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PET BUSINESS WORLD – THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE FOR THE PET INDUSTRY



Return to Plan A gives trade boost

ENGLAND'S Plan B Covid measures, which include mandatory face coverings indoors, end on Thursday January 27.

In a statement to MPs, prime minister Boris Johnson said the Omicron wave had peaked nationally and that face masks will no longer be compulsory in indoor venues, although people are still advised to wear coverings in enclosed or crowded spaces.

In a boost for retail and wholesale staffing levels, the prime minister also said the government intended to end the legal requirement for people to self-isolate after they test positive for Covid. Self-isolation regulations remain in place, but when the current regulations expire on March 24, Johnson said he expected not to renew them.

Mandatory Covid passports for entering large events will end, though organisations can still use the NHS Covid pass if they wish.

GOOD NEWS

The rule changes are good news for those organising events in the pet industry, to build on the success already enjoyed as restrictions were gradually eased in 2021.

Amanda Sizer Barrett, director general of PetQuip, said: "It was great to see a return of in-person trade exhibitions like PATs and Zoomark last year, where suppliers and retailers could meet again and we hosted a packed PetQuip awards event.

"We're well advanced in our planning for the UK pavilion and exhibitor group at Interzoo in May and for the PetQuip Awards in September."

Nicole Paley, deputy chief executive of the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association (PFMA), said: "Towards the end of 2021 we were delighted to come together at our annual convention, and in 2022 we are starting an exciting project around pet food ingredients sustainability."

The Pet Industry Federation's next big event – Virtual PetIndex – goes ahead as an online experience, with two live days on February 27-28. Attendees can book appointments with exhibitors using an online scheduling tool, in order to access exclusive show discounts, while new for 2022 is a Product Discovery Zone featuring new and hero pet products from exhibitors. The event will remain accessible online until March 8.



Pet drink specialist Furr Boost has celebrated a successful year of helping to keep the nation's dogs 'healthy, happy and hydrated'.

Since launching in 2020, Furr Boost has gained a loyal customer base of dog owners whose pets lap up the drinks. The brand has received over 93% five-star reviews on Trust Pilot.

The drinks, which are available in Tetra Pak cartons, can be served on their own, or added to food or made into frozen treats.

INSIDE



Hopes for consistent licensing

New pet shop licensing guidelines come into force on February 1 for inspections and star ratings. **Page 3**

2,000 hamsters culled

Covid-19 detected in hamsters leads to mass cull of animals. **Page 4**

UK on high alert over bird flu

Domestic birds remain on lockdown as more than 70 incidents are logged across the country. **Page 5**

DOG FOOD SPECIAL

Changes in dog ownership are driving new demands for pet shops to deliver natural feeding solutions and manufacturers are ready with the right products.



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Ask The Expert



Denise Elliott of Royal Canin explains how science and technology are driving change in pet health, wellbeing and nutrition. **Page 36**

10 questions with...



Jo Amit, co-founder of HOWND, reveals why plant-based pet food is here to stay. **Page 38**

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Tell us what you need to help meet the challenges and opportunities of the new year

David Rees

A new beginning

I AM brand new in the role of editor at pbwnews, so let me begin by wishing you all a happy new year, and to say what a privilege it is to be taking over a brand with such a great reputation in the trade.

The beginning of a new year is an opportunity for everyone to make a new start, so it's the perfect time to ask: what are the changes and challenges the trade is likely to face in 2022?

Covid is still with us, unfortunately, and although we are starting to see indications that the worst of it might be over, it has left a hugely significant legacy for the trade to deal with in 2022 and beyond.

Many aspects of retailing have changed fundamentally in the past two years, with online shopping and home delivery services achieving record market share, and the whole nature of face-to-face customer interaction transformed by the need for social distancing. The pandemic has also caused disruption across the global supply chain, creating shortages and delays, which Brexit has exacerbated.

The opposite side of every challenge is an opportunity, and of course one further legacy of the pandemic is the rise in pet ownership, and an increased awareness of the value of companion animals and the benefits they bring. Coupled with that is an even greater focus on health and wellbeing, and a strong desire among shoppers to extend that focus to their pets as well as themselves.

So there are reasons to be anxious about 2022, but many reasons to be optimistic, too. Let's just hope it is going to be a healthy new year, in every sense of the word.

These are my initial thoughts but, as the new guy, I am keen to learn as much as possible about the needs of the trade. I would appreciate it if you could fill in the reader survey inside this issue and return it, to give me a better understanding of what we can do to help you run a successful business...and you could win an iPad!

Pet shop licensing guidelines issued

PET RETAILERS can hope for a more consistent application of the licensing regime following the publication of new national guidance for local authorities.

The new document, which comes into effect on February 1, outlines the inspection procedure and star rating system for pet shops. Based on welfare standards found during the inspection and whether that business is deemed to be "low or high risk", local authorities determine the term of pet shop licences – one, two or three years.

Businesses deemed low risk and meeting higher welfare standards will be granted higher star ratings, which in turn is likely to lead to 'light touch' licensing and potentially lower fees. The new legislation also



provides the requirement for trained inspectors and the requirement for the training of licence holders and their staff.

The documents have been issued by the government to provide a structure for local authorities to use during the store inspection process, following the introduction of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

The guidance states that local authorities should provide written feedback on the star rating they have given to stores following the inspection, including details of the appeals process.

The Pet Industry Federation (PIF) runs a Primary Authority scheme, operated in partnership with the Corporation of London, which can be used by PIF member businesses to arbitrate if they encounter difficulties with their local authority or receive unusual licensing stipulations.

■ Are you happy with your inspection report and star rating? Let us know at editor@pbwnews.com

CONTINUED GROWTH FOR TRAINER

A DOG TRAINER and pet shop owner from North Wales is experiencing record demand for her puppy training service.

Karen Boyce, from Froncysyllte, near Wrexham, welcomed 250 puppies and their owners into her Beastly Thoughts Professional Dog Service (BTPDS) classes during 2021, having trained 220 in 2020 and 170 in 2019.

Karen said: "I am absolutely stunned that we have managed to continue training so many puppies during this global pandemic."

The Beastly Thoughts Professional Dog Services puppy classes cover North East Wales and North Shropshire.

Karen also owns the Awesome and Rawsome Pets shop in Froncysyllte, selling premium food and products selected for health benefits and eco-friendliness.



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Insurance deal gives microchipping a boost

BRITISH PET Insurance has teamed up with microchip supplier Pet-ID to offer free introductory cover to all eligible pets implanted with a Pet-ID chip.

The free cover lasts for a period of four weeks for eligible pets including dogs, cats, exotic pets and small mammals, after which owners can take out an annual policy.

UK legislation mandates that all dogs must be microchipped, and this will be extended to all cats in the near future. As a result, collaborating with Pet-ID was “a natural move” for British Pet Insurance, according to Andy Pearce, group chief executive of British Pet Insurance.

Pearce said: “As one of the UK’s most comprehensive specialist pet insurance providers, we’re delighted to be working with Pet-ID to achieve our joint goal of keeping the nation’s pets safe.

“Our focus is on the health and wellbeing of all pets, and having your pet microchipped is one of the most crucial steps you can take to recover your pet should it ever get lost or injured in your absence.”

Pet-ID has supplied microchips for over 20 years to implanters across the UK and worldwide. Standard microchips measure 12mm x 2mm and the company also offers chips which are 8mm x 1.4mm, suitable for miniature breeds and small species.

Omicron concerns cause ANIDO postponement

ANIDO, THE biennial trade fair for the pet care sector in Benelux and Northern France, has been postponed until September.

Originally scheduled for February, the event will now take place on September 4-5.

Show organisers said that, although the Belgian authorities had given permission for the event to go ahead next month, the spread of the Covid Omicron variant had made it too difficult for exhibitors to set up their stands and commit to manning them during the show.

The early autumn timeslot has been coordinated with stakeholders and other international fairs. The DIY, Pro & Garden trade fair, which was scheduled to take place at the same time as ANIDO at Kortrijk Xpo, has also been moved to the same weekend in September.

Registered visitors are being informed by email that their visitor badge will be automatically converted into a valid badge for the new dates.



10-UP FOR TRIXIE IN THE UK

PET PRODUCTS manufacturer Trixie is celebrating its tenth anniversary as a supplier to the UK pet trade this year.

Originally founded in Germany in 1974, the company appointed a dedicated sales team to service UK stores in January 2012. Following the UK withdrawal from the EU, the company established Trixie UK Pet Products Ltd in June 2021 in order to maintain an efficient and sustainable supply of products.

Today, seven Area Sales Managers are responsible for customers in the UK, led by National Sales Manager Russell Cook.

The company has promised to celebrate the anniversary year with an extensive range of special offers and promotions for UK retailers during 2022.

ALL HAMSTERS being sold in pet shops in Hong Kong are to be culled after a number of animals tested positive for Covid-19.

Several hamsters at the Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay have tested positive for the virus – the first time such a finding has been recorded in the world, according to a report in the *The Standard*.

An estimated 2,000 hamsters will be killed, including those at 34 local pet shops and at a main storage facility, while the government is also calling upon citizens to surrender any hamsters they have bought since October 22.

Thousands of hamsters to be culled after Covid cases

Rabbits and chinchillas at the pet shop and the store’s storage facility will also be killed, although none have yet tested positive.

According to the Centre for Health Protection in Hong Kong, the daughter of a person infected with the virus bought a hamster at the store on January 4, and returned on January 8 for additional purchases. A staff

member at the store has also since been diagnosed with Covid.

Health officers tested 78 samples from hamsters, chinchillas and rabbits inside the shop, and 11 hamsters tested positive. They took 511 samples at the storage facility and found traces of the virus. Authorities have yet to confirm whether hamsters can infect humans.

The two batches of hamsters in question were imported from the Netherlands on October 22 and January 7, according to local officials, who urged any customers who purchased hamsters in Hong Kong since October 22 to hand them over to health authorities.

The owners of the pets will be subjected to mandatory Covid testing, while all customers who have visited the Little Boss shop since January 7 will be quarantined, along with 30 workers at the warehouse.

SHOP WORKER UNFAIRLY DISMISSED

A WORKER at an Essex pet food business was harassed due to her age and sex and unfairly dismissed after raising concerns over inadequate covid safety measures, an employment tribunal has ruled.

Leigh Best was dismissed as a sales assistant for pet food retailer Embark on Raw, based near Billericay, Essex on May 11, 2020, having been employed by the company since January 29 of that year.

WHISTLEBLOWER

David and Andrea Fletcher, the firm’s co-directors, said she was dismissed due to her “rude and confrontational communication with co-workers and managers”. But the tribunal panel ruled that the main reason for her dismissal was because she made protected disclosures, known as “whistleblowing”, during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, when she claimed that the safety procedures devised by the company were not being

enforced and that co-workers were not wearing face coverings or following social distancing guidelines. When she expressed her concerns, she was told to be “realistic and not paranoid”, the panel heard.

Her employers maintained she had been given a verbal warning about her behaviour, but the panel found this was not confirmed in writing or correctly recorded. The panel also heard David Fletcher made inappropriate and derogatory comments to Leigh about her age and sex, including that he had shouted “she must be on her menopause” on March 20, 2020, during an argument about a mix-up with orders.

The panel concluded that Leigh was less favourably treated after raising safety concerns and that “Mr Fletcher invaded the claimant’s privacy, broached a highly sensitive topic for her and acted tactlessly.”

A further hearing to decide any compensation is scheduled for January 31.

Another win for Dogmatic’s Headcollar

THE DOGMATIC Headcollar has been named as the winner of the ‘Product I can’t live without’ category in the *Your Dog Magazine Product Awards 2022*.

The win marks the ninth time that the company’s products have been given the accolade in the annual awards programme.

A spokesperson for the company added: “We are always delighted to hear how much the Dogmatic Headcollar has helped owners and their dogs and it is their ‘must have’ product. It is wonderful to have such a loyal, growing Customer base who continue to ‘spread the word’ about Dogmatic.”



Conference offers expert advice on exporting

A FULL line-up of speakers will tackle the challenges of exporting from the UK at a conference in March.

The Future for International Trade Conference, to be held at the Stratford Manor Hotel on March 17, is sponsored by three trade associations in the pet product, garden & leisure and home enhancement sectors including PetQuip.

Speakers include experts in international trade, world retail trends, and legal compliance, plus UK government lobbyist John Arnold.

In addition, case studies will be presented by exporters from the pet products, houseware, gardening and DIY sectors, including Ben Braithwaite of ChickenGuard, Steve Turner of Spear & Jackson and Dan Robson of Grow Sow Simple.

Amanda Sizer Barrett, director general of Gardenex and PetQuip, said: "The Future for International Trade conference is always a lively and informative occasion focussing on retail trends in international markets, the practicalities of export logistics, compliance and the inspiring case studies.

"It's all about helping UK companies navigate their best routes to secure international sales."

Birds in lockdown due to avian flu

THE COUNTRY is on high alert over avian flu following the first confirmed human case of the disease and a rising rate of incidence in the UK bird population.

There have been 68 cases of the H5N1 virus in England, as well as confirmed cases at five locations in Scotland, three in Wales, and five in Northern Ireland (Defra figures 14/01/22) since the outbreak was first reported in October 2021.

The first person in the UK to catch the new strain has been named as 79-year-old Alan Gosling, a retired engineer who lived with about 20 ducks inside his home in Devon.

Gosling, who had about another 100 ducks living outside on his property in Buckfastleigh, noticed several birds falling ill in December, according to Devon Live.

Subsequent tests by government department Defra were returned positive for the H5N1 strain of avian flu, and the ducks were killed shortly after Christmas.

EXTREMELY RARE

All contacts of the individual, including those who visited the premises, have been traced and there is no evidence of onward spread of the infection to anyone else. The individual is currently well and self-isolating, Defra reports. This is the first human case of this strain in the UK, although there have been cases elsewhere globally.

Some strains of bird flu can pass from birds to people, but this is extremely rare, according to the UK Health Security Agency. It usually requires close contact with an infected bird, so the risk to humans is generally considered very low.

The UK's Chief Veterinary Officer, Christine Middlemiss, said: "While avian influenza is highly contagious in birds, this is a very rare event and is very specific to the circumstances on this premises.



"We took swift action to limit the spread of the disease at the site in question, all infected birds have been humanely culled, and cleansing and disinfection of the premises is underway.

"We are seeing a growing number of cases in birds on both commercial farms and in backyard flocks across the country. Implementing scrupulous biosecurity measures will help keep your birds safe."

Defra has introduced strict biosecurity measures for the trade and is also advising the public not to touch, move or transport sick or dead birds.

With effect from November 29, 2021, poultry keepers must now: house or net all poultry and captive birds to keep them separate from wild birds; minimise direct and indirect contact between poultry and captive birds and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds; reduce the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry and captive birds are kept; clean and disinfect clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds and clean and disinfect housing on a continuous basis.

SUPREME CREATES PREMIUM BATHING SAND

SUPREME PETFOODS has extended its Science Selective range with the launch of a new bathing sand for chinchillas, hamsters, degus and gerbils.



Designed to support optimal coat condition whilst being gentle on the skin, Science Selective Bathing Sand is intended to capitalise on premiumisation trend in the small pet sector.

Claire Hamblion, marketing director at Supreme, said: "The softness of a bathing sand depends on how variable the particle size is – if you have some small grains alongside larger ones, it can feel less soft. With Science Selective Bathing Sand, we are very careful to ensure that all particles are a very similar size, which makes it a really top-class product."

Science Selective Bathing Sand has a RRP of £4.99.

Dog training product secures five-figure funds

A DOG toilet training product made from natural grass has gained a big funding boost following an appearance on BBC One's Dragon's Den on January 13.

Described as the UK's first eco-friendly, real-grass alternative to puppy pads, Piddle Patch has secured a £50,000 investment from entrepreneur Steven Bartlett.

The product is a soil-free square of real grass for use indoors, in order to

teach dogs to only toilet on grass. Piddle Patch is currently delivered direct to the door on a subscription basis or as a one-off purchase.

Founder Rebecca Sloan said, "Steven's investment will allow us to fast track the growth of Piddle Patch, as well as launch a number of new products currently in development. Steven's advice, guidance, social media and marketing expertise will be invaluable".

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Lily's Kitchen uses Plant Power for latest launch

LILY'S Kitchen has launched a new range of plant-based dog food products to meet the growing trend for owners and their pets to cut down on meat consumption.

