Purina Announces 2021 Pet Care Innovation Prize Winners

Five pet care startups awarded a total of $50,000 prize money and support from Purina

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 27, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Five pet care startups from across the U.S. have been selected as the 2021 winners of the fifth annual Pet Care Innovation Prize powered by Purina. From pet diagnostic health tools and sous-vide pet food to environmentally friendly products for pets and their owners, the 2021 class of Pet Care Innovation Prize winners represents what's new and what's next in the $99 billion* pet care industry.

The 2021 Pet Care Innovation Prize Winners are:

- **Denver, Colorado-based ClueJay** is an innovative, online diagnostic platform that allows pet parents to access lab tests on demand from the comfort and safety of home. ClueJay lets dog and cat owners collect and mail stool (fecal) samples for parasite screening without the hassle and stress of vet visits.
- **Eden Prairie, Minnesota-based Kitty Sift** offers a convenient, healthy, and sustainable alternative to the plastic litter box. Made from 100% post-consumer recycled cardboard, Kitty Sift's disposable sifting litter boxes and liners enable pet owners to ditch plastic alternatives for a more sanitary, eco-friendly solution that protects their kitty and the planet.
- **Austin, Texas-based A Pup Above** makes fresh dog food that's cooked sous-vide, a unique cooking method that makes meat extra tender and moist while also preserving nutrients. Made with 100% human-grade ingredients that are fully traceable back to the source, A Pup Above delivers on average 72% more protein than other leading gently cooked dog foods.
- **Chicago, Illinois-based Mella Pet Care** builds accessible technology and diagnostic products for veterinarians and pet parents to better understand and track pet health to help their pets live longer, healthier lives. Co-created with veterinarians, Mella Pet Care is launching the first smart axillary thermometer, which measures temperature under the foreleg rather than rectally.
- **Florida-based VetGuardian** is the only zero touch remote telemonitor for veterinarians. The device continuously gathers a patient's vitals like pulse, temperature, and respiration rate from up to five feet away without the need for wires or physical contact—eliminating unnecessary stress to animals.

ClueJay, Kitty Sift, A Pup Above, Mella Pet Care and VetGuardian were among more than 100 companies from 43 cities globally that applied for the 2021 Pet Care Innovation Prize. As winners, each of the five startups will receive $10,000, mentorship from the Pet Care Innovation team and, this week, will participate in a virtual accelerator boot camp featuring pet experts from across Purina and the industry that is tailored to meet their business needs.

During a culminating (virtual) pitch competition in March, the five winners will get the chance to present their businesses to an audience of industry influencers and investors, and a grand prize winner will be chosen to receive an additional $10,000 in cash and an opportunity to partner with Purina on a project.

"Purina is committed to supporting early stage pet care startups," said Blair Morgan, co-lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures group, and vice president, strategy and innovation for Purina. "Our culture thrives on collaboration and mentorship, and by extending that outside of our walls to startups who share our passion for enriching the lives of pets, we are able to both help and be inspired by a new generation of entrepreneurs."

As Purina's corporate venturing group, 9 Square Ventures has been focused on connecting with pet care startups since 2014. The team's mission is to leverage Purina's knowledge, experience, and financial

resources to help emerging pet care startups scale their businesses and make a positive impact on the lives of as many pets and their owners as possible. The group has 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 group 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.

For more information, visit https://petcareinnovation.net/

*American Pet Products Association

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 creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations. Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Fancy Feast and Tidy Cats. Our more than 8,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 49 million dogs and 66 million cats every year. More than 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Purina promotes responsible pet care through our scientific research, our products and our support for pet-related organizations. Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than $150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive.

Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or subscribe here to get the latest Purina news.

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