PetPax Co. Wins Grand Prize at Annual Pitch Competition to Secure 2026 Purina Pet Care Innovation Prize

Boston-Based Pet Wellness Startup Takes Home Additional $25,000 Cash Prize and Mentorship from Leading Pet Care Company

ST. LOUIS, March 26, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Five innovative pet care startups from across North America came together today to pitch their businesses to top pet industry executives and investors for the chance to win the $25,000 grand prize as part of the 2026 Pet Care Innovation Prize. PetPax Co., a startup working to redefine everyday pet wellness for modern pet parents, was selected as the grand prize winner following the live pitch competition at Global Pet Expo, the pet care industry's largest annual trade show in Orlando, Florida.

Based in Boston, PetPax Co. was founded by two dog dads with a focus on pet wellness. The company's flagship product line, SupplaMelts™, uses a proprietary, fast-dissolving oral thin-film delivery method to provide veterinarian-approved supplementation that is easy to administer and gentle on dogs. With targeted solutions like ZenMelts® for calming and DentalMelts™ for oral health, PetPax Co.'s patent-pending delivery method is designed to improve absorption by bypassing the stomach acid while reducing stress for both pets and their humans. The company had previously been awarded $25,000 in non-dilutive funding along with mentorship from Purina and Active Capital as part of the Pet Care Innovation Prize program and was selected from a competitive pool of over 200 applicants worldwide. With this pitch competition win, PetPax Co. secures an additional $25,000 grand prize.

"At PetPax Co., we believe pet wellness should be simple, effective, and actually doable in real life. As dog dads ourselves, SupplaMelts® were built to improve compliance and outcomes by rethinking how supplements are delivered, based on our own experiences as pet parents. We're incredibly honored to win the Grand Prize of 2026 Pet Care Innovation Prize, powered by Purina. As a leader in pet health and nutrition, their recognition is meaningful validation of both the problem we're solving and the platform we're building with SupplaMelts," said Anthony Gatti, PetPax Co., CEO & Co-Founder. "It comes at a really exciting moment for PetPax Co. as we see strong momentum across the business, with accelerating growth, an active pre-seed raise, and expanding distribution. Purina's continued support helps us scale that impact and bring low-lift, high-impact wellness to more dogs and their humans."

Earlier this year, four additional 2026 Pet Care Innovation Prize winners each received $25,000, mentorship from Purina and Active Capital and the opportunity to participate in an accelerator experience at Purina's St. Louis headquarters. The 2026 winners include:

- **ChefPaw (Los Angeles, Calif.):** ChefPaw is revolutionizing pet food with personalized nutrition that saves pet parents time and money via streamlining every aspect of homemade feeding. The ChefPaw Pet Food Maker cooks, weighs & mixes fresh ingredients while working hand-in-hand with the ChefPaw nutrition app, which guides users through recipe creation, portioning, and step-by-step cooking for consistent meals balanced to the unique needs of each pet.
- **CoVetAI Inc. (Toronto, Ontario):** Built by veterinary professionals for veterinary professionals, CoVet is an AI-powered clinical co-pilot designed to reduce administrative workload and help prevent burnout. The platform automates SOAP notes, transcribes consultations and streamlines client communication, saving veterinary professionals and students more than two hours per day while enabling teams to focus on patient care.
- **Innovative Pet Lab, Inc. (Norcross, Ga.):** A certified women-owned, science-led pet health company, Innovative Pet Lab is redefining how pet parents understand their pets' wellbeing through simple, at-home testing. By translating large-scale biomarker data into clear, actionable insights, the company is challenging long-held assumptions about pet health and making veterinary science more accessible through non-invasive testing designed for modern pet families.

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- **Pawsitive Inc. (Austin, Texas):** PawsitiveTouch blends technology and neuroscience into wellness to address stress and behavioral challenges in dogs. Its patented TouchOne smart wearable and SaaS platform is designed to understand and regulate dogs' emotions and behavior – taking the industry a step forward from simply monitoring, to acting in real time to help, ushering in a new era of canine wellbeing, connectivity and peace of mind for dogs and their owners.

"The panel of judges who selected PetPax Co. as our 2026 Pet Care Innovation Prize grand prize winner sees tremendous potential in the business," said Patrick Mullen, co-lead of Purina's 9Square Ventures group and Vice President of Strategic Planning at Purina. "We are proud to help support PetPax Co. on its growth journey and look forward to seeing how all of our finalists continue to innovate and shape the future of pet care."

Now in its tenth year, the Pet Care Innovation Prize was created by Purina's 9Square Ventures group in partnership with Active Capital to support early-stage startups developing meaningful solutions across pet health, nutrition, services and technology. The program provides funding, mentorship and industry access to help founders scale their businesses and expand their impact.

Purina's 9Square Ventures corporate venturing group, founded in 2014, works to help emerging pet care startups grow and succeed by leveraging Purina's expertise, resources and industry relationships to positively impact the lives of pets and the people who care for them.

For more information about the Pet Care Innovation Prize powered by Purina, visit PetCareInnovation.net.

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, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 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. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

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.

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.

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