

Five Pet Care Startups Selected as Pet Care Innovation Prize Finalists

First-ever contest, powered by Purina, to award a total of \$60,000 to startups that are improving the lives of pets and pet owners

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 26, 2016 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- A gaming, learning and social platform for dogs and pet owners. A smart bowl that helps ensure pets get the nutrition they need. Fitness programs for pets and people. A sheep's milk-based treat for dogs. An eLearning marketplace for pet professionals. The creators of these innovative products and services are being recognized as finalists in the first-ever [Pet Care Innovation Prize](#), a partnership between [Nestlé Purina](#), a global leader in pet care, and investment firms [Active Capital](#) and [Cultivation Capital](#).

"Our focus is investing in technology, life sciences and FinTech companies whose ideas have the potential to transform the way we live and work," said Brian Matthews, Cultivation Capital Managing Partner. "We are thrilled to be a part of the Pet Care Innovation Prize, and we look forward to seeing how these finalists transform the pet care industry."

More than 80 companies from 11 countries applied for the Pet Care Innovation Prize. The contest identifies and supports early-stage pet care companies in the growing global market, which has \$60 billion in annual U.S. sales alone. The competition is tailored to companies producing food, nutrition, pet care, play and technology products and services for dogs, cats and their owners.

The five finalists will each receive a \$10,000 prize, plus an immersion in a multi-day accelerator program to get advice, mentorship and access to business partners. One of the finalists will be selected the grand prize winner, to be announced at a later date, and will receive an additional \$10,000 for business development and an exhibit at the 2017 Global Pet Expo, one of the world's largest pet industry events.

"Innovation is our pledge at Purina, and it's also important to support innovation within the broader pet care industry," said Blair Morgan, Vice President of Marketing, Innovation Group at Purina. "The Pet Care Innovation Prize is about helping advance the ambitions of passionate pet care entrepreneurs who, like Purina, aim to help to improve the lives of pets and pet owners."

The five Pet Care Innovation Prize finalists are:

- **FetchFind** / *Chicago* / *Founder: Jamie Migdal* / [fetchfind.com](#)
FetchFind is an integrated eLearning marketplace for the \$60 billion pet industry. With courses like pet first aid, canine behavior and customer service basics, FetchFind turns pet enthusiasts into pet pros while helping pet industry businesses train and retain staff.
- **Ewegurt** / *South Barrington, Illinois* / *Founder: Jennifer Erdman* / [ewegurt.com](#)
Ewegurt makes sheep milk yogurt treats/food toppers for dogs with a proprietary blend of sheep milk yogurt, protein, vegetables and fruit freeze-dried for shelf stability. Ewegurt products also claim to help reduce pet anxiety and promote immune and gut health.
- **K9 Fit Club** / *Chicago* / *Founder: Tricia Montgomery* / [K9FitClub.com](#)
K9 Fit Club has created exercise instruction that people do with their dogs in a classroom setting. Both the human and the dog benefit physically from the structured physical activities. The proprietary fitness programs are taught in a controlled small group environment by K9 Fit Club Master Trainers in licensed K9 Fit Club locations.

- **Obe** / *San Francisco* / *Founder: Hilary Jensen* / *ObeDog.com*
Obe's flagship product is the ProBowl and its companion iOS app. ProBowl is a patent-pending smart scale that connects to the cloud and your phone in the form of a dishwasher safe bowl and smart base and smartphone app. With Obe, pet parents can feed their pet much more accurately, helping ensure pets get the nutrition they need, when they need it, without getting too much.
- **PupPod** / *Seattle* / *Founder: Erick Eidus* / *PupPod.com*
PupPod is a gaming, learning and social platform for dogs and pet parents. Pet parents can use PupPod to play with their dog in person or remotely. Dogs exercise their mind by playing a puzzle game that gets progressively more difficult based on a dog's actual performance. Dogs are rewarded with kibble or treats for taking correct actions in the game. Pet parents can share their dog's progress and videos on social media and compare achievements across the PupPod community.

"All of the finalists for the Pet Care Innovation Prize are inspiring in their efforts to shape the future of pet care," Morgan said. "At Purina we're passionate about pets – and living big with our pets – and this innovation prize has been a tremendous opportunity to engage with and support others with a common vision of a better world for pets and people."

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.

About Active Capital

Active Capital is a St. Louis-based impact investing leader. Through programs like the Pet Care Innovation Prize and the Emerging Venture Leaders Summit, Active Capital helps startups, investors and communities come together with innovative products, initiatives and activities.

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.

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