus they deserve. That’s why strategic retail placement is crucial here.

“Treats should be integrated into the food department to increase eye contact and opportunities for success,” Kniceley said. “Merchandising food and treats together greatly increases the frequency of treat sales.”

Not surprisingly, treats perform well at eye level and in situations where they’re positioned to stand out.

“Clip strips in the aisle are a great display option when possible, as well as end caps,” Stock said. “And buy one, get one free offers and similar promotions

are a great way to promote key treats.”

For instance, consider running a deal where a free treat accompanies the purchase of a larger size hay variety to incentivize the purchase of a daily nutritional staple. Also, be sure to take advantage of significant “treat friendly” holidays, such as Halloween and Christmas, which lend themselves well to treat promotions.

Remember, too, that customers love variety, so resist aligning your shelves with too much of one type of item.

“For example, offering 10 brands of the same variety of treat is not necessarily the best use of space,” Stock said. “Instead, focus on brands you can trust and offering the greatest variety possible across those key brands.”

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.

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You Say You Want a Revolution

An explosion of hemp products comes to the pet industry.

BY STACY MANTLE

Hemp has become one of the most popular eco-friendly manufacturing resources. It's one of the earliest domesticated plants in existence and for good reasons. The plant thrives in nearly every climate. One acre of hemp can produce as much fiber as two to three acres of cotton and as much paper as two to four acres of trees. In addition to being durable and eco-friendly, this fast-growing green is

ready for harvest in as little as 120 days.

Hemp is durable, naturally resistant to many chemicals and pollutants, and does not require pesticides to thrive. This makes every part of the plant a naturally organic alternative for manufacturers. Since it's 100 percent biodegradable, the remains of any shredded hemp toys or collars do not damage the environment. The end result is a durable, antibacterial, antimicrobial,

mildew-free fiber that is nearly twice as strong as cotton.

Far Out Fabrics

Hemp is being used in everything from toys to collars and leashes to beds.

West Paw Design recently introduced a new Hemp Pillow Bed to their product line.

"West Paw Design chooses eco-friendly, sustainable and naturally

durable materials such as hemp because being friendly to the environment is woven into the fabric of everything we do,” said Spencer Williams, owner and president of West Paw Design.

Planet Dog is another favorite with its best-selling, eco-friendly and naturally dyed pure hemp collar. A nylon-reinforced plastic quick release buckle provides durability and safety.

Kristen Smith, marketing manager of Planet Dog, said, “The Cozy Hemp Collar softens with age like a favorite pair of jeans—it’s what you would wear if you were a dog!”

Forward thinking companies such as Honest Pet Products, creator of all-natural hemp and wool toys, are taking responsible manufacturing one step further by developing international partnerships with fair trade companies to create sustainable, environmentally conscious products that make pet owners feel good about what they give their pets.

“Our all-natural wool cat toys are handmade in Mongolia by women of impoverished, nomadic herding families. Through the Snow Leopard Trust’s Fair Trade cooperative, these families earn a living with their traditional wool-working skills,” said Mary Wolff, president of Honest Pet Products. “In exchange, herders agree to protect the endangered snow leopards that share their habits.”

Medicinal Purposes

New to the industry is the use of natural oils and compounds known as cannabinoids from the hemp plant. Cannabidiol is not psychoactive like the more commonly known compound, phytocannabinoid tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC. Cannabinoids are a class of diverse chemical compounds that act on cannabinoid receptors on cells that repress neurotransmitter release in the brain. Naturally occurring CBD has been proven extremely effective in human patients with epilepsy, behavior disorders, pain management and other neurological problems. As a result, it’s believed that CBD offers these same benefits to pets, particu-

larly senior pets or those with chronic pain and health conditions. We’re seeing this therapeutic compound appear in treats and supplements designed for all species, including dogs, cats and horses.

Companies like Canna-Pet and Hemp Health are leading the CBD pet care revolution.

New to the industry is the use of natural oils and compounds known as cannabinoids from the hemp plant.

“There is extraordinary confusion about the differences between CBD and medical marijuana, and we know that a first step in educating the public is to create products that take smoking and THC out of the picture,” said Katarina Maloney, co-founder of Hemp Health, Inc. “High strain CBD hemp is naturally rich in these therapeutic compounds—especially cannabidiol. Phytocannabinoids, terpenoids and flavonoids are compounds in cannabis that naturally interact with the nervous and immune systems of animals.”

Hemp Health creates products from industrial hemp, the high CBD, low-THC strain used to make materials like ropes, textiles, and paper. An organic, kosher and vegan product, Hemp Health sources from sustainable farms in Germany, Denmark and other European countries.