Comprising two wet recipe tinned lines and two dog treats, the new lines will feature a Plant Power flash on pack to highlight their plant-based protein ingredients.

The Mighty Burrito Bowl with Jackfruit (RRP £3 for a 400g tin) contains jackfruit, red pepper and kidney beans, flavoured with cinnamon and parsley, while the Vibrant Rainbow Stew (RRP £3 for a 400g tin and £1.50 for a 150g tray) is made with a selection of vegetables.

OMNIVORES

The new treats come in two grain-free recipes - Tropical Mango Jerky and Succulent Sweet Potato Jerky with Jackfruit (both RRP £3 for a 70g pouch). Both treats have a chewy texture and are made with natural ingredients and plant-based protein.

Samantha Crossley, marketing director at Lily's Kitchen, said: "As dogs are omnivores, feeding them vegan food once or twice a week is the perfect way to incorporate more vegetables into their diet in a healthy way.

"The new Plant Power range has been designed so that dogs can cut down their meat consumption, but still enjoy a nutritionally complete meal. They're so tasty, dogs won't even notice the difference."

The wet recipes are in the wholesale trade now, with the treats available to order at the end of January.

UK pet industry gears up for PATS Sandown show

RETAILERS have the opportunity to view the latest new product launches and pick up on key trends at the industry's leading Spring exhibition PATS Sandown on 27-28 March.

Following a successful return of in-person events at PATS Telford in September 2021, manufacturers and suppliers are returning to showcase their new products for 2022 to another live audience at Sandown Park exhibition centre in Esher, Surrey.

PATS Sandown has new dates in 2022 as it moves back to its original March staging after two events were held in February. It will however continue with its successful formula of Sunday and Monday show days, March 27th and 28th.

FACE TO FACE

More than 130 companies and brands have already booked their space at the Spring showcase.

Event organiser Gordon Thomas said: "We are almost sold out, which is great news and proof that the UK pet industry is fully behind an event where suppliers and buyers can meet face to face.

"We also know that visitors to PATS exhibitions value the opportunity to touch and feel new products, which is a huge consideration when buying stock for the new season."

Companies and brands exhibiting at PATS include Acana/Origin, Burns Pet Nutrition, Canagan, IPN, Pets Choice, Trixie, and we.pet, while a number of businesses, including Pet Dream House, In Vogue, Gladwells, and

Vetark, are returning to the Sandown exhibition after a short break.

New exhibitors include Bottled Baking Co, Park Life, Uniwipe Europe and Wings Enterprises, while award-winning gift and treat supplier Sniffe & Likkit is appearing at PATS Sandown for the first time.

Co-founder Lee Sargent said: "We made it to our first PATS in Telford last September and were delighted with the response to our new range, as well as finally having the opportunity to meet so many new and familiar faces in the pet industry. We were super-happy to sign up for Sandown and hopefully repeat a great experience.

"We love being able to demonstrate our products to potential stockists in-person - it's always the best way and we've missed being able to do it."

A full list of the exhibitors can be found at www.patshow.co.uk where visitors can register for free entry to the show.



SUCCESS FOR T FORREST IN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

PET TREATS supplier T Forrest has been recognised at the prestigious Red Rose Awards.

Organised by Lancashire Business View, the awards celebrate success in the Lancashire business, commerce and industry sectors.

T Forrest picked up the Family Business Award, sponsored by Napthens Solicitors. The judges referenced particular progression achieved by the company across creative and innovative elements of the business.

The judging panel said: "T Forrest have achieved much, made their ambitions clear, and excelled at a difficult time. The business responded very strongly to the pandemic. T Forrest are very much rooted in Lancashire with a strong family thread running through everything they do."

T Forrest is a fifth-generation family business, established in 1937, supplying a range of natural dog treats and dog accessories, plus seasonal and training treats and bird treats.



Functional foods offer 'lucrative opportunity'

THE FUNCTIONAL pet food market was valued at \$1,954.8m worldwide last year and is forecast to reach \$4,676.1m by 2030, registering a CAGR of 8.8% from 2021 to 2030, according to new research.

Functional food is gaining significant traction among developing countries, owing to increasing pet humanisation and rising disposable income along with growing interest in pet health, the report says.

Consumers' preferences for natural

and organic products and healthy ingredients has created a 'lucrative opportunity' for niche manufacturers to offer organic, natural, and allergen-free products, and innovation in specialty and premium cat food products is boosting the market.

The 'Functional pet food Market by Pet, Source, Application and Distribution Channel: Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, 2021-2030' report from ResearchAndMarkets.com

HEALTH CONCERNS PROMPT 'THINK BEFORE YOU BUY' WARNING

THE PUBLIC are being encouraged to "stop and think before buying a flat-faced dog" following the release of a new study into the health of French Bulldogs by the Royal Veterinary College (RVC).

The study, led by the RVC's VetCompass programme, compared the health of random samples of 2,781 French Bulldogs and 21,850 non-French Bulldogs and found that the health of the former group has strayed substantially from non-French Bulldogs in the UK, and is now largely much poorer, with breathing problems and sore eyes particularly common issues for the breed.

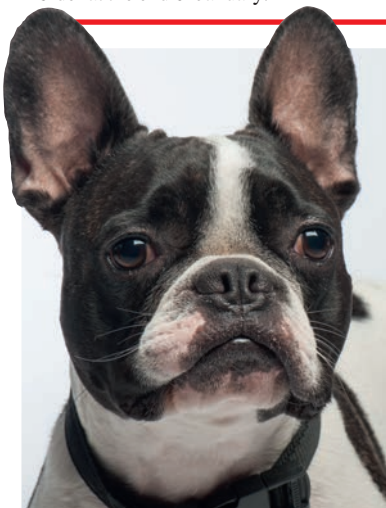
Compiling a list of the 43 most common disorders across both groups of dogs, the findings revealed many of the differences in health between the two groups were closely associated with the extreme body shape that defines French

Bulldogs. This includes a grossly shortened muzzle (flat-faced breed, brachycephalic), a large head, skin folds and shortened spine/tail.

The findings of the new study revealed that French Bulldogs had a higher risk of 20 out of the 43 disorders and a lower risk of 11 out of 43 disorders.

Other conditions with the highest risk in French Bulldogs included Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome, ear discharge, skin fold dermatitis and difficulty giving birth.

Dr Dan O'Neill, Senior Lecturer, Companion Animal Epidemiology at the RVC, and lead author of the paper, said: "There is no doubting that many humans love the feeling of owning their special French Bulldog. But sadly, this study helps us to grasp the full extent of the serious health issues affecting these dogs.



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Key food trends in Poland

PREMIUMISATION, small company growth and insect-based feeding are going to be key trends in the Polish pet food market going forward, according to a number of new reports.

The Polish pet food market outperformed the average for Eastern Europe showing a 6% increase in volume and a 4% increase in value in a year-to-year comparison, says Euromonitor International. It estimated that just a third of all dogs and just over 40% of cats in Poland are fed with ready-made pet food. But both figures are on the rise, with a growing number of customers switching to more expensive pet food.

Multinational companies have traditionally been strong in Poland, but their market share is declining, to the benefit of smaller companies, according to some analysts.

The country's largest insect protein producer HiProMine has raised funds to build a large-scale facility, capable of producing more than 300 kg of insects per square metre per month, say local reports.

Improved recipes for CSJ

CSJ HAS introduced new formulations for its Original Lamb recipes for dogs.

The Lamb with Rice now features increased vitamin and minerals plus additional levels of fat. The improvement is intended to enhance stamina and support good body condition whilst ensuring the product is still hypoallergenic. Glucosamine and herbs have also been added to help support healthy joints.

The Lamb Senior recipe also features increased levels of vitamins and minerals with added herbs to support liver function and general health. An increased level of protein also helps to support muscle mass and immune function so is suitable for overweight dogs or those that maintain weight easily, according to the manufacturer.

Pets Choice aims to bring manufacturing home

PETS Choice has submitted a planning application for a new warehouse, industrial unit and shop at its base at the Whitebirk Industrial Estate, Blackburn.

The application seeks planning permission for a new 120,000 square foot warehouse with three-storey offices, as well as a change of use for the conversion of the existing packing building to ancillary retail, in addition to a new access road.

The main purpose of the new development is to enable the company to transfer manufacturing of its products from Germany and France to the UK. If approved, the move is expected to create 60 new jobs in the area.

The company opened a 65,000sq ft production unit at the site as recently as two years ago, and as part of the new plan the existing industrial building currently used for packing operations will be converted to an ancillary retail unit operating on Thursday to Saturday for

wholesalers and the general public.

Pets Choice recently completed the transition of the assets of the Animate business to the Blackburn site, following the acquisition of the brand in November last year.

The transition created a number of new jobs in Blackburn at a variety of levels from warehouse operatives through to head office staff, and sees the company employ their first ever in-house seamstress.

MADE IN BRITAIN

Brand Manager Michael Haigh said: "It was incredibly important to us that we take on the manufacturing of the 'Made in Britain' products, so we are creating a dedicated seamstress room in our factory to accommodate the manufacturing of fleece crate mats and pet blankets right here in Lancashire. This is a really exciting move for the business as we expand our expertise from the manufacturing of pet food and treats into accessories too."



CAMPAIGN TARGETS OBESE DOGS

PET OWNERS were urged to #WeighUp their pets health and wellbeing as part of a campaign by the PDSA, launched during National Obesity Awareness Week in January.

The #WeighUp campaign, sponsored by Royal Canin, urges owners to take steps to combat weight-related issues with their pets.

A study of more than 4,500 pet owners by YouGov on behalf of PDSA found that the equivalent of 1.4 million pets have been fed more human treats since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. At the same time, many dogs were walked less frequently than pre-pandemic, with 38% leaving the house just once a day, compared to 33% in February 2020.

According to owners who said their pet was overweight, the most common factors preventing their pet from losing weight were: giving in when their pet begs for food (29%), they like feeding treats to their pet (19%), their pet is fussy with food (19%), and they feel giving treats shows how much they love them (15%).

PDSA Vet Nurse Nina Downing said: "Although some owners may think their chubby pets look cute, being overweight is a major red flag when it comes to their wellbeing. Overweight animals have a much greater risk of developing health problems such as arthritis and diabetes – which can have drastic consequences, even shortening their life by up to two years."

National cat Awards open for entry

CAT LOVERS across the UK are being invited to nominate their furry friends for the National Cat Awards.

Run by the charity Cats Protection, the annual event celebrates the devotion, courage and companionship of the nation's cats.

The entry window is now open and owners have until noon on March 10 to nominate their cat in one of four categories: Cat Colleagues; Most Caring Cat; Furr-ever Friends; and Outstanding Rescue Cat.

Cats Protection's awards organiser Kate Bunting said: "Over the past two years, the UK's pet cats have played an even more important role in our lives – whether it's keeping the kids' company during home schooling, being a companion for people living alone in lockdown or simply being there during times of uncertainty."

A panel of celebrity cat lovers will select the winners, which will be announced at a ceremony at London's Savoy Hotel on August 4, 2022.

| productnews



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Mobile pet shop is on the move

THE SUCCESS of a mobile pet store in North East Scotland has captured the attention of both the public and the historic regional newspaper, *The Press and Journal*.

Self-employed oil worker Stephen Bruce suffered a reduction in working days during the lockdown and now combines his work with running the mobile pet shop Pawz Pet Supplies.

According to *The Press and Journal*, Stephen started the business in September last year and has seen it grow week upon week. He stocks a range of items for dogs, cats, small furries, horses, fish and wild birds, and spends nights and weekends visiting communities across the North East of Scotland with his mobile trailer.

He said: "The business has been set up to give customers a solution to save travelling into town and also having a saving in their weekly expenses on their pet food."

Public bodies do their bit during covid

THE RSPCA is 'delighted' with how public bodies continued to prioritise animal welfare amid the covid-19 pandemic – and has given out 73 awards as part of its PawPrints scheme.

The charity has recognised public bodies for going above and beyond statutory minimums in how they promote welfare, including in their approaches to dealing with stray dogs and planning for local emergencies.

PawPrints – formerly known as the Community Animal Welfare Footprints (CAWF) – was first established in 2008.

Awards are divided into five PawPrint categories, awarded to bronze, silver or gold standard, and four special recognition awards have also been awarded this year - with a particular focus on how services were maintained or developed in the face of the pandemic and challenging coronavirus-related restrictions.

Vet Partners invests in Cardiff practice

ST-DAVID Veterinary Centre in Pentwyn, Cardiff has been transformed thanks to a six-figure investment by VetPartners.

The group injected £142,000 into the refurbishment project. Improvements include a modernised reception, an additional consultation room, an x-ray room and a dental suite. A cat-only waiting area has also been created, equipped with a shelf where cat carriers can be placed high up to keep feline patients separate from dogs.

UK pet boom presents sales opportunities

THE LOCKDOWN-driven boom in the UK pet population is creating huge opportunities for retailers that can meet the increasingly exacting needs of a new generation of pet parents.

Research by Mars Petcare has revealed that the new generation of owners are likely to view themselves as more than merely 'owners' of pets. The proportion of pet owners who say their animals are like children to them almost doubled between 2016 and 2020, while the proportion that view their pets as family members but not children fell significantly.

The research also revealed that the number of dogs and cats in the UK surged by 7% year-on-year in 2020 as Brits sought the mental health benefits and companionship of pet ownership during lockdown. That's a rise of more than 1.5 million pets.

URBANITES

As revealed in Mars Petcare's second annual petcare category report, *Pet therapy: The retail opportunities of the pandemic pet boom*, the surge in pet ownership is being driven by young urbanites, with 55% of new pet owners living in cities and a third aged under 40.

This group is more likely to favour pedigree breeds of dogs and cats and prefers smaller 'toy' dog breeds. The number of shih tzus, daschunds, pugs and chihuahuas living

The new generation of owners are likely to view themselves as more than merely 'owners' of pets

in the UK grew by 141 between 2016 and 2020.

The number of pedigree cats has also surged, with the British Shorthair population growing by 25.4% to 1.1 million between 2016 and 2020. The number of Persian cats has more than tripled and Bengals are up 71%.

CONSIDERATION

Zoe Taphouse, category and market activation director at Mars Petcare UK, said: "The new generation of pet parents are spending more money on products that give animals optimum nutrition for the life stage they're at. They're giving pet food as much consideration as the food they eat themselves, and trends in human food & drink are being reflected in the category."

The number of puppies living in the UK almost tripled between 2016 and 2020 to 1.8 million.

The greater number of puppies and kittens in the country, combined with the fact that smaller breeds of dog tend to live longer than larger breeds, means petcare category growth is likely to be sustained in the long term, adds Zoe. "The prospects for the category are extremely good," she says.



COLLAR COMPANY ACHIEVES QUALITY MARK

PET PRODUCTS supplier Collar has achieved ISO 9001 certification, which means that all the processes of management and production meet international quality standards.

Independently audited, ISO 9001 is defined as the international standard that specifies requirements for a quality management system. Organisations use the standard to demonstrate the ability to consistently provide products and services that meet customer and regulatory requirements.

The company maintains that the achievement was gained through a

focus on customer feedback, technological processes, and standardisation of storage and delivery systems. Collar chief executive Nikolai Sinita added that the ISO 9001 certificate demonstrated that the company "was a reliable supplier of pet products to its customers".

The certification applies to all brands and products supplied by the company, including accessories, toys, litter, and aquatic products. The status is valid for three years, after which a new evaluation and audit of the management system will take place.

Healthy New Year campaign raises awareness

LUXURY DOG food and treats manufacturer The Innocent Hound is backing its Fine Health range of products with a media campaign to drive awareness of the brand, while at the same time highlighting how caring for a dog can have a positive impact on daily life.

The '3 Ingredients for a Healthy New Year' campaign includes promotion through digital media, print and via influencers.

Fine Health air-dried dog treats contain active natural ingredients such as turmeric and spirulina, offering additional support for teeth, joints, skin and coats.



New online sales platform for independent retailers

THE BRITISH Independent Retailers Association (Bira) is calling on independent retailers to sign up to its new online trading site to help them recover from the pandemic.

The website, which is being launched in February 2022, will provide independent retailers with a new, cost-effective way to sell online, helping them build their presence both locally and nationally, Bira maintains.

