

Five Pet Care Startups Chosen For Purina Pet Care Innovation Prize

Finalists for Third Pet Care Innovation Prize Showcase Breadth of Booming Pet Industry

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 30, 2019 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- From ingredient innovations to streamlining veterinary care, the finalists for the 2018/2019 [Pet Care Innovation Prize](#), powered by [Purina](#), are taking innovative approaches to give pets and pet owners new options in feeding, treating, understanding, caring for and interacting with their dogs and cats. For the third time in as many years, the pet lovers at Purina are helping give promising pet care startups a leg up in the highly competitive \$70 billion* U.S. pet care industry with no-strings-attached financial support and mentorship through the Pet Care Innovation Prize.

The 2018/2019 Pet Care Innovation Prize finalists are:

- **Shameless Pets** / Chicago, IL / Founders: James Bello and Alex Waite / [shamelesspets.com](#)
Shameless Pets uses upcycling to turn ingredients that may have otherwise been lost or wasted into premium pet treats that support your pet's health. Each ingredient is carefully selected to produce unique flavors, provide the utmost nutrition, and support sustainable practices.
- **Bond Pets** / Boulder, CO / Founders: Rich Kelleman and Pernilla Audibert / [bondpets.com](#)
Bond Pets is working with cellular agriculture technologies to reinvent pet nutrition, making nutritionally-superior dog and cat foods sourced from real animal protein – without harming any animals in the process.
- **Basepaws** / Los Angeles, CA / Founder: Anna Skaya / [basepaws.com](#)
Basepaws is a pet genetics company out of Los Angeles, CA that has developed the first consumer genetics test for cats, which includes detailed information about breed, traits, health, and genetic markers for potential hereditary disease, and will use the rich data in areas of pet nutrition.
- **GuardianVets** / Chicago, IL / Founder: John Dillon / [guardianvets.com](#)
GuardianVets is a B2B telehealth service and platform that allows veterinary hospitals to offer 24/7 continuous client care. Since starting in 2017, GuardianVets has expanded to over 32 states in 81 cities and serves over 600,000 pet owners through its network of veterinary hospitals. GuardianVets is the exclusive triage provider for the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and a Chicago Innovation Award Winner.
- **PlayDate** / New York, NY / Founders: Anthony Chien and Kevin Li / [playdate.ai](#)
PlayDate's remote-controlled smart ball has a camera inside it so you can chase your dog or cat around even when you're not at home.

"This year's class of Pet Care Innovation Prize finalists is a testament to how broad the pet care industry is and how much potential is out there to positively impact not only the lives of pets and pet owners but the planet," said Blair Morgan, Co-Lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures Division and Vice President of Innovation at Purina. "We look forward to opening Purina's doors to these entrepreneurs and sharing our resources and expertise with them as they work to take their businesses to the next level in the industry that we lead and love."

The [Pet Care Innovation Prize](#) is a collaborative effort of Purina's 9 Square Ventures division with investing leaders [Active Capital](#) to support and connect with early stage pet care startups that are currently in market with an innovative business addressing pet and pet owner needs in the areas of pet health and wellness, services, technology, nutrition and emerging innovations. The five finalists each receive \$10,000 in cash from Purina with no strings attached. This week, they also are participating in a pet care business accelerator boot camp in Purina's hometown of St. Louis where they will meet with industry experts both at and outside of Purina.

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The annual Pet Care Innovation Prize experience concludes for this year's finalists in March 2019, when they will receive transportation, accommodations, and a booth presence at Global Pet Expo, the world's largest pet care industry trade show. There, they will get the chance to present their businesses to an audience of industry influencers, and a grand prize winner will be chosen on-site to receive up to an additional \$10,000 in cash and an opportunity to partner with Purina on a project.

For more information, visit www.petcareinnovationprize.com.

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.

**American Pet Products Association*

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