While several studies are currently underway to assess the benefits of CBD in pets, the science is far from perfect and dosing requirements can vary dramatically. Official dosing has yet to be established and can range from the 616 rule (6 mg per 100 pounds every six hours) to other individual metrics, such as 1 mg per 10-20 pounds of weight.

According to Canna-Pet, one of the first CBD products designed specifically for cats and dogs, a pet would have to “...ingest the equivalent of 1.25 times its own weight (approx-

imately an absurd 60,000-120,000 Canna-Pet capsules), before the THC level would approach toxicity.”

Auntie Dolores is well-known for creating a marijuana edibles brand that’s sold throughout California. They also produce Treatibles brand CBD pet treats.

“Treatibles was created because we wanted to make treats for dogs and we’re in the business of infusing medicine into treats,” said Julianna Carella, founder and CEO of Auntie Dolores and Treatibles. “Our metric is 1 mg per 10-20 pounds of dog weight.”

Things to Consider

If you’re considering adding CBD supplements to your retail aisles, it’s important to do your homework on choosing a reputable supplier.

“The CBD that is produced in high-quality products like those from Hemp Health are produced in a quality-controlled lab and contain no fillers, preservatives, solvents, pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers or any other additives,” Maloney said.

While there are reportedly many benefits—and many success stories—companies that manufacture the supplement are unable to share them all as the FDA continues its scrutiny of all-natural product claims. Veterinarians cannot legally counsel you on marijuana as an option for pets if there are still conventional methods of treatment available to try. However, many vets believe so strongly in the powerful natural benefits of CPD that they will offer the option to terminally ill patients. Others are waiting for the science to back it up.

One thing is certain: The use of hemp and CBD is on the rise and retailers who adapt quickly to this profitable trend will be leading the pack of the hemp revolution.

Stacy Mantle is an award-winning writer and multi-species pet lifestyle expert, author, and spokesperson. She is the founder of PetsWeekly.com and a regular contributor to national publications including *Pet Age*, *Cat Fancy*, and *Animal Behavioral College*.

Better Bathtubs

Choosing the right bathing equipment saves time, money and pain.

BY MAGGIE MARTON

Bathing equipment is a big-ticket item, so you need to find equipment that fits your space and your needs. When choosing bathing equipment for your salon, consider three key savings: time, money and soreness.

Time

An often overlooked aspect of choosing equipment is if it fits in the salon. Consider the placement and dimensions of tubs, for instance. Stepping around an ill-fitting corner several times for each client eats up valuable grooming time. A range of lengths and depths exist, and when you're space-planning your salon, consider how the bells and whistles fit, too. For example, Forever Stainless Steel makes a tub that has a telescoping ramp that can slide underneath the tub when in use, saving that step-over move each time you need to shift positions. Focus on efficiency when laying out how large equipment will fit in your space.

In addition, incorporating new systems can be an upfront expense that pays off. For instance, automatic shampoo systems that dispense pre-diluted shampoo save you the time of mixing concentrated formulas into bottles and speed up the groom. Options include those by Cosmos Bathing Systems and the Prima Bathing System.



42% of dog owners took their dog to a groomer in the past year.

Source: 2015-2016 APPA
National Pet Owners Survey

Money

Think about how much money your salon will save over the course of the year if you can cut down on the water and product used for each client. Look for tubs with built-ins that assist you, like spaces to store product so you don't have to step away and incorporated hair traps. Flexible options that allow you to customize the experience for your salon and customers save you from having to purchase multiple products. Shor-Line manufactures the Elite Grooming Tub, which is made of a one piece-backsplash with adjustable feet so that it can be free-standing or against a wall. It also allows the groomer to choose between steps or a



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Another money saving option is the recirculating bath system. The system includes a submersible pump, a hose and an adjustable nozzle. Water and product are mixed quickly in the tub and then the mix is pumped through the nozzle and through the dog's coat. Once the dog is clean, the tub is drained and the dog is rinsed. This system uses less water and product while completing the groom quicker than if done by hand. One popular option is the Hanvey Bathing Beauty system. Another option, the Thera-Clean system, is hands-free technology that utilizes microbubbles rather than regular soap for superior cleaning power.

"Back and shoulder problems can be prevented with an ergonomically laid out salon."

To pair with a recirculating system, Forever Stainless manufactures a complementary product.

"Our company makes an adaptation to our stainless steel animal bathtubs that is designed to complement a recirculating bathing system," said Jeanne Caples of Forever Stainless. "Selected tub models include a recessed area into which the recirculating pump can fit, and because the bottom of the recess is lower than the main part of the tub bottom, the amount of water needed for bathing can be greatly reduced."

"Because such a small amount of water is being used, the amount of shampoo needed to achieve the correct dilution rate is also very greatly reduced, resulting in significant savings in water and shampoo," Caples said. "Of course, as in any use of a recirculating pump system, the water and shampoo product is drained from the tub after that bath is completed, with fresh water and new shampoo provided for the next animal."