The UK-wide platform, called Neartoo, is open to all types of retail and will be owned by indies, exclusively for indies, and will operate at "significantly lower" sales commission than its competitors, says Bira.

Retailers will be able to create their own individual profiles on the site, which can either be synced to their

existing online sales platform, or act as their own platform if they don't yet have an online presence.

For Bira members, use of the platform is free for 12 months, and non-Bira members can sign up and get five months free.

PROFITABILITY

Bira's CEO Andrew Goodacre said: "The pandemic has accelerated shopping behaviours, with more use of the internet and people also shopping more locally.

"This platform, owned by independents, addresses both of those societal changes, and will allow these retailers to open up new ways of selling to customers, and more profitably."



IVC Evidensia claims to be the largest group of its kind in Europe, with more than 1,500 practices across 11 countries

IVC EVIDENSIA EXPANDS IN FRANCE

IVC Evidensia has completed the acquisition of French veterinary group VetOne.

The group of more than 200 hospitals and clinics located across France covers all aspects of veterinary care.

Following the acquisition, Steve Rosengarten, currently chief executive of VetOne, will assume operational responsibility for the combined group as chief executive of Wivetix, while Patrick

Govart will remain as president of IVC Evidensia France.

Rosengarten said: "We are delighted to join IVC Evidensia to create the absolute French leader in quality veterinary care. The strength of an international group, our family spirit, our decentralized and learning approaches, and our common values form an unparalleled environment for our employees."

Behaviour advice could reduce rehoming rates

MORE UNWANTED dogs would be kept out of welfare centres if their owners could receive pet behaviour advice.

That's the verdict of a survey of people calling Wood Green The Animal Charity to give up their dog.

Almost 25% of owners contacting the charity said they wouldn't abandon their pet if advice and support was made available.

This intervention could reduce the

number of companion dogs needing to be rehomed – currently a devastating issue with more than 100,000 dogs entering UK rescue centres annually.

The research was carried out by Natalie Powdrill-Wells, welcome centre manager at Wood Green. The project analysed the call records of 1,131 relinquishment requests to establish if the offer of free behaviour advice was accepted.



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Lobsters and lap dances: UK's strangest business expenses



FINANCE EXPERTS are reminding business owners that reasonable costs are classed as legitimate expenses – no matter how unusual they may be after uncovering hundreds of 'strange but valid' expenses.

Research revealed that 44% of SME owners fail to claim business expenses due to fears of penalty fines and being unsure what qualifies as a legitimate expense. As part of the study into the financial health of SMEs, some of Britain's most bizarre expenses were uncovered – including live lobsters, pink tutus and lap dances!

The research by The Accountancy Partnership found that 65% of UK small business owners let expenses go unclaimed each year, meaning nearly four million businesses are missing out on tax relief and potentially hampering profitability.

Stolen royals plea

HOBBYIST BREEDER DK Royal Pythons owner Kevin Townsend was burgled in December, with some of his select animals stolen during the raid.

Some of the royal python morphs stolen include: male pastel spotnose clown 200g; female clown 1800g; male redstripe yb 700g; male pin pied 800g; female enchi desert ghost 1000g; female lemonblast desert ghost 2000g; male leopard ivory 200g; female pastel ivory 300g; female firefly ivory 300g; female leopard super phantom 200g.

If anyone has any information, or has been offered any of the above reptiles, contact Kevin at www.instagram.com/dkroyalpythons

■ More reptile news and views on p40

SCOTTISH DOGS CAN NOW BOOGIE WITH THEIR OWNERS

DOG CLOTHING manufacturer Urban Pup has released a range of canine hoodies and t-shirts featuring Scottish football fans' adopted anthem 'Yes Sir I can Boogie'.

The new items, developed with the backing of the Scottish FA, also feature the Scotland crest and are available with two different designs in either Wallace Blue or Away Blue, retailing at £13.95 for the t-shirt and £19.95 for the hoodie.

The new range is a tribute to the Scotland national team's now-famous changing room celebrations on the night they beat Serbia

and qualified for UEFA Euro 2020, when team members sang and danced to the 1970s disco classic.

Urban Pup Managing Director Denis Kelly is confident that the items will strike a chord with fans of the Scotland team.

He said: "After the success of our official Scotland football shirt and accessory ranges, it was a no-brainer to include this new fun range of hoodies and t-shirts to commemorate that very special night in Serbia. We know that supporters will love them just as much as we do."



Changes in dog travel law not extended to cats

CONCERNS THAT cats are being "left behind" in changes to laws around pet travel have been raised by Cats Protection.

The charity says proposals in a Government consultation, which closed in October, contained important changes to dog travel – including increasing the minimum age for travel and banning the movement of heavily pregnant dogs – but fails to extend the same protections to cats.

Cats Protection estimates that 70,000 cats acquired between March 2020 and March 2021 were from an overseas source and is calling on the Government to increase the minimum age that cats can travel into Great Britain from 15 weeks to six months, ban the movement into the UK of pregnant cats in their last 42 days of gestation and ban the importation of cats which have been de-clawed.

Speaking in a parliamentary debate on the topic, initiated by Sheryll Murray MP, the government said that the proposed legislation had not been extended to cats as they represented a much smaller proportion of pet traffic.

Rebecca Pow, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said: "In 2020, cats made up 9% of the total commercial movements of cats, dogs and ferrets to Great Britain, although that was a 2% increase from 2019. Dogs travelling by the same rules made up 91% of the total movements."

HUGE CONCERN

Cats Protection's Head of Advocacy & Government Relations Jacqui Cuff said: "While the Government is looking at changes to improve the welfare of puppies and dogs being brought into the UK, it is not considering the same improvements for cats, which is a huge concern.

"We know there has been an increase in the numbers of people looking to buy a kitten, and prices have also gone up. The current laws on importing kittens and cats are far too relaxed and urgently need to be tightened up to prevent a surge in unscrupulous traders importing kittens into Great Britain for onward sale."

MILLION HOMELESS PETS PLIGHT SET TO WORSEN

AN ESTIMATED 1.1m homeless cats and dogs in the UK are living in shelters or on the street, and the problem will get worse before it gets better.

That's the verdict of a new study – The State of Pet Homelessness Index – launched by Mars Petcare in partnership with an advisory board of leading animal welfare experts.

The survey reveals how there are several challenges for Britons looking to get a pet, such as prohibitive rental agreements, with almost two thirds (63%) of the general population reporting it to be difficult to own a dog when you live in an apartment.

NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS

Stigmas against adopting specific breeds of dogs is also part of the problem, with over half (58%) of prospective pet owners saying they would not buy or adopt a Pitbull because they're perceived as an aggressive breed.

The report also identified issues with negative perceptions of animals from shelters and stray populations, with 36% of people revealing they would not consider adopting from a shelter and a quarter (25%) believing that stray dogs are a danger to them.



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THANK YOU!

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2012 -

TRIXIE UK ready to deliver in anniversary year

Pet product distributor TRIXIE is celebrating ten years of direct sales and distribution to the UK. Handled from our head office in Tarp, Germany, we have a dedicated Area Sales Team ready to fulfill orders and ensure the efficient delivery of all items to valued customers



SINCE its foundation in 1974 by Bonnik Hansen, TRIXIE has gradually established itself in all European countries as well as other countries across the world. After the former independent wholesaler and distribution partner TRIXIE UK went into administration, TRIXIE was faced with the issue of how to continue to supply the UK market. TRIXIE decided to take matters into its own hands by appointing a dedicated sales team for the UK, which started serving and developing UK stores in January 2012.

In 2018, TRIXIE promoted Russell Cook to the new position of National Sales Manager UK to drive and manage growth in pet accessories and help retailers and his team reach their full potential, supported by Jana Suhr in 2020 as back-office team leader. 2021 was a challenging year for TRIXIE as the company faced new regulations due to Brexit but this challenge was met in June 2021 with the

formation of TRIXIE UK Pet Products Ltd.

"With this step, we are able to ensure the sustainable supply of the 6,500 items in our range to the UK without additional administrative work with customs or other authorities," says CEO Volker Haak.

Therefore, TRIXIE is confident that it will be able to ship goods to UK customers just as easily as in pre-Brexit times and is well prepared for the next 10 years.

TRIXIE UK SALES TEAM

At the beginning of 2012, TRIXIE started direct sales to the UK. Today, seven Area Sales Managers are responsible for our customers in the UK.

They look after them by taking orders, handling complaints, presenting

attractive offers as well as assisting with store design and merchandising. The entire logistics are handled from our headquarters in Tarp, Germany. Customers and Area Sales Managers can rely on the back-office team of six people, all of whom speak English and are led by Jana Suhr who, together with National Sales Manager Russell Cook, looks after the strategic development of the UK market.

Russell Cook says: "At TRIXIE we always look to the future, with new innovations, unique products and market leading solutions to help our customers reach their full potential in this ever changing industry. This year is a little different as we are also taking a look back to the last 10 years of TRIXIE trading direct with the UK and celebrating this moment with you all.

"I am extremely proud to be leading the UK team into our 'TRIXIEVERSARY' year and I



"Since joining TRIXIE 10 years ago I have enjoyed the opportunity to build excellent relationships and develop business with Pet retailers who share my enthusiasm for this growing sector. TRIXIE has allowed me to use my own individual skills and experience to build my area but importantly have made me feel part of the TRIXIE family from day one. The past few years have surely created extra challenges and obstacles for everyone but by working alongside our amazing Head Office Team we have overcome whatever has been thrown at us. We have a great Team in the UK and I look forward to the opportunities the future will bring for us all."

MARTIN HUME TRIXIE UK Area Sales Manager

Our Area Sales Managers



Russell Cook



Duncan Bryant



Ian King



Lisa Pearson



Martin Hume



Shaunie Booth



Steven Skinner

Seven Area Sales Managers are responsible for all our UK customers. Looking after your orders, handling complaints, keeping you aware of our attractive offers as well as assisting with store design and merchandising.

would like to thank all our customers past and present, for their support."

TRIXIE RANGE AND LOGISTICS

The TRIXIE range offers something suitable for everyone. This is not only because the selection is very extensive with 6,500 items, but a core philosophy for TRIXIE is also providing quality products that offer value for money.

From hamster houses and scratching posts to dog coats – the extensive range of TRIXIE products are sold to more than 8,500 pet shops worldwide.

The different areas of TRIXIE's warehouse work together to ensure that orders are dispatched as quickly as possible while at the same time, the focus remains on the utmost care and highest levels of customer service. Only a state-of-the-art, path-optimised and well-structured logistics system can make that possible. There are computerised records of all stages of the process, from the arrival of goods and their internal movement to order picking and shipping.

SUSTAINABILITY IS IMPORTANT TO US

To address the issue of sustainability, we have set up a project group that examines both processes and materials. The group assigns, bundles, monitors and promotes work tasks. In the warehouse, packaging materials have been reduced or used more efficiently, packaging has been reduced in size and multiple blisters have been removed.

In June 2020, we added our Be Eco series to the range. Transport boxes, litter trays, resting places and toys are all made from recycled materials. More items are being added to the range on an ongoing basis.

With sale of our BE NORDIC series, TRIXIE is supporting marine conservation projects and regularly donates to nature conservation associations, including start-ups and regional associations. ■

CELEBRATE WITH US



Our customers can look forward to 10 great anniversary deals. More information will follow in the course of the year

READY TO DELIVER



Following the commissioning of the OSR extension in autumn 2020, the automated OSR system now has 47,662 storage spaces and is the heart of the TRIXIE warehouse



The 26m-high fully automated warehouse, commissioned in 2018, provides additional storage for 39,000 pallets.

TRIXIE UK Pet Products Ltd.

Phone: 0207 1542940

E-mail: sales@trixieuk.uk

Website: www.trixieuk.uk



Pets give companionship – but you can't cuddle a fish!

A NEW study in the open-access journal, 'Animals', examines the links between pet ownership, loneliness, and wellbeing during the covid-19 pandemic.

The study – led by the University of the West of Scotland, with support from the Waltham Petcare Science Institute in Leicestershire – also provides evidence that many people perceive psychological and emotional benefits from their relationship with their pet, which may translate into a greater bond and potentially improved mental well-being and loneliness.

In the online survey of 1,199 participants, those who kept companion animals overwhelmingly rated them as having had a positive effect on their well-being during the pandemic.

Many participants indicated their companion animals provided a source of positive distraction, and among participants who kept ornamental fishes, watching home aquaria was frequently cited as a beneficial activity and a welcome distraction – although they lacked the comfort of personal touch.

Registered medicines advisors play key role, says AMTRA

RETAILERS ARE being reminded of the important role of Registered Animal Medicines Advisors (RAMAs) in the pet trade.

With veterinary practices facing increasing difficulties in recruiting enough staff to fill rotas and increasing number of households welcoming companion animals into their homes, RAMAs play a key role in providing pet owners with access to advice and guidance to help keep animals healthy, according to the Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA).

Retailers are increasingly reacting to this demand and recognising the commercial value of training and employing RAMAs, explained AMTRA secretary general Stephen Dawson.

"Pet stores and retailers continue to recognise the importance of providing customers with access to registered professionals with a tailored qualification in veterinary medicines advice," he said.

Practitioners holding AMTRA RAMA qualified status demonstrate to pet owners and others involved in the purchase and supply of veterinary medicines that they are dealing with a registered professional, with the ability to



Stephen Dawson

advise, prescribe and supply medicines suitable as treatment or prevention for that animal, including on flea, tick and worm control measures, explained Dawson.

UNIQUE RESOURCE

"We have a unique resource for all companion animals in the UK, through our network of RAMAs, and it is essential we can maintain and build this essential distribution channel for veterinary medicines. Businesses able to provide this valuable resource for clients will feel the commercial benefits," he added.

Breakthrough diet supports Wood Green

A PARTNERSHIP between Wood Green, The Animals Charity and Breakthrough Dog Food is helping to give dogs with complex behavioural needs a second chance at happiness.

Since 2016, Breakthrough has donated food worth more than £2,500 a year to Wood Green. The brand says its 'specially formulated product range can make a real difference to dogs' behaviour, with amino acids and vitamins that help overcome stress'.

Ciara Pollen, dog section manager at Wood Green, which rehomes about 700 dogs each year, said: "The generous food donations we receive from Breakthrough ensure our dogs are fed a nutritionally complete diet that supports their overall wellbeing, including those with complex needs."

Breakthrough Dog Food is a joint venture between Val Strong and Oscar Pet Foods, and is a result of Val's lifetime of study and research into diet and behaviour.

Val said: "We are delighted to have formed a long-term partnership with Wood Green by providing Breakthrough food to support the dogs in their care."

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IT'S ALL ABOARD FOR POSH PETS

THERE HAS been a surge in people taking their pets on board private jets, according to a report by US news agency CNN.

Private aircraft travel has become more accessible in recent years, and has witnessed increasing demand following the travel chaos caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Now private jet companies are reporting a surge in bookings from travellers – many of them new to the private jet world – who want to bring their pets on board with them.

Global aviation company VistaJet has reported an 86% increase in the number of animals it's flown over the last two years – and it's not just cats and dogs getting their wings.

According to Matteo Atti, executive vice president of marketing and innovation, one in four of its members now flies with a four-legged companion, while the number of birds being taken on board is also on the rise.

"Rabbits are a recent new breed of pet flown by VistaJet, and while dogs continue to make up the majority of animal passengers, the number of cats spiked 357% from 2019 to 2020," he said. Another private jet company, NetJets, has even developed the hashtag #NetPets for its pet travellers, so that images of them can be shared on social media.

SECOND HOME

One reason for the increase in pet flights has been put down simply to the surge in pandemic pet ownership.

However, Daniel Hirschhorn, co-founder of boutique private jet charter company Luxury Aircraft Solutions, said: "We're seeing an increase in the level of leisure trips versus business trips. You're not going to take your dog into your meeting, but you'll certainly take it to your other house, if that's convenient for you."





Groomers team up to revolutionise cat care

TWO BRITISH Isles Grooming Association (BIGA) supporters have teamed up to create the UK's first portfolio of dedicated cat grooming qualifications in the UK.

Fern Gresty, of iPET Network, met Heidi Anderton when they were both directors at BIGA and true to the spirit of the organisation, the doors were opened for a partnership and further promotion of grooming for animal welfare.

