VetChip Wins 2024 Purina Pet Care Innovation Grand Prize

Perth, Australia-Based Pet Startup Wins Additional Funding and Support from Purina in Annual Competition

ORLANDO, Fla., March 21, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- VetChip was selected as the grand prize winner of the 2024 Pet Care Innovation Prize, earning $25,000 and support from the pet care experts at Purina. VetChip was one of five pet care startups from across the U.S., Canada, and Australia that pitched their businesses to pet industry influencers and investors at Global Pet Expo, the pet care industry's biggest trade show. The biotechnology company is dedicated to improving animal health and welfare through pioneering technology that monitors, analyzes, and detects pet health issues. The VetChip is implanted to gather data and alert pet owners via an app if potential issues or signs of illness or injury are detected, allowing for faster diagnosis and treatment.

"We are absolutely thrilled to have our revolutionary biosensor achievements recognized through the Pet Care Innovation Prize 2024," said VetChip co-founder Garnett Hall, DVM. "This award will help us to unlock a world of possibilities for proactive animal healthcare, including welfare monitoring, nutrition support and detection of diseases. The time spent with the team at Purina has been extremely rewarding and will help immensely to accelerate our R&D efforts."

VetChip was selected by a panel of judges that included investors, industry experts, and Purina executives. In January, five startups were selected from nearly 150 companies to participate in the 2024 class for the Pet Care innovation Prize. Each winner received $25,000 cash and participated in a bootcamp accelerator experience with business experts, industry leaders, veterinarians, and Purina executives to broaden their network, strengthen their business plan, and gain knowledge from across the pet care landscape. The 2024 class of Pet Care Innovation Prize winners represents some of the best innovation happening in the $136.8 billion* pet care industry.

The other 2024 Pet Care Innovation Prize Winners are:

Melbourne, Florida-based SwiftPaws (https://swiftpaws.com) makes playful enrichment products to exercise and entertain pets. Best known for their American-made lure coursing kits, the SwiftPaws team is dedicated to the mental and physical wellbeing of pets and the people who love them. SwiftPaws was featured on Shark Tank in 2022.

Kansas City, Missouri-based BestyBnB (https://bestybnb.com) bridges the gap between human social services and animal welfare organizations by securing safe, temporary housing for clients' pets when they are in challenging situations where they cannot care for their pets. By creating and enhancing crisis care and safety net pet programs for organizations that serve people in crisis, BestyBnB helps ensure that clients will seek care and help knowing that their pets are safe.

Chicago, Illinois-based Arch Pet Food (https:/archpetfood.com) offers alternative protein pet treats and food that are food-allergen friendly, highly nutritious, and sustainable. Arch does this by utilizing superfoods like microalgae, insect proteins, and invasive fish as key ingredients.

Vancouver, Canada-based RYERCAT (https:/ryercat.com) hopes to redefine feline oral health with a toothbrush and dental line designed specifically for feline anatomy. Like many cat owners, the founders of RYERCAT struggled to brush their cats' teeth, which led them to create a better dental

founders of HYERCAT struggled to brush their cats' teeth, which led them to create a better dental solution to improve the brushing experience for cats and their owners.

"Each of the winners brought so much passion to the program. We were very impressed by VetChip and the entire 2024 class. The Pet Care Innovation Prize is a highlight for all of us at Purina, allowing us to help grow the entrepreneurial petcare network, and bring more solutions to the industry that improve the lives of pets and their owners," said Bill Broun, co-lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures division and Vice President Mergers & Acquisitions and Corporate Venturing at Purina.

The Pet Care Innovation Prize was created 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 Pet Care Innovation Prize is a collaborative effort of Purina's 9 Square Ventures division and impact investors Active Capital. Previous Pet Care Innovation Prize winners have raised millions of dollars in equity and prizes from investors and accelerator programs across the U.S. Several startups have been successfully acquired and/or made appearances on Shark Tank, the business reality television series where contestants try to convince one of the sharks to invest money in their idea.

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 build and scale their businesses and make a positive impact on the lives of as many pets and their owners as possible.

To find out more about the Pet Care Innovation program, visit PetCareInnovation.net.

*American Pet Products Association

About 9 Square Ventures:
9-Square Ventures is a corporate venture arm of Nestle Purina PetCare which is focused on investing in emerging pet food and snack brands. It also evaluates other pet care businesses and advanced food technologies.

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 10,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 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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