According to the manufacturer, when used in conjunction with a pow-

er bathing system, water and shampoo use can be decreased 75 to 90 percent.

Soreness

Back and shoulder problems can be prevented with an ergonomically laid out salon. Tubs that have adjustable heights work well for groomers of varying heights. If possible, faucet ports should be plumbed on both sides of the tub for right- and left-handed groomers. Additionally, think about accessories; for example, Thera-Clean recommends that its unit be stored on a rolling cart because it's cumbersome and heavy to be moved around the salon.

Tubs are available in sizes for the smallest and largest dog breeds and include ramps, steps or walk-in options. Test equipment before purchase for comfort. Can you reach ev-

erything you need to without having to step over or around elements? If the equipment needs to be moved around your salon, is it light enough or is there a cart or wheeled option?

Grooming is a physical business, but groomers tend to focus on ergonomic handheld equipment like clippers and shears while overlooking the big pieces. Select equipment to mitigate any soreness or long-term damage.

The equipment in your salon will be a large expenditure and will take up a large amount of space. Focus on investing in the right pieces up front—or as you make replacements—to save you and your staff time, money and physical pain.

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

BEFORE YOU BUY A BATHTUB

Here's a short list to consider:

1. Make sure that it fits in the space you have and leaves room to maneuver. Don't forget to account for add-ons, like ramps.
2. Think carefully about which features you must have, which ones you'd like to have and which ones you can live without.
3. Look for features that will save you space, time and/or money, such as built-in storage spaces and recirculation systems.
4. Think about the ergonomics of the tub and look for features that reduce wear and tear on the body, like adjustable height and walk-in ramps.

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Community

News and Events in the Pet Industry

Animal Supply Company 2015 Fall Open House

Animal Supply Company held its Southeast Region 2015 Fall Open House on September 26-27 at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Bradley Caldwell Showstoppers Trade Show

Bradley Caldwell held its annual Showstoppers Trade Show on September 15-17 at Harrah's Waterfront Conference Center in Atlantic City, N.J.



Animal Supply Company National Sales Meeting

Animal Supply Company held its national sales meeting on September 17 at the Gaylord Texan Hotel in Grapevine, Texas.

2015 Groom Expo

Groom Expo was held from September 17-20 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center in Hershey, Pa. It included the Groom Olympics, other competitions and the latest products for groomers.



Community News and Events in the Pet Industry

Phillips Warehouse Ribbon Cutting

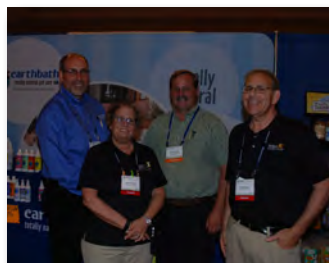
Phillips celebrated the opening of its new Texas warehouse in Arlington on September 17.

Pet Food Experts Northeast Buying Show

Pet Food Experts held its 2015 Northeast Customer Appreciation Buying Show on September 10-11 at Mohegan Sun Resort Casino in Uncasville, Conn.

2015 Phillips Southern Buying Show

Phillips held its 2015 Southern Buying Show on October 1-2 at Disney's Contemporary Resort in Orlando, Fla.



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November

Nov. 2-4 New England Grooming Show, Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center, Sturbridge, Mass.
www.newenglandgrooms.com

Nov. 6-8 Aquatic Experience, Schaumburg Convention Center, Chicago.
Contact: 800-999-7295
www.AquaticExperience.org

Nov. 7-8 The New Jersey Family Pet Show, Garden State Exposition Center, Somerset, N.J.
Contact: Dennis Garetano, 631-423-0620, Dennis@familypetshows.com, www.familypetshows.com

Nov. 9-12 Pet Boarding & Daycare Expo, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, Pa. www.petboardingexpo.com

Nov. 14 Atlanta Pet Expo, Georgia International Convention Center, Atlanta, Ga.
www.atlantapetexpo.com

Nov. 14 Miami-Fort Lauderdale Pet Expo, Fort Lauderdale Convention Center, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. www.miamiftlpetexpo.com

Nov. 20-22 Novi Pet Expo, Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi, Mich.
www.novipetexpo.com

Nov. 29 NY Metro Reptile Expo, Westchester County Center, White Plains, N.Y.
www.reptileexpo.com/white-plains.html

December

Dec. 5 Holiday Pet Festival, North Mall, Scottsdale, Ariz.
www.holidaypetfestival.com

Dec. 12-13 Winter Wonderland Pet Expo, LA Convention Center, Los Angeles, Calif.
www.holidaypetexpo.com

January

Jan. 9-10 Bay Area Pet Expo, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, Santa Clara, Calif.
www.bayareapetexpo.com

Jan. 9-10 Reptile Super Show, Pomona Fairplex, Pomona, Calif.
www.reptilesupershow.com

Jan. 30 Great Lakes Pet Expo, Wisconsin Expo Center at State Fair Park, Milwaukee, Wis. www.petexpomilwaukee.com

Jan. 30-31 Edmonton Pet Expo, Edmonton EXPO Centre, Edmonton, Alberta www.petexpo.ca



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Gone Fishing

Grizzly Pet Products brings sustainable, high-quality fish oil supplements to pets.