Heidi's Absolutely Animals business, in Lewisham, is now an approved iPET Network Training Provider, and industry veteran Heidi, who has run her business for 28 years, worked with Fern and partner Sarah Mackay.

TWO-GROOMERS-PER-CAT

Heidi currently grooms around 30 cats a week at her London salon and her unique 'two-groomers-per-cat' technique is a key part of the training she passes on to students.

"This is the first nationally accredited portfolio of cat grooming qualifications," she said, "and I want to encourage existing salons to consider cat grooming because it is so important for their welfare."

"I'm really pleased to be working with iPET Network and thrilled that our joint support of the British Isles Grooming Association brought us together."

Vet group boosted by growing pet ownership

VETERINARY services group CVS has reported a strong financial performance as it reaped the benefits of the UK's increasing number of pet owners throughout the lockdown restrictions.

The company, which owns more than 500 veterinary surgeries in the UK, Netherlands and Republic of Ireland, saw full year revenues rise 19.2% to £510.1m, achieved through strong organic growth and also contributions from nine acquisitions. Pre-tax profits soared from £9.9m to £33.1m.

'Deed not breed' challenge to dangerous dogs legislation

A COALITION of the UK's leading animal welfare and veterinary groups has welcomed an independent academic report which challenges the premise underpinning current dog control legislation, that certain breeds are inherently dangerous.

The report, entitled 'Investigation of measures to reduce dog attacks and promote responsible ownership amongst dog owners with dog control issues in the UK' was compiled by Middlesex University, following a Government commission in November 2018.

The report said: "Participants almost unanimously cast doubt on the idea that breed was a cause of dog attacks noting either that dogs are not inherently dangerous if properly socialised and engaged with using appropriate behaviours, or that all dogs could be dangerous if placed in the wrong situations and handled inappropriately."

The report also found data around dog bite incidents to be lacking and

record-keeping to be inconsistent across the country.

The coalition welcoming the findings includes Battersea, Blue Cross, British Veterinary Association, Dogs Trust, RSPCA and The Kennel Club. The group claims that the report casts significant doubt on the evidence that the UK Government has been using to justify Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act, which labels certain types of dogs as inherently aggressive and dangerous to public safety.

IMPERATIVE

Dr Samantha Gaines, secretariat of the group and RSPCA dog welfare expert, said: "Given these findings, it is now imperative that the Government uses them to inform an evidence-based, 'deed not breed' approach to future dog control strategy and moves away from the current breed-specific approach. This goes hand in hand with encouraging responsible dog ownership and owner education."

In brief

Public thanked for being charity's eyes and ears

THE RSPCA received 492,471 calls to its cruelty hotline over the summer as part of its Cancel Out Cruelty campaign between June 1 and August 31.

The reports included 271 concerning attempted killings, 3,059 relating to animals being beaten, 421 reports of improper killings, 181 of mutilations and 304 of animals being harmed in suspicious circumstances.

RSPCA chief executive Chris Sherwood said: "For our frontline officers, rescuing animals from horrific circumstances never stops. We receive more incidents of deliberate harm to animals over the summer months than any other time of year, which is heartbreaking."

During the summer months, there have also been a number of RSPCA prosecutions coming before the courts.

Chris Sherwood added: "We are so grateful to people who report suspected animal suffering to us. The public are our eyes and ears as we work together to help improve animal welfare and promote animal kindness."

BIG GARDEN BIRDWATCH BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES

THE RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch returns for another year this month, running from January 28-30.

The campaign, which is currently being advertised on television, encourages volunteers to observe wild birds in their garden, balcony or a section of parkland and count how many of each species of bird lands on their patch during one given hour, between January 28-30.



Participants are being encouraged to fill bird feeders or lay out good quality bird food on the ground or on bird tables in order to attract birds to their gardens, creating sales opportunities for pet food stores.

In 2021, more than one million people took part in Big Garden Birdwatch. According to the RSPB, 38 million birds have been lost from UK skies in the last 50 years.

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Finding ways to grow export business

PET firms will get the chance to discover ways to grow their export business at a special conference co-hosted by PetQuip.

The second edition of the popular 'Future for International Trade Conference' was due to take place last November but will now be staged on March 17 2022.

The new date is in response to industry requests to host the conference when international travel restrictions ease further, as several international show organisers wish to participate, as well as recently announced organisational changes at the Department of International Trade, both of which restricted the availability of the leading international experts and export speakers who were scheduled to appear.

The event will focus on challenges and opportunities for UK exporters, advice on international logistics, routes to open up export markets with significant potential and includes insightful business case studies by some of the UK's leading exporters.

In addition, experts in many aspects of international sales will be available throughout the conference to provide specific advice and support to delegates on a one-to-one basis in the Export Expert Zone and there'll be plenty of networking opportunities between delegates too.

ASK THE EXPERTS

Organised by leading trade associations – Gardenex, BHETA and PetQuip – the conference is aimed at companies in the home enhancement, garden and leisure and pet product sectors.

Director general of Gardenex and PetQuip, Amanda Sizer Barrett confirmed: "The Future for International Trade conference is a lively and informative occasion comprising the UK's exporters, top-level speakers and export experts. The conference will help UK companies navigate their best routes to secure international sales, especially in the changed world post-Brexit and following the impact of the pandemic."

■ For more information email katie-mai@petquip.com

EXTRA COST OF RENTING WITH PETS REVEALED

UK PET owners have to pay an average £81 more per month to rent a property than the average renter, according to a new survey from Admiral.

The analysis, which was carried out in October 2021 based on over 161,000 renters (singles and couples) and more than 199,000 advertised rentals, found that the average pet-friendly property in the UK had a rental price of £630, compared to a price of £549 for non pet-friendly properties in the same location.

England, where renters have to pay £106 more to rent with their pets, has the most significant difference, while the gap was narrowest in Wales at £27.

York was found to be the friendliest city in the UK for pet owners, with 15.2 rooms per 100 available open to renters with pets.

In contrast, only 2.8 rooms per 100 in Wakefield were open to pet owners, making it the least pet-friendly city in the UK.

THROUGHOUT history, innovation has always been the key to progress – humanity's greatest new ideas have given us novel ways of enhancing our lives. This is just as true today, and it has never been more relevant in the world of pet trade. As science advances, cutting-edge innovations are broadening our ability to cater to consumer preferences. Retailers who take advantage of these fresh ideas will be well-equipped to succeed.

INNOVATION IN THE PET FOOD INDUSTRY

The value of innovation cannot be overestimated in pet trade. Newness catches the public interest, encouraging customers to visit stores and make purchases. It is not just newness that is important though: breakthrough innovations must also be highly relevant to customer desires. By keeping on top of the latest consumer preferences and offering inventive new products to meet them, retailers will find themselves marked out as destination stores.

Currently, customer preferences regarding pet food are highly influenced by the way pets are becoming part of our families. With owners looking to provide five-star care for their pets, multiple innovative products are now available, from bespoke personalised diets to nutritional support for animals with particular conditions. In fact, the scope of how nutrition can help pets is ever growing – as well as foods designed to enhance gut health and optimise the microbiome, Purina scientists have developed a dog food that can support older pets showing signs of cognitive decline.¹

Such innovations that help pets live longer and healthier lives are powerful tools to help owners who consider their pets part of the family. Even beyond this, though, recent scientific advances have opened up a whole new way that we can use diet to strengthen the bond between ourselves and our pets.

Specifically, a decade of scientific study at Purina has yielded a ground-breaking innovation: a feline diet that not only caters for the cat's complete nutritional requirements but also helps reduce the owner's exposure to cat allergens. This is a completely new approach to help people and their pets live happier lives together.

BREAKTHROUGH DIET COMBINES IMMUNOLOGY AND NUTRITION

The idea for this novel diet was developed by Dr Ebenezer Satyaraj, an expert in immunology and nutrition. Dr Satyaraj had personal experience of the difficulties that cat allergies can cause, as his daughter loves cats but suffers from sensitivities to cat allergens. He knew how much joy it would bring his daughter to have a close bond with a feline companion, and he saw how difficult it would be for her to achieve this.

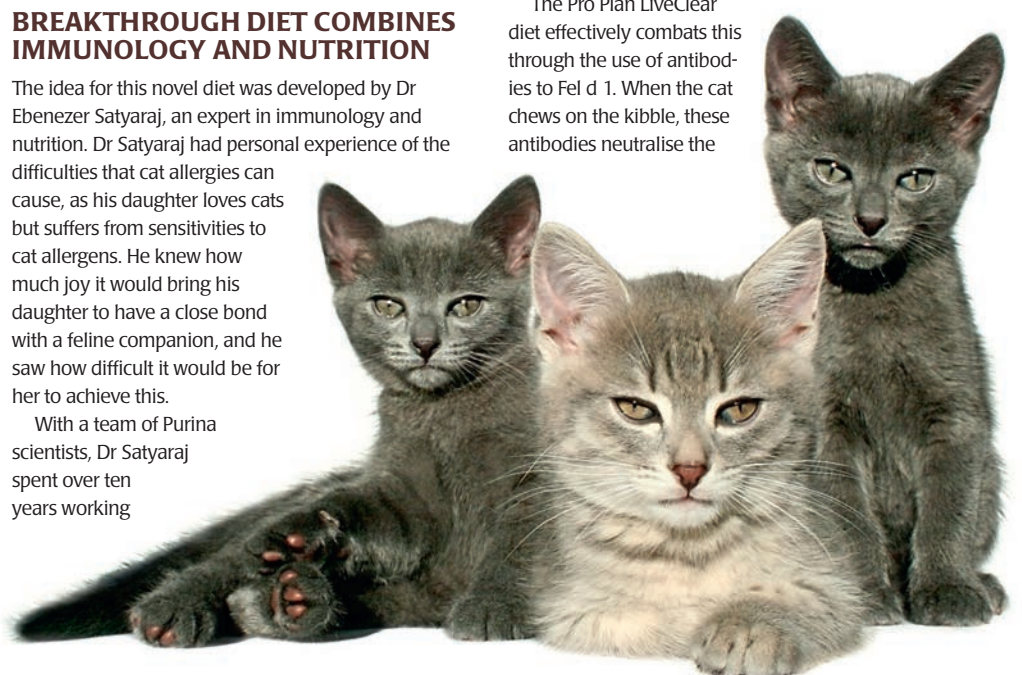
With a team of Purina scientists, Dr Satyaraj spent over ten years working



on the issue, developing a major scientific breakthrough. The fruit of the team's research was Pro Plan LiveClear, a feline diet proven to reduce the level of active allergens on cat hair and dander.²

The secret behind this diet is that it contains antibodies to the major cat allergen, Fel d 1. This protein is normally found in the cat's saliva, meaning it gets spread all over the coat when the cat grooms. Cat hair and dander coated in Fel d 1 is then shed around the home and can cause a reaction for people who are sensitive to the allergen.

The Pro Plan LiveClear diet effectively combats this through the use of antibodies to Fel d 1. When the cat chews on the kibble, these antibodies neutralise the



Calum Macrae is a board director of Lily's Kitchen and tailored pet food business tails.com, and is Nestlé Purina PetCare's regional managing director for the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries. Calum leads a team of more than 400 pet care professionals and sits on the NPP EMENA and Nestlé UK operating boards



New ways for retailers to meet customer needs

allergen in the saliva – meaning that less active Fel d 1 is spread around the house. In fact, studies show the diet is remarkably effective: 97% of cats showed reduced levels of active Fel d 1 on their hair and dander from the third week of feeding.

In this way, the LiveClear diet helps owners with cat allergen sensitivities enjoy the benefits of a closer relationship with their pets. The potential impact on the lives of these owners could be significant: in a survey conducted at Purina, almost 60% of owners affected by cat allergens avoided petting their cat at all. The prospect of regaining a closer relationship with their pet could make a tremendous difference to these owners – and a retailer who recommends this game-changing new approach will not be forgotten.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Pro Plan® LiveClear was developed by a team of committed scientists dedicated to Purina's goal, which is quite simply to strengthen the bond between people and their pets. As the future unfolds, innovations developed with the purpose of helping

pets and owners live happily together will continue to prove popular, given the strong trend for closer owner-pet relationships that has only been reinforced during the pandemic.

Humanisation of pets has been on the rise for many years, but when many of us were spending all day at home, we saw our pets make their way beyond our family time and into our work lives too. With owners seeking high-quality products to support their much-loved companions, it is no surprise that the trends of humanisation and premiumisation are expected to remain strong drivers in the pet food sector for the next five years.³ Products that strengthen and protect the human-animal bond will therefore be in high demand.

With the pet food industry producing ever more inventive solutions on this score, we are expanding the range of ways we can support owners who are closely bonded to their pets. By embracing such new innovations, retailers will be better equipped as we look towards a future in which pets are firmly established as part of our families. ■

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Jollyes partnership pays off for Mackle Petfoods

JOLLYES AND Northern Ireland pet food company Mackle Petfoods have been named the winners of the Private Label, Contract Manufacturer Collaboration Award at the recent Irish Private Label Manufacturer Awards.

Jollyes is a long-time customer of Mackle Petfoods, which has been manufacturing private label core cans for the chain since the 1970s. In 2017, Mackle Petfoods launched the bespoke Lifestage trays into Jollyes stores.

Colin Ferguson, Head of Sales at Mackle Petfoods, said: "We are absolutely delighted with this award, especially as it represents what we have found to be the most effective way of working with our customers. By viewing customers as partners, together we strive to do the best for our pets and pet parents."

Chris Burns, Commercial Director at Jollyes, added: "Mackle's ethos and commitment to quality and innovation matters to us and our customers. We are as proud as they are that their meat relies heavily on local suppliers and is fully traceable to the farm of origin."

NEW £10M PET HOSPITAL TO CREATE 120 JOBS



The hospital will include state-of-the-art equipment, pioneering treatments and specialist-led extended clinical services

EUROPE'S LARGEST veterinary care provider has received planning permission to build a new state-of-the-art veterinary referral hospital near Birmingham, providing 24-hour care for pets in the West Midlands.

It will be one of the largest veterinary hospitals in the UK with the capacity to treat up to 10,000 pets per year.

IVC Evidensia, which has over 100 veterinary referral centres across the UK, has been granted the permission by Birmingham City Council to erect the 36,000 sq ft hospital, costing £10m, on the new West Longbridge regeneration site. It's claimed the project will create 120 jobs with the hospital eventually employing around 100 staff.

The hospital plans focus on a number of environmentally-friendly building initiatives and is set in a landscaped green space with picnic tables to help enable a relaxing environment for owners and their pets.

Grooming market prepped for growth

THE GLOBAL pet grooming products market was valued at US \$4,532m (£3,338m) in 2020 and is expected to reach \$6,085m by 2027 at a compound annual growth rate of 4.7% from 2020-2027.

A rise in awareness about pet health is a prominent factor in increasing demand for pet grooming products, the report from *ResearchAndMarkets.com* suggests.

Plus, the increasing trend of organic products has encouraged manufacturers to introduce organic grooming products for pets, which is in turn likely to drive market growth during the forecast period.



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Dog food SPECIAL

IT'S ONLY NATURAL!

How are shoppers' demands for traceable and authentic ingredients changing recipes?

page 22

Working through Brexit and covid

What are manufacturers doing to counter continuing supply chain issues

page 32



Start your new year with some new ideas to help you build dog food sales and make the most of new trends driven by the changing face of pet ownership in the UK

Are natural food credentials the way to your customers' hearts?



As the UK dog population grows, there are clear opportunities for retailers to continue to build their sales of dog food. But the market is changing, as owners are increasingly looking to switch to products with natural and healthy credentials to ensure the wellbeing of their pets

THE UK dog feeding market is worth £1.5bn, representing 48% of the total pet food market of £3.2bn, according to the Pet Food Manufacturers Association.

With an estimated 12 million hungry dogs to feed, the UK dog food category is set fair to remain strong and robust, bringing sales and profits to retailers for years to come.

But just as health and wellbeing are growing in importance for human consumers, particularly when it comes to diet and lifestyle, so these concerns are being carried over into the products they are selecting to feed their pets.

According to research by Butcher's, 86% of owners are looking for dog food with natural ingredients, while 76% are looking for foods with a specific health benefit.

The company reports it has been enjoying double-digit growth from its natural health benefits range.

A switch to natural feeding products is now becoming a clear trend, according to James Kennedy, sales director at Forthglade.





