Purina Announces 2020 Pet Care Innovation Prize Winners

Five Pet Care Startups Selected to Join Pet Industry Leaders for Boot Camp Accelerator and Behind the Scenes Access at Purina

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 29, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Pet health and wellness takes center stage for all five startups selected by Purina to be the 2020 class of its annual Pet Care Innovation Prize program. From trending pet food options and a new approach to dental care to on-demand veterinary diagnostics and end of life assistance, each business is working to break through in the highly competitive $75 billion* U.S. pet care industry. For the fourth year, Purina will open its doors to the selected startups, offering mentorship, behind the scenes industry access and financial support to the 2020 Pet Care Innovation Prize winners to help them learn and grow in the industry that Purina leads and loves.

The 2020 Pet Care Innovation Prize winners are:

- ***Because Animals*** *| Philadelphia, PA | Founders: Shannon Falconer and Joshua Errett |* *becauseanimals.com*
  Because Animals is a biotech company creating nutritious pet food without harming animals with cultured ingredients like probiotics, nutritional yeast, and cultured meat.

- ***PetHospice*** *| Berkeley, CA | Founder: Shea Cox, DVM, CHPV, CVPP, CPLP |* *pethospice.com*
  PetHospice provides comfort and care to pets and their families when end of life nears. Their full-service support includes in-home hospice and palliative care, euthanasia, telehealth services, grief counseling, free education and an online community.

- ***TEEF! by Primal Health, LLC*** *| Minneapolis, MN | Founders: Dr. Emily Stein and Lindsey Campbell |* *teefhealth.com*
  TEEF! by Primal Health LLC is a companion animal dental care product line made using *Protektin42*™, their canine-specific formulation that contains highly pure, human grade ingredients in powder form that can be added to a dog's drinking water.

- ***Lacuna Diagnostics*** *| Ft. Collins, CO | Founders: Conor Blanchet, Bikul Koirala, Garrett Walz, and Aaron Wallace | lacunadiagnostics.com*
  Lacuna Diagnostics is diagnosing cancer and infections at the speed of digital. Much like radiology, Lacuna has created a point-of-care solution that moves images of microscope slides through the cloud to our specialists for rapid diagnosis. Faster diagnosis means better outcomes for veterinary patients.

- ***NewRoad Foods*** *| San Juan Capistrano, CA | Founders: Katie Smith and Greg Dorin |* *newroadfoods.com*
  For people whose dogs are part of the family, NewRoad Foods is a trail-blazing canine nutrition company specializing in human-grade kibble – made from scratch, baked to order and delivered fresh each month.

"It's inspiring to see so many passionate startups focused on improving the lives of pets and the quality of care they get throughout their lives," said Blair Morgan, co-lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures and vice president, strategy and innovation, for Purina. "By opening our doors and resources to these entrepreneurs, we hope to foster a more collaborative and inclusive network for the next generation of pet care thinkers and leaders."

9 Square Ventures was founded in 2013 as the venture division within Nestle Purina PetCare. They have been steadily investing millions of dollars in a diverse set of early stage pet care startups. The Pet Care Innovation Prize is a collaborative effort of Purina's 9 Square Ventures division and 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, and food, treats or litter. 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

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 and investors both inside and outside of Purina.

The annual Pet Care Innovation Prize experience concludes for this year's winners in February 2020, 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 Nestlé S.A., a global leader in nutrition, health and wellness. **Subscribe here** to get the latest Purina news.

**American Pet Products Association*

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