BY TOM MAZORLIG

Pet Age spoke with Harald Fisker, president of Grizzly Pet Products, about the company's products, origins and sustainability efforts.

Tom Mazorlig: *Can you tell me the history of Grizzly Pet Products?*

Harald Fisker: The idea and vision of Grizzly came together from working with salmon products and plants in my previous bioengineering career and from the apparent lack of good omega-3 supplements on the pet shelves about 15 years ago. The shelves were stocked with all kinds of soy oil derived omega-6 supplements and only one low potency omega-3 product. It was like an invitation to make ends meet, so I ended my corporate career and started Grizzly Pet Products in January 2002.

Being new to the pet industry, it took time to get things really rolling, but being extremely persistent with product quality and branding helped spread the word steadily faster. Come 2007, we outgrew our sourcing plant and installed our own salmon oil production plant in Alaska, more than doubling the resources. After yet another plant and plant expansions in 2013, we again doubled the sourcing capacity, and 2016 will see one more plant built in Alaska. We strongly believe in controlling the quality of our products from fish to consumer and there's no better way than designing and building our own plants.

We added in-house baked and dehydrated treats to the line-up about eight years ago, and pollock oil was added in 2013. Our latest additions, Grizzly Krill Oil and Grizzly Joint Aid, were added earlier this year and are finding their way to the shelves.

Tom: *Grizzly's products are certified by the National Animal Supplements Council (NASC). Can you tell me what that certification means and how Grizzly got certified?*

Harald: NASC was originally formed to help resolve the situation around "unapproved" joint ingredients/products in order

to avoid Stop Sales orders from FDA and state inspectors. It has over the years grown into being a well respected but also necessary authority to keep bridging the gap between FDA and the pet industry. NASC offers its members certification through full-blown cGMP audits, which verify all ingredients used and all processes used, as well as all quality and production documentation. It's a major ordeal to obtain and maintain, so we're very proud to have this certification, which enables Grizzly to display the NASC seal on all our products, informing customers that our products are produced following very strict guidelines and policies.

Tom: *It's clear that sustainability and being ecologically responsible are important to Grizzly. Can you tell me more about the company's efforts to be eco-friendly?*

Harald: All our oil products, whether it's salmon, pollock or krill, all come from certified sustainable fisheries in Alaska and Antarctica, respectively. We actually utilize co-products from salmon and pollock seafood productions, so no fish is caught for the purpose of pet products alone. We also strive to procure all our packaging in the USA, so not only the products themselves are made in USA.

Tom: *Most of your products are made from salmon oil or pollock oil. What are the benefits of these oils and what are the differences between them?*

Harald: Grizzly has strong ties to the Alaskan seafood industry, so it's natural for us to source raw materials from salmon and pollock fisheries. Further, it is a known fact that salmon oil and pollock are amongst the best fish oils due to the high concentrations of long chain omega-3 fatty acids, benefiting our pet's health inside out, from heart to coat. We also use a lot of salmon proteins in our treats and joint products, especially because fish protein, nutrition-wise, is only second to egg white protein, easily outperforming chicken, turkey and mammal proteins.



Tom: *I noticed on your website that you have an omega fatty acid supplement for horses. What made you decide to branch out to make an equine product?*

Harald: The Grizzly Omega Aid for horses actually came about just like the original Grizzly Salmon Oil. There was almost nobody offering the good long chain omega-3s for horses. There was a lot of omega-6 plant oils and a few short chain omega-3s from flaxseeds. So we created a salmon oil based product for horses, neatly disguising the fishy origin with some organic peppermint oil. I tell you, it smells good the days we're producing that product.

Tom: *What's a typical day like for you?*

Harald: I'm privileged to have a fantastic production, quality and office staff on-board, so I can typically spend most of my time looking ahead, be it new production plants, marketing and sales plans, export regulations and certifications or even new products every now and then. I like to be at our main production facility in Woodinville, Wash., keeping a finger on the pulse, but travels to Alaska during the salmon season and, of course, to trade shows and other events are good for new inspirations and networking.

Tom: *What's in the future for Grizzly? What new products do you have in the works?*

Harald: We plan to keep the good Grizzly work up for years to come, and with that I sure expect new products to surface in the near future, but that sack is still tied up pretty good.



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