The UK pet food market is forecast to grow at an annual rate of 4.5% in 2021 through to 2026

(Mordor Intelligence)

"Clearly, there is a significant shift in shopper behaviour in the category – new dog owners are spending more time researching diets and realising that a natural diet is best for their dog's health and wellbeing, whilst current dog owners are seeing that switching from traditional standard wet dog food brands over to natural brands has a very positive impact on their pet's health," he says.

"Our own research indicates 50% of current mainstream shoppers are considering switching to a natural diet for their dogs. Forthglade is very well positioned to meet the needs of these shoppers with our transparent ingredients, high meat contents, grain free and brown rice natural recipes," he adds. "Many traditional mainstream manufacturers are now trying to stabilise the declines they are seeing in their brands by entering the natural category, however, this is proving difficult for many as they lack the credibility that trusted brands such as Forthglade have in the natural arena."

Jo Mulgrew, marketing director at Fish4Pets, is clear on the direction the market is taking.

BALANCED DIETS

"We predict more and more emphasis on healthy, balanced diets for our dogs," she says. "With the growing plant-based trend in the human food market, and increasing interest in environmental impact, we believe pet owners could move further away from red meat as protein source for dogs and lean towards alternatives."

"We champion fish as the 'perfect protein' for dogs, due to the powerful health benefits of omega-3 as an anti-inflammatory, supporting coat and skin condition, mobility and cardiac health."

"With many owners still questioning the validity of vegan and vegetarian food for dogs, our pescatarian approach appeals because it fits their requirements for a tasty, healthy protein choice, with well-known health benefits and in a way that addresses environmental considerations too".

With a huge, and growing, array of dog food brands and products to choose from, shoppers could be forgiven for becoming a little confused when trying to make the right selection for their pet dog. But the trade is doing a great job at communicating the benefits of individual products, according to Philip Dykes, chief operating officer at Arden Grange.

"There is a lot of choice in the market and, as new trends arise, more dog food brands pop up," he says. "Recently we've seen a surge in niche brands, such as those offering different manufacturing methods or specialising in certain ingredients."

"It can be a minefield for dog owners who are looking for the right food, but I strongly believe that consumers do a great job of researching brands and choosing what is right for their pet. Credible advice from pet food retailers, veterinary practices, breeders and rescue centres can help consumers to cut through the 'noise' and make a confident and informed choice."

Jo Mulgrew at Fish4Pets believes creating clear points of difference is a pathway to growth in the category.

"As a manufacturer offering a unique selling point to our customers, we are fortunate that we will be looking to grow our business throughout 2022 and beyond," she says. "We don't believe the dog food market is overcrowded, we believe there is room for greater segmentation as dog ownership grows and interest in their well-being increases."

Will Saville from Naked Dog Food maintains there is room for everyone in the marketplace.

"Choice is a good thing for consumers," he says. "We have a good network of supplier relationships built up over years and so we can continue to meet demand through the supply chain."

RAW FOOD MARKET GROWTH

He continues: "We are expecting to see new entrants to the raw food sector this year, ...continued on page 26 >>

DOG FOOD KEY TRENDS

HUMANISATION

The difference between human and pet food is certainly narrowing, particularly as owners become more aware of their own nutritional needs and want to make sure those of their dogs are similarly accounted for.

HEALTHY FOOD

Health and wellbeing is hugely important to both dog owners and their pets, so shoppers are increasingly looking for products with health benefits, either as part of an all-round natural and healthy diet or to help address specific health problems.

PREMIUMISATION

Demand for premium products is up, as owners are increasingly looking for foods made from authentic and nutritious ingredients, on top of a desire for locally-sourced and fully traceable foodstuffs.

TREATS

The treats market increases in value and volume year on year and has surged during lockdown. Dog treats sales increased by 8.8% in a four-week period following the first lockdown, according to Mars Petcare.

RAW MEAT

Freeze-and-thaw raw meat is developing a following in the UK, and freeze-dried raw food products are growing in popularity in the United States.

FURTHER TRENDS

- ◆ Limited-ingredient diets (LID)
- ◆ Personalised shopping and home delivery
- ◆ Alternative protein sources, such as insects.





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of owners look for
food with natural
ingredients*

76%

are looking for dog
food with a specific
health benefit*

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*Butcher's Quant Research, UK Dog Owners, Feb 2020 for Simply Gentle, Lean & Tasty and Joints & Coat

**Butcher's Internal Sales, Total Market, 52 w/e 29.11.21



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Time to take action on obesity

Research by the Royal Veterinary College last year found that 7.1% dogs under veterinary care were recorded as overweight, with breeds such as pug, beagle, golden retriever and English springer spaniel at particular risk.

Obesity is now becoming one of the biggest issues in the UK pet industry, maintains Philip Dykes, chief operating officer at Arden Grange.

"Overfeeding can lead to so many health problems for dogs so it's important that we can provide clear advice," he says.

"At Arden Grange we are keen to educate customers about how much food their dog needs and provide sensible advice on giving treats, to keep their dog healthy and happy. We run a free dog and cat Diet Club for any customers that would like their pet to lose weight steadily and provide helpful factsheets with many tips for maintaining a healthy weight.

"January is a key month for owners to assess their pets' weight and so we are promoting our healthy weight loss materials."

VET charity PDSA urged pet owners to #WeighUp their pets health and wellbeing as part of a campaign launched during National Obesity Awareness Week (January 10-16).

The PDSA's #WeighUp campaign, which is sponsored by Royal Canin, urged owners to take steps to combat weight-related issues with their pets.

PDSA vet nurse Nina Downing said: "Although some

owners may think their chubby pets look cute, being overweight is a major red flag when it comes to their wellbeing. Overweight animals have a much greater risk of developing health problems such as arthritis and diabetes – which can have drastic consequences, even shortening their life by up to two years."



<<from page 23... complying with legislation and producing safe food for the dogs.

"So look out for new products and innovations coming from Naked Dog throughout 2022!"

BRAND DEVELOPMENTS

Arden Grange is supporting its products with a brand new television advertisement, hitting the screens next month, as part of its ongoing 25-year anniversary celebrations.

Philip Dykes says: "We are one of the few leading dog food brands that is independent and family-owned so, after 25 years of success, we wanted to showcase Arden Grange to new customers in a fun and engaging way. We are really excited for the debut of our new TV advert hitting the primetime screens in February!

"We launched our 25-year anniversary celebrations last year and there have been many brilliant activities surrounding the anniversary. These will all come to a climax at Crufts in March."

The company is also updating its Sensitive dry dog

food range with the launch

...continued on page 28 >>

Anxiety in pets is an area of concern for many owners. Half of pet food buyers say they are interested in products with 'calming ingredients'

(Mintel)

NUTRITION CENTRE OPEN FOR CONSULTATION



RAW DOG food business Naked Dog is the first dog food company to open a dedicated veterinary-approved nutrition centre to provide expert nutrition consultations and seminars to owners.

The centre, opened July 2021, offers in-person and online independent consultations with both a nutrition specialist and a practising holistic vet as well as running educational seminars and teaching the only Ofqual-regulated diploma in canine nutrition.

Consultations at the centre are independent. Dogs do not have to be eating Naked Dog food to book a consultation, nor will they be asked to switch if the food they are eating

is suitable, the company says.

Pet shops and stockists can 'refer' customers to the centre for dietary help effectively providing retailers and their customers with a dog nutrition service.

Working with retailers Naked Dogs nutrition consultant Caroline Griffith believes that the centre and the education it provides can help increase sales for the retailer by sending owners back to the stockist as well as providing their customers with the professional nutritional support for dogs: "A customer who receives the specific supplement they need rather than keeps 'trying' various ones with no real benefit is a happier customer."

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<< from page 26... of new 'Superfood Blend' recipes, as well as two new products - Sensitive Adult Mini and Sensitive Adult Large Breed for dogs.

"This launch responds to rising consumer demand for a choice in foods for dogs with sensitivities and introduces further nutritional benefits for the existing products with the new 'Superfood Blend' - a combination of plant and fruit extracts that have excellent antioxidant properties to support the dogs' immune systems and overall health," explains Philip.

Despite the challenges of the lockdown periods, Fish4Pets was able to roll out a programme of new product launches throughout 2020 and 2021, and the activity will continue in 2022.

"We have gained huge insights into customer behaviour around pet ownership and feeding," says Jo.

"In terms of food types, we are continuing to see consumers wanting to add moisture and whole ingredients in their dog food, whilst still looking for the convenience of complete kibble. We have seen a

hugely successful response to our new complementary cans range for use as 'toppers' on kibble and we are excited to be launching our new flake range this month."

Fish4Dogs Finest

Fish Flakes are aimed at dog owners who like the convenience of a complete dry food, but worry their dog's diet lacks interest and moisture, often leading them to add unhealthy extras.

By slightly reducing the amount of kibble and adding a topper of fish flakes, dog owners can help their dog maintain a healthy lifestyle with no hidden extras, whilst benefiting from added omega-3 in their diet, Fish4Dogs explains.

The new range is supplied in 100g pouches, six per shelf-ready box, in a choice of three flavours - mackerel flakes with squid, tuna flakes with anchovy or white fish and salmon.

Forthglade has a number of new product launches planned for 2022, explains James.

"We're extending our cold pressed natural dry dog food range with recipes and new pack formats, there's a big push into treats with new ranges planned and we also have an exciting new limited-edition meal to launch in the Spring - it's a busy year ahead!"

Last September saw the launch of the Dogs Welcome project, in partnership with the National Trust, and the dog-friendly developments from the project are now being implemented across National Trust locations, and the detail communicated to the 5.8million Trust members, with sites receiving over 220 million visits per year, reports James.

DIGITAL MARKETING

"Digital marketing and social media remain a strong focus for the year ahead to continue increasing

brand awareness, with a focus on our heritage and natural message," he says.

"We have reached up to five million people in the last few months via digital content, and our social media platforms continue to grow. In 2021 we reached 29 million people with our organic social posts, and we received over 5,200 social mentions.

"Next year we hope to build and further increase this social success, reaching over 40,000 Instagram followers and continue our strong engagement rate of 8.2% on the platform." ■

Immunity comes top in UK poll of pet owner concerns

A POLL conducted by pet food brand Vet's Kitchen has shown that British people consider immunity to be the most important aspect of their dog's health.

The poll also revealed that digestion and behaviour come in second and third place respectively.

The trend comes following almost two years of a global pandemic, during which we saw the nation's health consciousness skyrocket and sales of immunity-boosting supplements boom, the brand says.

Laura Shears, MD of Vet's Kitchen, acknowledges a "shift towards more health-conscious purchasing" and suggests it is the latest stage of an enduring behaviour.

"In recent years, humanisation has been one of the key trends driving premiumisation in petcare. That is now moving more into people taking an interest in their pet's health and that is part of humanisation, of course," she said.

Vet's Kitchen nutritionist Fiona Firth said: "At Vet's Kitchen, we've seen humanisation take the form of an increased consciousness for pet health and we've reflected this in our recipes which include pet food to support a dog's immunity, such as Grow & Develop puppy food, aimed at dogs aged 0-1 years which contains added beta glucans, nucleotides and omega 3.

"Our Everyday Health and Protect & Care dog foods, aimed at adults and senior dogs, contain added supplements for joint health, digestion and to support healthy skin and coat. It's all part of our mission to improve pet health and wellbeing."



There are 90 million pet dogs in Europe (FEDIAF estimate). The UK has the third-highest number, after Russia and Germany

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The covid pandemic and fall out from Brexit created the perfect storm for businesses to navigate when it came to delivering products to the buoyant dog food market. Here, leading dog food companies look back on how they have met the challenges of the past two years

How to keep going through Brexit...in a pandemic

THE COVID pandemic and the UK exit from the European Union have coincided to create unprecedented disruption to supply chains and the normal patterns of operation across most industry sectors, and the dog food category has not escaped their twin impacts.

Ironically, these supply chain issues happened at a time when conditions in the dog food market were set fair for strong growth.

Jo Mulgrew, Marketing Director at Fish4Pets, recalls how the rapid growth in pet ownership initially brought a hugely positive impact on business, but also brought its share of challenges too.

SIGNIFICANT GROWTH

"In the early months of lockdown, as pet ownership grew, panic buying prevailed and consumers sought alternative sources to supermarkets for their dog food, such as shopping at their local independent retailers or online, and as a result we experienced a significant growth in sales," she says.

"However, these positives soon lead to additional operational challenges. Any previous forecast modelling was eroded, and we quickly suffered material shortages as well as trying to increase operational headcount, whilst adhering to social distancing challenges.

"The 'Brexit Effect' of rising costs of containers in and out of Europe and lengthy shipping delays, coupled with manufacturing interruptions around the world caused by the pandemic, meant that sourcing packaging and other materials lead to huge resource and time constraints. Not only were we selling out of lines, but getting goods produced and back out to consumers was taking three times as long as before, and costing three times as much."

While many of these issues unfortunately remain here to stay, Jo believes the trade is learning how to cope better.

"We don't see these global challenges ending overnight, but we do see the supply chain working hard together to adapt and become more robust to such threats in the future," she says.

CONTINUING ISSUES

James Kennedy, Sales Director at Forthglade, also expects 2022 to see a continuation of issues in the supply chain, but observes that some companies are more exposed to them than others.

He says: "Brexit and the pandemic have both had a significant and long-lasting effect both on the

availability of raw materials and transportation, as a result of a lack of available labour.

"This, coupled with more complicated import and export regulations, means that any brand reliant on co-manufactured product from outside the UK or reliant on materials from overseas, will continue to have major challenges into 2022. But being a British manufacturer, making our own food in our own factory in the heart of Devon, means we can source the vast majority of our raw materials from within the UK and so are less impacted by the Brexit factor than many others.

Cost price pressures continue to be a major issue for the category, however, and will continue in 2022. Raw materials, labour, transport and utilities all continue to increase in cost. As a manufacturer that won't compromise on the quality of the food that we make, it means 2022 will undoubtedly throw up challenges for us."

But faced with the ongoing challenges of getting quality dog food to the customer when and how they want it against this backdrop of uncertainty, the industry has performed "remarkably", according to Philip Dykes, Chief Operating Officer at Arden Grange.

"We are living and working in

unprecedented times," he says. "The pet food industry has done remarkably well keeping the nation's pets fed over the last two years and we shall endeavour to keep our supply chains robust."

Jo at Fish4Pets can also see the upside of the situation.

"Like many in the dog food industry, we are thankful for the positives our industry has seen in the UK during these testing times," she says. "Our size meant that we could be agile, and move quickly to the changes in our environment with the support of our versatile staff and business owners. As food manufacturers and key workers, we were able to keep our business open, and we worked hard to rapidly introduce new health and safety measures, shift patterns and home working to ensure all our staff and customers were safe.

MORE RESOURCES

"As a company, we have restructured, putting more resource and processes into the supply chain to ensure we have less reliance on one supplier for leading components. We are in the process of opening a new, state of the art, eco-friendly distribution facility born out of challenges we faced during recent years, enabling us to store more stock and introduce more products," she adds. ■





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Pet owners warned about 'silent killer'

UK householders are being warned of the danger of carbon monoxide to pets after new research revealed more than nine in 10 (96%) don't think their pet would be affected – and many don't even have a carbon monoxide detector in their home.

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless, poisonous gas, known as 'the silent killer' and pets are affected by it and can help identify potential dangers. For example, cats might refuse to come into the house and dogs may have a sore mouth and appear irritable.

According to online heating supplier BestHeating, there are about 60 deaths in England and Wales every year from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning and thousands are hospitalised.

The most common symptom in both people and pets is fatigue and if this is only low level poisoning, it can be easily treated by spending time outside getting fresh air.

Animals are affected in the same way as humans but, as they are smaller than humans, they are affected a lot quicker and sometimes more severely.

The research found that 30% of Brits don't have a carbon monoxide detector at home and more than a quarter don't know the symptoms (26%), often mistaking it for flu or food poisoning.

ANIMAL HOSPITAL SCOOPS TOP VET HONOURS

A SURGEON at the Royal Veterinary College's Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital in Camden has won UK Rabbit Vet of the Year' at The Burgess Excel Vet Awards. The hospital also won Best Rabbit Practice of the Year.

Dr Nadene Stapleton was honoured for her outstanding contributions to rabbit health and welfare having overseen the attainment of the RWA Gold Standard Veterinary Practice accreditation for rabbits at the BSAH. She also played a key role in the creation of safety guidelines for anaesthesia in rabbits for general practitioners.

