

# Purina Veterinary Diets Announces New Name and Mission in 2015

Nutrition Perception survey reveals need for in-clinic nutrition conversations

**ORLANDO, FLA.**—Nestlé Purina is renaming their therapeutic nutrition brand and launching a new “nutrition forward” mission to provide educational resources to veterinarians and veterinary technicians. These announcements were made during the 2015 North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando and coupled with findings from a new study about nutrition conversations in veterinary clinics.

## **Purina renames therapeutic line**

Purina will change the name of its veterinary pet food from Purina Veterinary Diets to Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets. The transition will begin in March 2015, and is expected to take several months as the new packaging replaces the old.

“We saw a need for a stronger link between Purina’s premium wellness brand and our veterinary diets,” said Candy Caciolo, Portfolio Director of Professional Engagement Marketing at Purina. “Pet owners recognize Purina Pro Plan as a leader in nutritional innovation. Branding our well-pet diets and our veterinary diets under a single brand name will help facilitate client compliance with veterinary nutrition recommendations.”

Caciolo stressed that the change is in name only. “We are changing the name of our veterinary line, but not the scientific formulas trusted by the veterinary community. The formulations themselves will stay the same, as will their veterinary exclusivity,” she explained.

## **“Nutrition forward” approach helps veterinarians meet client needs**

In a study just completed by Purina, [\[1\]](#) both veterinarians and pet owners who regularly visit veterinarians stated that nutrition is very important to pet health, and that veterinarians are a primary resource for pet nutrition information. At the same time, both veterinarians and owners noted a significant opportunity to change the frequency and the content of nutrition conversations in a manner that moves nutrition forward among veterinarians’ priorities.

“Virtually all veterinarians—97 percent of those we surveyed—reported that some clients have misperceptions about how to best feed their pets,” said Grace Long, DVM, Director of Veterinary Technical Marketing at Purina. “At the same time, two-thirds of pet owners said they would like to be ‘more knowledgeable’ about their pet’s nutrition, and spend more time discussing it during regular check-ups.”

Time is a factor, however, with 70 percent of veterinarians saying they would be more proactive about educating clients if they had more time. Noting that both veterinarians and

pet owners are comfortable having veterinary technicians shoulder more responsibilities for nutrition education, Dr. Long said Purina plans to add additional resources into its online *Daily Nutrition Matters* education course ([dailynutritionmatters.com/continuing-education/](http://dailynutritionmatters.com/continuing-education/)) and *Nutrition Myths* resource center ([purinaveterinarydiets.com/nutrition-myths-facts](http://purinaveterinarydiets.com/nutrition-myths-facts)).

The Nutrition Perception Study also found many pet owners are looking for more in-depth information on pet nutrition. While acknowledging that nutrition conversations traditionally focus on basic issues such as brand and form (e.g. wet or dry), Dr. Long emphasized that pet owners are most interested in discussing the types of ingredients that should be in their pet's food and how specific diets can help manage their pet's condition.

The study findings may surprise some veterinary practitioners, according to Dr. Long. While eight in 10 veterinarians believe some clients are unwilling to buy therapeutic foods because of the high cost, nine in 10 pet owners said that if their pet had a specific health condition, they would be willing to feed their pet a prescription-only food if their veterinarian recommended it.

"This clearly indicates an open attitude on the part of pet owners toward the idea of therapeutic diets and the strength of a veterinary recommendation," Dr. Long concluded. "That's welcome news to veterinarians who recognize the important connection between nutrition and patient health."

### **About Nestlé Purina PetCare**

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.

### **Photo cutline** (*send side-by-side photo of existing and new packaging*)

The new packaging for Pro Plan Veterinary Diets will include the veterinary symbol to distinguish it from the wellness line, as well as trilingual packaging (English, Spanish and French) and new icons on the package to communicate key nutrition benefits of specific diets.

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[\[i\]](#) Nutrition Perception Study, Nestlé Purina PetCare, 2014 (n=201 veterinarians and 307 pet owners).

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