

The Purina Institute Takes a Deep Dive into the Science of Cats

CAN Summit Includes Top Feline Practitioners & Nutrition Experts

ST. LOUIS, Mo., May 2, 2019 ... The intriguing nature of cats transcends their independent spirit. Scientists presenting the latest discoveries about these enigmatic companion animals have drawn a global audience of leading feline practitioners, research veterinarians and nutrition scientists to the Companion Animal Nutrition (CAN) Summit, which runs May 2 to 4, 2019, in San Jose, Costa Rica. Attended by 125 key opinion leaders, the conference is hosted by the Purina Institute, a global organization dedicated to advancing nutritional science so that pets can lead better, longer lives.

“The CAN Summit offers a dynamic forum to tackle important topics ranging from taurine deficiency and DCM to obesity and diabetes in cats. Insightful conversations among colleagues is likely to challenge long-held beliefs. Importantly, the powerful scientific findings being presented will help to shape the future of feline veterinary medicine and nutrition,” says Dr. RuthAnn Lobos, DVM, CCRT, Manager of Scientific Programs and Events for the Purina Institute.

Key takeaways from feline experts will include:

- Genomic medicine holds great promise for delivering health care based on an individual’s genes, environment and lifestyle. Bringing feline genomic medicine into veterinary practice will first require a high-quality domestic cat genome reference, broad sampling of DNA sequence variants and an accessible database.
- Obesity is a key risk factor for type 2 diabetes in cats, yet protective mechanisms prevent most obese cats from developing diabetes. Alterations in pancreatic beta cells, muscle and liver – plus adipose tissue – act as metabolic switches in the development of this disease.
- In cats, taurine deficiency has long been linked with DCM, as well as in retinal, neurologic and reproductive dysfunctions, but the exact mode of action is still not well understood. Carnitine is another amino acid, which when deficient can affect heart, liver and muscle yet may also have a role in the prevention of age-related muscle loss.
- Feeding patterns in cats may be influenced by food texture and food availability. Factoring in these influences may help tailor diets for obese cats or cater to nutrient needs in geriatric cats.
- Water is an essential element that is infrequently considered in nutrition research. Cats eating wet diets are in a different physiological state than those on dry diets, and high-moisture diets alter food intake and activity, all of which can impact health.

The CAN Summit continues a 25-year legacy of bringing together the most influential veterinary thought leaders from across the globe to discuss emerging and ground-breaking science in small animal nutrition. Past conferences have included scientific programs on: “Gerontology: An Inside Out Perspective” (2018), “The Nexus of Pet and Human Nutrition: Focus on Cognition and Microbiome” (2017), and “Pet Nutrition: Beyond Essential” (2016).

In addition to the CAN Summit, the Purina Institute is helping to shape the nutrition conversation among the international veterinary community as the first Diamond partner of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) and as the sponsor of the Purina Institute Resident Research Grant program for veterinary residents of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM) and the European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine – Companion Animals (ECVIM-CA). The Purina Institute is dedicated to facilitating collaboration and increasing knowledge exchange within the global veterinary community.

About the Purina Institute

The Purina Institute is a global professional organization with a mission to advance nutrition science to help pets live better, longer lives. As the voice of Purina's science, the Purina Institute represents a diverse team of more than 500 scientists and pet care experts around the world. The Purina Institute shares Purina's groundbreaking research and latest scientific findings in pet nutrition so veterinarians and other pet professionals can make nutrition a foundational element of their conversations with pet owners.

About Nestlé Purina PetCare

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

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