Purina Announces 2022 Pet Care Innovation Prize Winners

Pet care startups from Boston, Bloomington, MN, Los Angeles, Oro Valley, AZ, and San Diego Win Cash Prize and Support from Pet Care Experts at Purina in Sixth Annual Competition

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 25, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Five pet care startups from across the U.S. have been selected as the 2022 winners of the sixth annual Pet Care Innovation Prize powered by Purina. From a company giving dog breath a lasting mint aroma to a tool that helps pets communicate better with humans, the 2022 class of Pet Care Innovation Prize winners represents some of the latest and greatest products and service startups in the estimated $109 billion* pet care industry.

The 2022 Pet Care Innovation Prize Winners are:

Bright Planet Pet (brightplanetpet.com)
Bloomington, Minnesota-based Bright Planet Pet makes 100% plant-based dog treats that taste and smell like real meat. Made from sustainable and all-natural ingredients, Bright Planet treats create up to 90% less carbon emissions and use 68% less water than comparable meat-based treats. For every bag sold, Bright Planet makes a donation to plant one tree.

FluentPet (https://fluent.pet/)
San Diego, California-based FluentPet, Inc is the company behind the FluentPet HexTile System: a way to combine recordable sound buttons and connecting HexTiles that enables dogs, cats, and other animals to express themselves and be understood by humans. Developed in close collaboration with an active user community, FluentPet uses cognitive science and academic research to make teaching, learning, and communicating easier for pets and their people.

Paway (www.paway.com)
Los Angeles, California-based Paway is a social network just for dogs, available on iOS & Android. Members can create a social profile to meet local dog parents, keep track of their dog's health & find dog friendly places. In addition, Paway sells premium software (PawayPro) to pet care professionals to help manage, grow, and promote their business without paying premiums to 3rd party apps.

QSM Diagnostics (www.qsmdiagnostics.com)
Boston, Massachusetts-based QSM Diagnostics is fundamentally changing how bacterial infections are diagnosed and treated. The company's patented technology allows veterinarians to diagnose and monitor bacterial infections in dogs and cats using disposable sensors for point of care infection detection and monitoring. No software is required to run a test, and results are available in two minutes from the time a sample is collected.

uPetsia (www.upetsia.com)
Oro Valley, Arizona-based uPetsia solves the problem of bad dog breath by modifying natural canine oral bacteria to produce mint aromas. These bacteria can be incorporated into treats and food and fed to dogs, giving them mint breath for several hours, unlike traditional treats or toothpastes with mint flavor added, which only last for minutes.

More than 120 companies from 75 cities globally applied for the 2022 Pet Care Innovation Prize. Each of the five startup winners will receive $10,000, mentorship from the Pet Care Innovation team and will participate in a virtual accelerator boot camp featuring pet experts from across Purina and the pet care industry.

During a culminating 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 at Global Pet Expo to receive an additional $10,000 in cash.

"Despite the many challenges of the pandemic, innovation in the pet care industry has continued to thrive," said Blair Morgan, co-lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures group, and vice president, strategy and innovation for Purina. "This year's class of winners showcases the breadth of opportunities that exist in the pet care industry. From pet tech to diagnostics, each business is unique, but all are driven by a shared love of pets and desire to make a positive impact on their lives, which is a cornerstone of Purina's mission too."

As Purina's corporate venturing group, 9 Square Ventures is focused on connecting with pet care startups. 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 since it was founded in 2014.

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/

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 Nestlé Purina PetCare

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 8,700 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 51 million dogs and 65 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.

*American Pet Products Association

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