Dr Stapleton works to improve the standard of care of rabbits by teaching veterinary students, nurses and owners. She often writes about rabbits for various journals and magazines and has two bunnies of her own – Elmer and Nosh.

She said: "I feel really passionately about advocating for the health and welfare of rabbits and will continue to put in every effort on their behalf. Perhaps now my own rabbits will listen to me!"



Dr Nadene Stapleton

Pet care sales set to hit \$67bn in North America by 2025

THE NORTH American pet care market accounts for a nearly half of the global pet care industry by value and is forecast to reach \$67bn by 2025.

According to a new report from *ResearchAndMarkets.com*, the region, has about 46% of the market and has recorded positive growth owing to continuance of pet humanisation and sustained premiumisation of pet food.



**What's it like to sell a pet retail business?
The owner of three pet stores reveals how she handled the sale of her 30-year-old company**

BUILDING UP a string of pet stores in Yorkshire became a labour of love for Liz Bowers, founder of The Pet Store, but she knew there would come a time to escape the daily grind of running a business.

She explored the possibility of selling The Pet Store and its three stores in Barnsley, Wakefield and Denby Dale, and along came pet chain Jollies to buy the business.

So, what was her thinking when it came to selling The Pet Store?

"It's a very buoyant sector and we'd been very busy, but running a business like this is a 24/7 occupation," said Liz. "I reached an age where I wanted to take a step back and I also wanted to see the business move onto the next stage. I used a consultant to help me find a buyer."

SHARED VALUES

"Jollies were head and shoulders above the other interested parties. They moved very quickly and we had a lot in common in terms of shared values and our approach to customers."

"I knew they were a stable business, backed by Kester Capital, but it wasn't just about the money. It was important to me that the business was in good hands and that my employees would be looked after because I felt a big responsibility to them."

Liz started the business in a portable cabin 30 years ago, without any experience in the pet trade. "Previously I'd worked in catering, but with two small children I needed a rethink and starting my own pet food business seemed a good option."

"To begin with it was just me selling mainly dog food, helped by family members, and as the business grew we moved into a small shop. Over the next few years we moved into the Barnsley store and then Denby Dale and Wakefield and built up a fantastic team of staff."

Liz admitted that selling a business can be a stressful business but found the Jollies team to be



Liz Bowers

very supportive throughout the negotiations.

"We had a lot of meetings and I met all the board. We got on very well," she added. "They kept me and my advisers informed all along the way and there weren't really any issues that held things up."

They were very straightforward to deal with and the whole transaction was kept confidential because I didn't want to create any uncertainty among staff or customers.

"I'm now in a transition period working alongside Jollies and I think it's very useful for both sides to have that continuity. I think the business will go from strength to strength under the new owners."

Joe Wykes, Jollies chief operating officer, said The Pet Store was an attractive acquisition for a company with ambitious growth plans.

"It was exactly the kind of business we were looking for – well established with a loyal customer base, expert staff and a similar culture to ours."

"The Pet Store locations are also a great fit with our existing Yorkshire stores and will complement our business in the region."

LOCATION

"We have ambitious plans to grow the business, both through opening new stores and by making targeted strategic acquisitions."

"We have a nationwide network of more than 70 stores across GB and Northern Ireland, but that leaves plenty of room for expansion, even in areas where we already operate."

So makes a business attractive when Jollies is looking at potential deals?

"Location is a key factor and we want businesses that are successful in their own right but need help and support to grow and can benefit from being part of a bigger group with all the advantages we can offer in terms of buying power, marketing and training," added Joe.

"Jollies is a very solid company, supported by Kester Capital, so owners have the assurance that we are a safe pair of hands." ■



Joe Wykes

'Major step forward for cat welfare' set to bring new demand for pet services

Enforced cat chipping moves closer

GOVERNMENT PLANS for compulsory microchipping of pet cats has been hailed as 'a major step forward for cat welfare in England'.

Research from Cats Protection, the UK's largest cat charity, shows that 2.8 million – or 26% – of all pet cats in the UK are not currently microchipped.

Cats Protection's Head of Advocacy & Government Relations Jacqui Cuff said: "As the UK's leading cat charity, we have been at the forefront of the campaign for compulsory microchipping of pet cats.

"Every day, we see how important microchipping is for cats and for the people who love them – whether it is reuniting a lost cat with their owner,

identifying an injured cat, or helping to ensure an

owner can be informed in the sad event that their cat has been hit and killed by a car.

"Micro-chipping is by far the most effective and quickest way of identifying

lost cats and can help ease the pressure on rescue charities like Cats Protection. Without a microchip, a lost cat will most likely end up being rehomed to a new home as there is often no trace of their original owner."

CONSULTATION

The Government carried out a consultation on the proposed measure, and 99% of respondents supported compulsory microchipping of owned cats. Once introduced, the regulations will mean all owned cats in England aged over 20 weeks will need to be microchipped.

TIME TO OFFER A MICROCHIPPING SERVICE?

PET PROFESSIONALS are being urged to add microchipping to the list of services they offer as the new rules for cats are set to lead to a surge in demand.

Qualification providers iPET Network says that pet microchipping is a skill which existing businesses could easily add as a service.

Sarah Mackay, co-director of iPET Network, said: "With these new regulations coming in for cats, the time to add in microchipping as a service has never been better. The qualification is inexpensive, and then you are up and running to start helping more people than ever be reunited with their precious pets," she added.

In brief

Pets pile on the pandemic pounds

FINDINGS FROM a survey of more than 1,000 pet owners reveal that almost one in 10 believes their pet has gained weight during lockdown.

The 'Great British Pet Survey 2021', carried out by veterinary scale manufacturer Marsden Weighing Machine Group and pet food manufacturer Burgess Pet Care, also found that almost a third of pet owners (32%) said that their pet was overweight.

For dogs, the weight gain was significantly worse, with three times as many owners believing that their dog was over weight, compared to the 2019 results.

Scheme educates offenders and dogs

YOUNG OFFENDERS are teaming up with assistance dogs of the future in a unique rehabilitation scheme that gives them qualifications and a fresh start.

Inmates at HMYOI Werrington are taking part in the Restart Dog Project, where assistance dogs in training go into prison to meet offenders, who learn how to get the dogs ready for work.

Stay **ONE** Step Ahead



OvertheCounter is a magazine and website highlighting animal health issues and is focused on helping qualified advisers, including AMTRA-qualified Suitably

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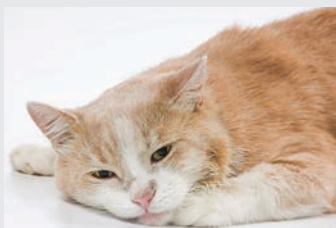
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A quarter of UK homes have cats

THE UK's pet cat population increased by about 600,000 as more young people turned to the company of a feline friend during the pandemic.

The number of pet cats rose to 10.8 million during 2020/21, up from 10.2 million in 2019/20, according to Cats Protection's 'Cats And Their Stats Report 2021', which looks at the relationship between people and their cats.

The second report published by Cats Protection – and the largest cat survey of its kind – showed around 800,000 cats were acquired for a reason linked to the pandemic such as working from home or to relieve loneliness, and this more than offset pet cats that died owing to illness or old age. It means that today just over a quarter of households (26%) own a cat.

More than half of new cat owners (51%) were in the 18 – 34 age group while just one in 10 were aged 55 and over.

Vets share knowledge through virtual event

THOUSANDS OF veterinary professionals from around the world gathered for a virtual conference to share knowledge on the most pressing topics concerning animal healthcare.

The virtual Royal Canin Vet Symposium was a new interactive and immersive experience that offered free live broadcasts in seven languages, plus on-demand content, and training.

The event saw renowned international experts sharing their knowledge and the latest trends in dermatology, health technology, telemedicine, and practitioner well-being.

Glue trap ban in pipeline in Wales

THE WELSH Government has revealed plans to ensure that new legislation will amend the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ban the use of snares and glue traps in Wales.

While the Welsh Government had previously announced plans to ban snares in its programme for government, this is the first time it has committed to doing the same for glue traps, too.

Ask the expert...

ADVICE ON SOME OF THE KEY INNOVATIONS THAT WILL TRANSFORM THE PET CARE BUSINESS IN THE FUTURE



DENISE ELLIOTT is global vice president of R&D at pet food manufacturer Royal Canin. Here, she explains how increased use of technology is driving new breakthroughs in pet health, wellbeing and nutrition

R&D IS DRIVING THE FUTURE OF PET HEALTH

We live in an age of unprecedented technological advances that allow us to know more about the health of our cats and dogs than ever before. But what do pet professionals do with that knowledge? How can leaders in veterinary medicine and information technology come together to design innovative solutions to help pets live long and healthy lives?

A starting point to this mission is another question: where and how should we look for the next breakthrough? I've learned in my years leading the R&D division of Royal Canin, a global expert in health through nutrition, that our best innovations come by building small and agile teams that can work outside of traditional research and development processes to explore untapped areas for cutting-edge science and technology. In the same spirit, our division also regularly seeks external partnerships and collaborations from academia, government, industry and even startups.

We host the Royal Canin Vet Symposium each year largely for this purpose, bringing together thousands of vets from over 90 countries to interact with some of the leading experts in the world and our team of experts committed to advancing pet health.

FROM TELEMEDICINE TO WEARABLE TECH

Having worked as a vet myself, combined with my time as a researcher at the Waltham Petcare Science Institute in Leicestershire, and now in the pet nutrition industry, this has given me a broad view to see where the most important innovations are heading. Those include some mind-bending breakthroughs in telemedicine, wearable tech and artificial intelligence, and connected devices. Other advances in providing 360-degree care include dog trackers – not unlike ones that humans have on their smartphones – that can monitor a canine's activity, like sleeping patterns. We know, for example, increased sleeping could be a sign of pain and joint disease.

Understanding patterns and irregularities in our animals' lives can help us better figure out their needs and know when to seek veterinary help. This is especially important for cats, who often hide their pain. One of the most exciting

new products for felines are granules for litter boxes that turn blue if the cat's urine contains blood traces, which has multiple causes and the underlying illness can be difficult to diagnose.

Algorithms developed in partnership with the Royal Veterinary College are also helping to predict kidney disease in cats. In the past, this common ailment was most often diagnosed too late for preventative treatment, but new algorithms can identify risks for kidney disease 12-15 months before cats have clinical signs.

Of course, some vets have concerns about whether automation and increasingly available information will make our jobs obsolete. But new technology also has the potential to improve our workflow and allow vets to focus on what matters most: the connections we build with our patients. The pandemic has proven the power of telemedicine to provide remote consultations with ease to both the doctor and the client, who can receive care from the comfort of their own home.

THE POWER OF INDIVIDUALISATION

I believe the future of veterinary medicine is built on tech... and love! It was a pleasure to discuss this topic last year with thousands of pet professionals that joined our 2021 Vet Symposium.

Some of the most exciting changes are in nutrition and medical tools for our cats and dogs that adapt to the individual animals they are, recognising that each pet's health needs are driven by a unique combination of circumstances and characteristics. In the past, pet nutritionists tended only to address one pathology at a time, be it obesity, mobility, dermatology, or kidney disease. Yet some one-third of dogs and cats suffer from multiple pathologies that one existing pet food

product alone cannot necessarily support.

Royal Canin spent seven years researching how to formulate a nutritional solution that could provide a bespoke diet for each pet's particular requirements. Mathematicians used big data to formulate multiple nutrition combinations, taking into account traits including age, weight, breed, gender, neutering status, and risk factors.

The result is Royal Canin Individualis, which launched in 2019 and is currently available in 12 European countries, including the UK. Royal Canin Individualis was developed using Royal Canin's innovative algorithms that incorporated input from our network of veterinary partners around the world. As part of the nutritional support for complicated cases and conditions, vets can then adopt an 'Individualis' diet based on the animal's needs and response.

HELPING THOSE WHO HELP US

Looking forward, I'm also excited about ways we can help the animals who help us, like dogs who can detect illnesses like Covid-19 in humans, assist people living with disabilities or provide rescue support during emergencies. It's our responsibility to speak on their behalf and help make their lives better.

Animals can bring so much joy to our lives, something I've seen over the years working in veterinary research. Every day, I see the potential of tapping into big data to help improve the health of pets. Still, the innovations driven by data and artificial intelligence are only useful if the people using them are working to the best of their abilities. I am fortunate that my work today combines my dual passions for pet nutrition and data science, along with a fundamental belief in the ability of teams (of humans!) to drive innovation. ■



International experts will highlight developments in the pet industry around the globe at the Petfood Forum Europe

Expert forum kicks off Interzoo programme

A WIDE-RANGING supporting programme of events around the Interzoo 2022 exhibition in Nuremberg will kick off on 23rd May 2022, a day before the fair opens to visitors.

International experts will highlight developments in the pet industry around the globe at the Petfood Forum Europe on the 23rd, while Interzoo will also offer an extensive supporting programme during the exhibition period from 24th to 27th May.

Regional developments, import/export guidance and sustainability will be covered during the course of the trade fair, while there will also be presentations and demonstrations on current industry topics such as market figures, pet grooming, aquarium keeping and influencer marketing.

PET NUTRITION

Dr Rowena Arzt, Director Exhibitions at Interzoo organiser WZF, said: "We are very pleased about the new cooperation with Watt Global Media for the Petfood Forum Europe. This will be an exceptional prelude to the fair and will provide an additional forum for in-depth discussions on the important topic of pet nutrition."

Steve Akins, Executive Vice President and Publisher, Global Petfood & Events at Watt Global Media, added: "Due to its internationality, the segments it represents and its product range, Interzoo is the perfect environment for Petfood Forum Europe."



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Elaine Biggs, left, and Beth Kirwan from Pennard Vets' Sevenoaks practice

One in four dogs suffering with 'lockdown anxiety'



NEARLY HALF of UK dog owners believe the lockdowns and other events of the last year has had an impact on their pets, with over a quarter of respondents reporting their dogs have become more anxious during this time, according to a survey by Purina Petcare.

The survey of 1,005 UK dog owners, carried out by Opinion Matters during October 2021, found that 49% of owners believed the last year has had an impact on their pets, with 28% reporting that their dogs have become more anxious.

Purina's survey also found that 36% of dog owners are concerned about their pet's health and wellbeing as a result of new challenges but, when asked what positive steps they intend to take to improve their pet's happiness and wellbeing, just 20% said they would reassess diet.

Following the survey, Purina PetCare is aiming to raise awareness among dog owners about the link between their pet's gut health and their brain and, therefore, their

behaviour. The company is urging owners to ensure they are feeding a good, complete and nutritionally balanced diet to maintain a healthy gut environment for their dogs, in turn helping them maintain their mental wellbeing as well as their physical health.

GUT MICROBES

Dr Libby Sheridan, Vet and Scientific Affairs Manager for Purina in the UK & Ireland, explains: "More and more evidence is suggesting that gut microbes help the brain develop and function normally. We're discovering that these tiny micro-organisms are actually very important for helping the gut communicate with the brain, and they can have real effects on behaviour."

"With more people owning pets than ever, it's a perfect time for us to help owners understand the link between tummies, brains and, therefore, behaviour."

ONLINE PRODUCT TRAINING FROM VITAL

VITAL PET Group has launched The Retail Academy as an online learning tool to support its retail customers.

The Academy is free to Vital customers and provides educational information on brands in the sector, including bite-sized lessons to boost product knowledge, advice on how to drive sales and the chance to win products and discounts in instant-win competitions.

Courses can be taken at starter, intermediate or advanced level. Each course will be marked from either multiple choice or open-ended

questions, and participants will be rewarded with a certificate upon completion, which can be printed and displayed in their premises or saved as recorded achievements for sales staff.

Training courses are designed to explain how brands fit with consumer trends and give advice on merchandising. Featured brands include Yarrah and Elkwood with modules from Ministry of Pets, Cath Kidston and iQuties due to be added in February 2022.

The academy is available for Vital customers to access now at www.vitalretailacademy.co.uk.

In brief

Dogs wanted for disease research

THE ROYAL Veterinary College is calling for owners of dogs in the UK with autoimmune diseases to take part in new research, which aims to gather data and insight into the diagnosis, treatment response and outcomes of these dogs.

