

2017/2018 Pet Care Innovation Prize Finalists Unveiled

Five Pet-Centric Startups Receive Recognition and Funding from Pet Care Leaders at Purina

ST. LOUIS, Nov. 8, 2017 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Five pet-focused startups have each won \$10,000 and are competing to win the 2017/2018 Pet Care Innovation Prize grand prize. The finalists include a pet life management app, a microbiome-based pet health diagnostics and supplement company, a pet food company harnessing an invasive fish species as a primary protein source, a dog walking app delivering highly personalized pet care and a vendor-friendly customizable subscription box for dogs, each getting valuable business support and vying for a free booth and support to exhibit at Global Pet Expo, the world's largest pet industry trade show. Now in its second year, the [Pet Care Innovation Prize](#) is a partnership between [Purina](#), a global leader in pet care, and investment firms [Active Capital](#) and [Cultivation Capital](#). The [American Pet Products Association](#) also will offer valuable support, providing a booth and marketing assistance to help the Grand Prize Winner make the most of attending Global Pet Expo in March 2018.

Hoping to capture attention in a growing global pet care market with more than \$60 billion in sales annual in the U.S. alone is difficult, but the Pet Care Innovation Prize aims to help through its mission to support and connect innovative early stage companies with pet-related products and/or services for sale. The competition is open to companies that focus on key areas of dog and cat needs, care and ownership including pet food, nutrition, care, play and technology. More than 85 companies from nine countries applied for the 2017/2018 Pet Care Innovation Prize.

Past Pet Care Innovation Prize finalists and winners have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in equity and prizes from investors and accelerator programs across the US.

"We were thrilled to help launch the Pet Care Innovation Prize last year," said Cultivation Capital Managing Partner Brian Matthews. "Our focus is investing in companies whose ideas have the potential to transform the way we live and work. Our team sees lots of exciting potential from the pet care startups that come through the Pet Care Innovation Prize."

This year's five finalists will each receive a \$10,000 prize, plus a trip to St. Louis, where Purina's global headquarters is located, for a Pet Care Business Boot Camp, a multi-day accelerator program to get advice, mentorship and access to business partners. All of the finalists will then present their businesses to an audience of industry influencers early next year at a Purina Better With Pets event in New York. The Grand Prize Winner will be announced in March 2018, and all five finalists will attend Global Pet Expo, the world's largest pet industry trade show, courtesy of the Pet Care Innovation Prize team and the American Pet Products Association, the producer of the show. Additionally, the Grand Prize winning startup will receive a free booth at Global Pet Expo and up to an additional \$10,000 in marketing

support.

"The ongoing pursuit of innovation is a key to success in every consumer-focused industry, but the unique ability to change and enrich the lives of pets and people sets the pet care category apart," said Blair Morgan, Co-Lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures Division and Vice President of Innovation at Purina. "The Pet Care Innovation Prize is Purina's way of working with other pet lovers to reward ideas that will raise the bar in making the lives of pets and the people who love them better."

The five 2017/2018 Pet Care Innovation Prize finalists are:

- **AnimalBiome** / Berkeley, CA / Founders: Holly Ganz and Kari Goodman / animalbiome.com AnimalBiome is helping the millions of dogs and cats in the US living with chronic digestive disorders by offering microbiome-based supplements and non-invasive diagnostics.
- **BareItAll petfoods** / Chicago, IL / Founders: Michael Cody and Logan Honeycutt / bareitalpetfoods.com BareItAll makes healthy, environmentally friendly pet food for dogs and cats utilizing the invasive Asian Carp as the main protein source, creating a commercial market to help reduce the populations and prevent them from entering the Great Lakes.
- **Barkly Pets** / Washington, D.C. / Founders: Christopher Gonzalez, Dave Comiskey and Jim Camut / barklypets.com Barkly is the highest rated, most reliable dog walking app to simplify everyday and essential pet care needs, available to users 365 days a year in 60 minutes notice or less.
- **Fetch Labs Inc** / San Jose, CA & New York City, NY / Founders: Greg Tariff, Adam Jackowitz and Steve Malko / fetchmypet.com Fetch Labs, Inc. is making pet life management simple for pet parents with the Fetch My Pet app.
- **PupJoy** / Chicago, IL / Founders: Dustin McAdams and Bill Wilkins / pupjoy.com PupJoy provides the industry's most customizable and vendor-friendly subscription box for dogs and their parents as well as an online store for product replenishment and larger ticket items.

"This year's Pet Care Innovation Prize finalists each have the potential to influence the industry in very different ways," Morgan said. "From addressing areas of pet health and nutrition to easing some of the challenges of modern pet ownership, there is a diversity of ideas that is exciting to see."

About Active Capital:

Active Capital is a St. Louis-based impact investing leader, helping startups and investors come together to grow innovative products and initiatives. Active Capital manages the Pet Care Innovation Prize.

About Purina

Nestlé Purina PetCare promotes responsible pet care, community involvement and the positive bond between people and their pets. A premiere global manufacturer of pet products, Nestlé Purina PetCare is part of Swiss-based Nestlé S.A., a global leader in nutrition, health and wellness.

About Cultivation Capital

Cultivation Capital is a St. Louis-based early stage venture capital firm focused on investing in high potential technology, life sciences and FinTech companies. Cultivation Capital is managed by a team of experienced entrepreneurs, and has invested in 36 companies that have exceeded \$500 million in total capital raised. For more information, please visit

www.cultivationcapital.com

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