This information will then be shared with veterinary practices and specialist hospitals to help owners and vets make decisions when dogs are diagnosed with one of these conditions.

The team aims to collect information from 400 dogs, making it the largest planned study of autoimmune diseases ever conducted in veterinary medicine globally.

The project is funded by the Small Animal Medicine Society and owners can volunteer to participate by visiting <https://rvco.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/immunoregistry>

Care home gets new pet thanks to ITV show



RESIDENTS at a Penarth care home thought they were being interviewed for a television show about their memories of pets but, in reality, it was a warm-up for a special surprise – being introduced to their new cat Scotty.

ITV's *The Pet Show* chose MHA Morel Court for a piece on how pets are important for people of all ages.

Scotty was introduced to residents on camera and was soon at home, being given lots of fuss and cuddles by residents and staff.

Vet practice recycles food pouches

now planning to expand the scheme into its other Kent practices, in Allington, Borough Green, Langley Park and West Malling, next year.

The company has also pledged to start recycling surgical aprons, face masks, needle caps, blister packs and plastic syringes that have been used with sterile water or saline. The scheme has been trialled at Pennard Vets' Tonbridge and Sevenoaks practices and the company is now exploring rolling this out across the group.

10 questions with...

JO AMIT, co-founder of HOWND

1 How did you and fellow co-founder Mark Hirschel come up with the idea of HOWND?

Our love of dogs and passion for innovation inspired us to set up HOWND. We saw a gap in the market for an all-natural cruelty-free pet care brand, and created Butch & Bess in 2013, rebranding to HOWND two years later. Our first ranges of vegan and cruelty-free certified alcohol- and paraben-free shampoos, fragrances and wipes quickly caught the attention of the pet trade and press. Today, HOWND is loved and trusted by thousands of pet parents, dog groomers and retailers in the UK and overseas because we continue to innovate premium products in health, wellness and hygiene, while maintaining the authenticity and ethos of our brand.

2 What did you do before launching HOWND?

Mark Hirschel, who is commercial director, has more than 20 years of senior commercial experience in fashion and pet retail. I'm the product and brand director, and my experience spans across branding and marketing.

3 Do you have any advice for someone starting out in this sector?

My advice to any start up: if you have a great product that people continue to purchase, you need to get equally creative with your financing as you scale up. Build a solid team of talent that complements your skill set. Starting a new business and creating products from scratch, no matter how passionate you are, is always a gamble.

4 Did you always want HOWND to be an ethical lifestyle brand?

I have inadvertently become the company's resident animal welfare activist. When we first launched the business, I approached Cruelty Free International to ascertain what was involved in ensuring that none of our raw ingredients from suppliers would be tested on animals. We have been aligned with this wonderful organisation since the beginning, and undergo strict auditing throughout our entire supply chain. Thankfully, a plant-based future is becoming more than a trend in the UK, and is smashing through mainstream society. With the rise of the ethical shopper, the human 'clean' movement is now a strong driver in pet parents' purchase decisions.

5 What was your first product and is it still selling today?

I was reminded of one of our first products by a customer a few days ago, who had found an old bottle of 'Stinkerbelle.' Now called Yup You Stink! this was our very first shampoo and has remained our bestseller over the years. Butch Leather was our first cologne, and is still going strong today too.

6 What made you launch 'Bring Your Dog To Work Day'?

We came up with the initiative in 2014 after the landlord of a new office space we leased wouldn't let us bring our dogs into the office. After quite a bit of begging and pleading, he reluctantly agreed, and we started thinking of all the other companies that also couldn't bring dogs to the office. At the time we were already raising money for an animal

rescue charity and decided this was the perfect time to bring the two together and create Bring Your Dog To Work Day. We are now into our eighth year and have had hundreds of businesses and individuals take part and help raise much needed funds for local animal charities. The event has now become a big day in the calendar with TV stations, national newspapers, and a range of celebrities taking part.

7 Why did you decide to move into the highly competitive pet food sector?

This was a natural progression for the business. We launched our award-winning plant based Hemp Wellness treats in 2017 and, in 2019 (post-investment), we started to develop a nutritionally complete plant-based food for dogs. Although the pet food sector is extremely competitive, this is mainly for animal-based foods whereas we are offering something very different and in a sector which is only starting to push forward.

8 Did you need outside help to come up with a recipe for a vegan food?

I knew which ingredients we wanted to include in our recipes that together would be tasty, healthy, easily digestible and an alternative for dogs who suffer from meat or fish protein allergies. We have a vet nutritionist as well as a pet food nutritionist on board to ensure that

HOWND Superfood is palatable and is nutritionally complete and balanced in accordance with FEDIAF guidelines.

9 Were you worried by recent negative newspaper headlines warning dog owners could face hefty fines for putting their pets on a veggie diet?

This was an attempt at fake news by meat lobbyists. There was a warning of fines if people did not feed their pets 'suitable diets' – in other words, vegan or vegetarian food that was not complete. The 'Jail Fine' headline actually backfired, leading to a 90% surge in online searches for vegan/vegetarian dog food in both the UK and US, resulting in increased exposure for all plant powered food brands. So, thanks to the lobbyists for the PR!

10 What are HOWND's future aspirations?

To make the world a better place one dog at a time. We want to continue creating great plant-based products which offer real health benefits for dogs. We want to educate pet parents on the benefits of plant-based nutrition and hope to reduce the number of dogs who suffer from allergies. Ultimately, we want to be a leading brand that focuses on health and wellbeing while playing an important role in reducing animal cruelty and damage to our already fragile planet. ■



Government pledges to work with 'Reggie's Law' campaigners

THE GOVERNMENT has invited the Justice for Reggie campaign to join its review into the sale of animals online, following a Parliamentary debate on the subject last month.

The Westminster Hall debate was triggered by an online petition, which gathered 109,000 signatures from concerned members of the public, asking the Government to introduce regulation of all websites where animals are sold.

The Justice for Reggie campaign was started by Richard Ackers who purchased a 12-week old puppy named Reggie from a website in December 2020, only to find that he was in extremely poor health and unable to recover. The campaign is calling for the government to introduce a new 'Reggie's Law', making it compulsory for websites to verify the identity of all sellers, and for young animals for sale to be pictured with their parents on all listings.

Speaking on behalf of the Government at the debate, Jo Churchill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), said that the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) will continue to be the main forum for discussing online sales regulation, but that input from other organisations, including the Justice for Reggie campaign, will be welcomed.

She said: "We think a holistic

approach is possible, but I am well aware that the key stakeholders – trade associations, PAAG, the Pet Industry Federation, and the Canine and Feline Sector Group – will be integral to collecting evidence to inform DEFRA's review.

ROUNDTABLE

"Following this debate, I will ask officials to meet representatives of the Justice for Reggie campaign so that we can take on board any information and evidence they can provide that can assist our understanding of these issues. There

will also be a roundtable with PAAG and some of the online platforms in the new year, which Justice for Reggie would be welcome to attend to make its points in person."

Speaking at the debate, Christina Rees MP said: "We all agree that the Government must act now. It is terribly upsetting that unscrupulous people are making money from disreputable pet animal sales online, but the key point is that innocent people are being duped by unscrupulous pet sellers who do not care if the animals they are selling live or die."



Justice for Reggie website: www.justiceforreggie.co.uk

EquiTrace secures funding

EQUITRACE – a new app for horses that combines identity, GPS and medical records data using a scanner, a microchip and a mobile phone – has signed an investment agreement for €1m.

The deal is backed by a syndicate of HBAN angel investors led by Brendan Nevin, CEO of Code Institute, and Enterprise Ireland will also be investing in the company, providing €250,000.

EquiTrace will use the investment to grow the company, building a sales and development team as well as investing in marketing, and focusing on global expansion.

EquiTrace is already in use in five countries, including Ireland, the US, Canada, Italy and Sweden. The international horse authority, FEI, which covers many sports including dressage, driving and eventing, licenses EquiTrace's software. Merck USA recently signed a deal with EquiTrace covering 13 countries.

New groom school opens

A NEW Four Paws Groom School has opened its doors, offering iPET Network further education courses.

The school, in Ledbury, Herefordshire, is on the site of a former solicitors in the market town, and will offer a range of Level 3 courses in dog grooming, as well as a qualification in Canine Emergency First, and the Level 4 Higher Professional Diploma in Dog Grooming, for qualified groomers who have been working in the industry for over a year.

All of the iPET Network qualifications are Ofqual regulated, and are delivered by industry professionals.



Stocky & Dee was launched in Scotland in 2019 by husband and wife team Mairi and Chris Robb

PUP-CYCLE CHARITY GIVES COLLARS A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

A LUXURY dog accessories business is encouraging pet owners to do their bit to cut out waste by returning their used puppy collars.

Stocky & Dee's 'Pup-cycle' initiative up-cycles outgrown puppy collars and donates them to dogs' homes to be worn again.

The charity initiative from the Edinburgh-headquartered family business asks customers to send back collars that their puppy has outgrown in return for a discount on a future purchase. Stocky & Dee refurbishes these collars, if needed, and donates them to a different dog charity every month.

The Pup-cycle initiative is one of the many ways Stocky & Dee encourages the reusability of its products and helps in its drive to be a sustainable business that does not negatively impact the environment.

In brief

Ear blister warning

NEW RESEARCH has found that dog breeds with folded ears have a higher risk of developing blood blisters in them compared to breeds with erect ear carriage.

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) research showed that dogs with v-shaped drop and semi-erect ear carriage were more prone to a condition called aural haematoma.

There were 14 dog breeds particularly affected, including bull terriers, Saint Bernards, French bulldogs, Irish Staffordshire bull terriers and English bull terriers.

The condition is said to be highly distressing and likely painful for dogs and owners should seek prompt veterinary care.

This study was supported by an award from the Kennel Club Charitable Trust and Agria Pet Insurance.

Cat-only clinic opens

LIME TREE Vets, of Stoke on Trent, has opened the first cat-only clinic in Staffordshire.

The Lime Trees Cat Clinic will provide complete veterinary care to feline patients across the county and beyond, offering general preventative healthcare as well as advanced procedures and treatments.

Leading the operation is senior vet Dr Jodie Tanner, who has worked at Lime Trees since graduating from the Royal Veterinary College in 2015.

Owning five cats aged between 18 months and 20 years old, Jodie understands the special requirements feline patients have.

"With this new facility we will be able to provide a full range of services to cats and their owners in a calm and stress-free environment," she said.

Eco-friendly fun for dogs

BECO HAS launched a range of dog toys made from recycled materials.

The new range of Rough & Tough toys are made from a mix of recycled materials, including up to six recycled plastic bottles in each toy.

The panels on each toy are woven together with double stitching and reinforced with two layers of cloth to ensure durability even with the strongest dog.

The range comprises 11 new toys including Crocodile, Spider, Kangaroo, Shark and Narwhal, with an RRP of £8.99.



Reptile specialist Tony Jones writes for specialist magazines in the UK, Europe and America. In this column, he gives news and views on the industry

Tony Jones

New AAL guidance

NEW guidelines pertaining to the Animal Activities Licensing have been issued. These are due to come into force in February 2022.

Traders will be pleased to hear that there have been no significant changes. The way enclosure sizes are measured has changed, with the new guidelines being concerned with area, rather than lengths and widths. Also, the way tortoises are measured has been standardised with all guidance now referring to the plastron length – the straight-line measurement from the front to the back of the dorsal shell. The guidance also made changes to the definition of a 'trader' versus a 'hobbyist'.

Sadly, the new guidance did not implement the Companion Animal Sector Council's (CASC) guidelines for enclosure sizes which would have tidied up a lot of difficulties for snake keepers particularly. The requirements for large pythons and boas differ vastly from those of small burrowing snakes. A more nuanced approach is sorely needed, but this will apparently have to wait.

The new guidance will be available on the .gov website on February 1, but traders can get copies of the document from CASC, their trade association or their local authority.

And, while we're on the subject, it's worth knowing that a more thorough review of the AAL guidelines will occur in 2022/2023 as part of the customary five-year Post Implementation Review. This is when significant amendments will likely occur, with the process being debated from both sides of the table. Look out for new guidance in 2023.

Herp conference

A packed schedule of esteemed speakers will speak at the AAH/BHS conference on March 12-13. The conference takes place at Drayton Manor Theme Park over two days and will feature Dr Jonathon Howard (The Beardie Vet), Dr Hew Gollge from UFAW, Dr Gerardo Garcia from Chester Zoo and Robert Mendyk from Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, among many others.

Tickets are £30 for one day or £55 for two, including lunch and refreshments, access to trade stands and zoo tours.

Wash your hands

The Food Standards Agency has ordered a product recall of certain frozen rodents supplied by Monkfield Nutrition. The recall does not affect rodents from other sources or suppliers.

While this problem is significant and reptile keepers should always be considerate of salmonella, it's worth noting that the risks and incidences of catching salmonella from keeping and feeding reptiles are relatively small and easily negated. It has long been known that reptiles and rodents carry salmonella. Risks can be negated by basic hygiene measures, specifically through washing hands and cleaning surfaces that have been in contact with reptiles or rodents.

Full guidance on the issue can be found on the Companion Animal Sector Council (CASC) website casc.org.uk.

Guy Van Heygen obituary

It was sad to hear of the death of Guy Van Heygen, father of Emmanuele Van Heygen, brand manager for Exo Terra. Guy was best known in the herp world for filming Exo Terra's expedition films in remote areas of the world, but he was also instrumental in producing promotional content for Exo Terra too.

I only met Guy a handful of times, most often at the Terraristika reptile show in Hamm, Germany. He was always exceptionally friendly and kindly spoken. I know many in the trade will be sad to hear of his death.

My condolences to Emmanuele and his family.

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Call for mandatory first aid qualifications

A NEW campaign is calling for first aid qualifications to be mandatory for all UK pet professionals.

The Safe Pets and People campaign's aim is to highlight the fact that currently the likes of dog walkers, dog groomers and pet sitters do not have to carry an animal first aid certificate.

The campaign is being led by the iPET Network (International Pet Education Training), a national qualification provider and Awarding Organisation regulated by Ofqual, CCEA Regulation and Qualifications Wales. The campaign is also being backed by the RSPCA, The Groomers Spotlight and Street Paws.

Sarah Mackay and Fern Gresty of iPET Network, said: "First aid is not an expensive course, and it doesn't have to be an iPET Network course that you do, we are not saying that and this isn't about selling our courses or making money."

Dog groomer Helen Storer runs Jango's grooming parlour in Northampton and credits the dog first aid training she has



Sarah Mackay and Fern Gresty

received with saving the life of her cockapoo Jasper, after he began to choke on a rawhide chew.

She said: "The training has been invaluable and I have the knowledge to use at work too, particularly when we get elderly dogs who may become unwell while they are having a groom."

"I think it gives my clients faith in me, and it definitely gives me faith in myself and the confidence to step in when things go wrong."



PDSA client Brian, PDSA vet nurse, Nina Downing and pet patient Biscuit

NEW PET HOSPITAL TAKES SHAPE

LEADING VET charity PDSA has celebrated a milestone, as the roof was installed at the new Nottingham Pet Wellbeing Centre. A 'topping out' ceremony was attended by a charity vet nurse, as well as clients and pet patients.

Thanks to the charity's generous supporters, including a significant donation from The Marian and Christina Ionescu Hospital and support from the players of People's Postcode Lottery, PDSA has so far raised £2.3 million towards the build cost for the pioneering new centre.

Located in Basford, the new hospital will replace PDSA's current premises, which has now reached breaking point. The centre will feature a larger, brighter waiting area, with separate areas for cats and dogs, reducing the stress a visit to the vet can cause. It will also house improved kennel facilities to allow pets to recover from surgery and treatment in a better environment, a diagnostic room, digital x-ray facilities, and a bigger car park.

Sniffe & Likkit signs up Anna

FAST-GROWING British dog grooming, gifts and treats firm Sniffe & Likkit has announced a partnership with renowned pet behaviour and nutrition expert, Anna Webb.

Regularly featured across media such as SKY 1 (for its 'A Different Breed' show), The Observer, Talk Radio and various BBC radio shows, Anna is also an ambassador for the national charities 'All Dogs Matter' and 'Dogs on the Streets'.

Work with Sniffe & Likkit will see her collaborate across a wide variety of media,

including her own podcast, 'A Dog's Life' - especially in support of its new products, which includes 'Glove My Dog'.

This is a drying towel made from a unique type of natural bamboo fibres ('Tamboocel'), renowned for its super absorbent and fast-drying qualities.



Anna Webb drying Florence with the Glove My Dog towel

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Dealer scheme powers growth at wholesaler

PEDIGREE WHOLESALE is reporting growth of over 35% from the Hikari brand in the past two years, driven by the ongoing success of the company's Saki-Hikari dealer programme.

John Newbury, aquatics business manager at Pedigree Wholesale, told pbwnews that a change in approach to how the company works with key Koi retailers and dealers has been a major factor in the sales increase.

He said: "As a business, Pedigree Wholesale is growing significantly and the aquatics side has felt the benefit of that too, but we have taken some specific actions with our Saki-Hikari dealer programme which brought us strong growth."

The network of Koi retailers and dealers in the scheme is now vetted very carefully, explained John.

"We ask that people must have a

thorough understanding of fish ponds and fish before working with them.

"We felt that some people were buying and selling the Hikari brand too cheaply on platforms such as Amazon, so we resolved to only work with certain operators. Approved dealers are now enjoying sales at the recommended retail price – and making more money as a result."

Demand for the product is growing



too, explains John. "Pond ownership and home aquarium ownership are at their highest-ever levels, and now that people have made that investment in their homes they want to get the best from it. We are expecting another solid year in 2022.

"By keeping the product within proper channels we have seen demand go a bit crazy. If it hadn't been for the difficulties of importing product from

japan we could have seen sales grow by 50% or more."

John also attributes a good portion of the company's aquatic growth to the recruitment of a new colleague Alastair Blakeman, who has been out in the trade building relationships with customers and recruiting new dealers. Pedigree Wholesale also over-indexed on sales at the Aqua Telford show last autumn, up by 10% on those achieved two years ago, he adds.

Pedigree Wholesale holds an exclusive licence to sell Hikari in the UK and Ireland, along with wholesale partners J&K Aquatics in Somerset and Norwood Aquatic in Surrey.

In brief

Goldfish drivers give new insight into navigation

A TEAM of Israeli scientists have taught a small school of goldfish how to drive a vehicle as part of a study into animal navigation.

The research group, from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, created a water tank on wheels that moved in response to the direction that the six goldfish were swimming via a computer-linked camera system.

The scientists then set up a target board and gave the fish a food reward if the vehicle touched it.

After a few days of training, the fish were able to navigate the vehicle to hit the target from a variety of different starting positions in the room and even if there were obstacles in the way.

The scientists suggest this study shows the ability to navigate unfamiliar environments – which is essential for animal survival or finding food, shelter and mates – is universal to all species.

The study was first published online in the journal Behavioural Brain Research.

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OATA WARNS OF CONTAMINATED MOSS BALLS

OATA is advising the trade to avoid moss ball products sourced from the Ukraine amid concerns over infestation by non-native zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*).

Ukraine has recently been identified as a source of contaminated moss balls, and there have been incidences reported in countries such as the UK, USA, and Sweden where zebra mussels have been found within Marimo (*Cladophora*) moss balls.

The organisation has updated its guidance for retailers, encouraging them to avoid stocking moss balls direct from Ukraine or from unverified suppliers where the source cannot be determined. If unsure, avoid stocking moss balls until your supplier confirms a lack of zebra mussels in their stock, OATA suggests.

Zebra mussels are small, fingernail-sized molluscs native to the Caspian Sea region of Asia. In their larval stage, the mussels live freely in the water column, where they can be easily transported, while adult zebra mussels can stay

alive for several days outside of water and commonly attach to boats, fishing equipment and aquarium plants such as moss balls.

Despite their small size, zebra mussels can cause a lot of problems, from clogging pipelines used for water filtration, infesting beaches and damaging boats. They also negatively impact aquatic ecosystems by harming native organisms, OATA says.

NATIVE WATERWAYS

Another potential route for zebra mussels to be introduced into native waters is on swan mussels destined for garden ponds. Zebra mussels can live on swan mussel shells, which therefore could become a route for zebra mussels to enter native waterways, although OATA has yet to receive any reports of zebra mussels coming into the UK in this way.

The organisation is requesting that any infestations are reported to the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat.

THE FOSSILISED remains of a large ichthyosaur, colloquially known as a 'Sea Dragon', has been hailed as the most complete fossil of its type ever found in Britain.

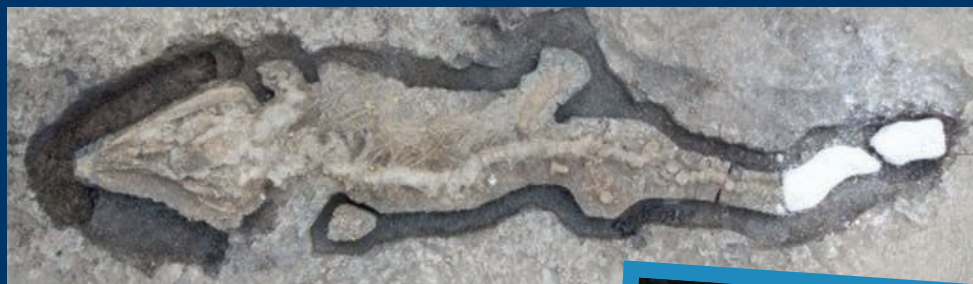
The 180 million years old fossilised skeleton, which measures around 10 metres in length with a skull weighing approximately one tonne, was discovered at the Rutland Water Nature Reserve, owned and run by Anglian Water. It is the biggest and most complete skeleton of its kind found to date in the UK and is also thought to be the first ichthyosaur of its species (*Temnodontosaurus trigonodon*) found in the country.

Ichthyosaurs first appeared around 250 million years ago and went extinct 90 million years ago. The marine reptiles varied in size from one to more than 25 metres in length, and resembled dolphins in general body shape.

The ichthyosaur was discovered by Joe Davis, Conservation Team Leader at Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, who operates the nature reserve in partnership with the water company, during the routine draining of a lagoon island for re-landscaping at Rutland Water in February 2021.

The fragile remains were excavated in August and

RUTLAND 'SEA DRAGON' HAILED AS A UNIQUE FIND



September 2021 by a team of expert palaeontologists assembled from around the UK, in partnership with Anglian Water, Rutland County Council and the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

Anglian Water is now seeking heritage funding to preserve the remains and ensure that it can remain in Rutland where its legacy can be shared with the general public.

Details of the excavation featured on BBC Two's Digging for Britain programme earlier this month and are available on BBC iPlayer.





Customer care is key to the success of The Aquatic Warehouse in Hertfordshire. Here Glen Bird, a partner in the business, reveals how this specialist outlet has grown over the past three decades

Going the extra mile



DIY SOS team onsite in 2016

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE AQUATIC WAREHOUSE?

The Aquatic Warehouse was formed in December 1993 when our three partners purchased the Cole Green premises just outside of Hertford, Hertfordshire. Soon after, the refurbishment began in earnest!

In March 1994 we opened the doors to the public, showcasing our cold-water section, and whilst trading we also built our tropical fish house and opened this in October 1994. Fast forward eight years, where trade continued to thrive, we opened our second store in Crews Hill. Later that same year however, tragedy struck. In November 2002 an electrical fire gutted the entire Cole Green site. A truly terrible time, but one that taught us the art of resilience and cemented our ambitions even further. Whilst we waited for planning permission to be approved and for our new building to be erected, we strove ahead with the opening of a third store in Harlow in 2003, marking our 10th anniversary in business.

January 2004 saw the Cole Green store reopen, and all three stores ran alongside one another. However, our management team continued to assess the success of our stores and after a period of reflection felt that three stores spread the team too thinly and, not wanting to see customer service standards slip, the decision was made to close the Harlow store. In 2015, the team also took the decision to concentrate on the Cole Green store, making it The Aquatic Warehouse's flagship store. The store was fully refurbished to mark this exciting chapter and was



Our long-term vision is simple – to continue to deliver on the standards we have already set for ourselves. We want to continually improve our store to ensure that it is a pleasant and enjoyable environment in which to shop and to ensure that we stock everything a customer would hope to find here.

designed to be the best aquatic retail outlet in the area.

In 2016, reacting to customer demand, we diversified, launching our pond and aquarium maintenance business which is going from strength to strength. We have since closed our Crews Hill branch and relocated our staff to the Cole Green site to ensure it is as good as it can be.

HOW BIG IS THE STORE AND HOW MANY EMPLOYEES?

The Aquatic Warehouse sits on a 6,500sq ft site with ample parking, supported by three partners – myself,

Paul Sharpner and June Sharpner - and five incredibly dedicated and passionate team members.

WHAT SETS THE AQUATIC WAREHOUSE APART FROM OTHER STORES AND WHY DO YOUR CUSTOMERS LIKE YOU SO MUCH?

We believe it's our exemplary customer service that sets us apart! We pride ourselves on giving a superior standard of service to all our customers, many of whom we have known for years.

We also believe in offering a truly personal service, hence the customer loyalty and retention that we are so proud to have achieved. Simple things such as meeting and greeting all our customers can make such a difference to the customer experience and we are delighted to share our advice, knowledge and support to both the novice and seasoned fish-keeper. We are also

flexible and will always 'go the extra mile' to help our customers as demonstrated during the Covid lockdown, when we provided a delivery service to our most vulnerable customers, free of charge.

We offer all our customers a Privilege Card which gives them a 10% discount off all fish and plants – this gives us the opportunity to engage with new faces and introduce ourselves to customers.

Our excellent staff certainly set us apart from other stores. They enjoy being 'part of the family' and understand the importance of customer retention. We are fortunate to have low staff turnover and our loyal

staff have been with us for many years, and we know our customers enjoy being served by a familiar face.

All of this has meant that we have created a friendly store which has a great, fun atmosphere.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR BIGGEST 'WINS' AS A BUSINESS?

Our main objective is to remain a 'bricks and mortar' business supported by a strong management structure which sees at least one partner present in the shop seven days a week. We also pride ourselves on providing professional aftersales and maintenance service support and having a knowledgeable team with an unrivalled understanding of the products we offer. It is this knowledge that we want to pass onto our customers, taking the time to educate them on how to run their pond and aquarium in the best possible way. It is these values that underpin everything we do.

We have also totally redesigned our shop and cold-water area to enable us to house a huge variety of livestock and an impressive range of branded goods – together creating one of the best aquarium stores anywhere in the UK. We are exceptionally proud of what we have achieved.

It would be remiss of us not to mention our involvement with the BBC DIY SOS 'Big Build' programme in 2016, which was a favourite memory for many of us. Filmed in Welwyn Garden City, we were able to contribute to this incredible and humbling experience, installing an OASE biOrb Life 30 aquarium (kindly donated by the OASE team) in a special dialysis room being constructed in the home of a lovely, local lady.

WHAT IS YOUR LONG-TERM VISION FOR THE BUSINESS?

Our long-term vision is simple – to continue to deliver on the standards we have already set for ourselves. We want to continually improve our store to ensure that it is a pleasant and enjoyable environment in which to shop and to ensure that we stock everything a customer would hope to find here.

We will also continue to develop our pond and aquarium maintenance business which is growing exponentially year on year. This added value service not only broadens our customer base, but we know it also leads to increased sales in store.

WHICH BRANDS DO YOU ENJOY WORKING WITH?

We have always had, and hope to continue to have, a great relationship with OASE. They have helped us create a fantastic in-store display of both aquariums and dry goods; products which we know drives sales and encourages customer loyalty thanks to the quality and breadth of products on offer.

We also particularly enjoy working



The store works with leading suppliers



with biOrb, Den Marketing, Hagen, Hikari, Hozelock, Interpet/Blagdon, JUWEL, Red Sea and Tetra.

ANY PRODUCT LINES YOU COULDN'T BE WITHOUT?

Quite simply, OASE. Their quality products never fail to satisfy, all supported by eye-catching packaging that looks great on the shelf, effectively selling itself.

HOW ARE CONSUMER DEMANDS/TRENDS CHANGING?

The Aquatic Warehouse does not currently have an online presence although we appreciate customers do buy products in this way. Whilst it would be easy to be enticed by an online store, we strongly believe in educating our customers about specific products through friendly and frequent interaction in store. In our experience, customers are willing to get the best for their livestock and often feel let down by online stores which fail to provide comprehensive after sales service and advice. For us, there is no substitute for this invaluable face-to-face interaction.

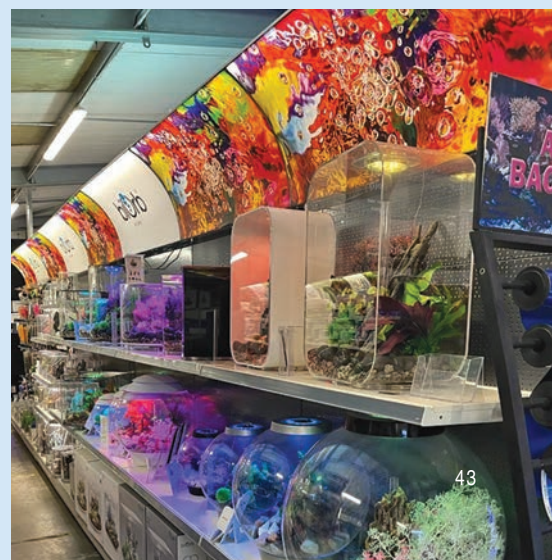
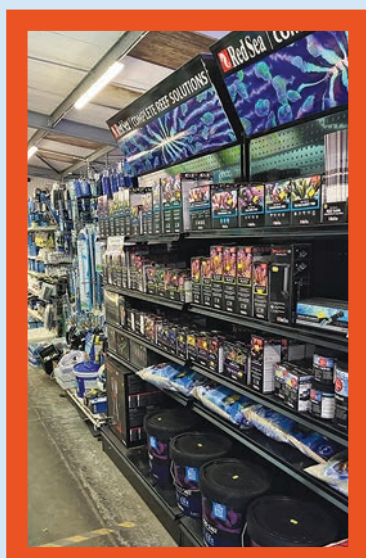
Additionally for us, the excellent relationships we

have built with our suppliers and wholesalers over the last 28 years of trading mean we can be highly responsive to customer demands. Even when product is not in stock, we can order and receive specialist goods in a very short timeframe.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE POND & INDOOR AQUATICS MARKETS?

Both the pond and indoor aquatics markets are seeing sales continue year-round, although we do see cold-water livestock sales dip for a three-to-four-month period each year during the winter.

The trend for year-round pond maintenance is building and we are pleased to see this happen. Customers are coming to understand that in order for their ponds to remain in tip top condition at all times then regular pond maintenance is key. ■



DOGS

GOLDEN BALLS!

A GOLDEN retriever has been written into the history books – as he's smashed the world record for holding the most tennis balls in his mouth in one go.

Seven-year-old Finley can fit a whopping six tennis balls in his mouth and his impressive feat means he's beaten the previous record of five, which stood for 17 years and was held by another golden retriever from the US.

Finley's has been recognised by the Guinness Book of Records and features in the 2022 edition.

Proud owners Cheri and Rob Molloy and their daughter, Erin, from Canandaigua, New York, US, told the *Mirror* they were over the moon with their pooch's skills and couldn't be more excited to see Finley's feat in writing.

Finley also has his own Instagram account, and the record-breaking dog shared his big news with his 47,000 followers.

Finley's family – who have owned him since he was a 10-week-old puppy – said they spotted he could pick up lots of balls at once when he was two years old.



Coats determined by ancient DNA

THE COMBINATION of genes that determine canines' fur color and pattern originated about two million years ago in an extinct ancestor of dogs and wolves, according to a new study in *Nature Ecology & Evolution*.

White wolves and yellow dogs share nearly identical configurations of the agouti-signaling protein gene, and that specific DNA configuration is more than two million years old, according to geneticist Chris Kaelin.

Old but gold!

A 14-YEAR-OLD Pekingese mix with only one upper tooth, a severe underbite and a floppy ear was one of the more unlikely faces of Saving Senior Dogs Week, an awareness campaign in the US.

The dog, Rex, was abandoned and adopted by Maria Buck, who told 'Today' that it was 'an incredible privilege' to make a difference in an elderly dog's last years.



CATS



Kittens have a crush on rescuer

A QUICK-thinking couple from Wokingham have saved two kittens that were just minutes away from being crushed to death after discovering them trapped inside the engine of a car in a scrap yard.

Tommy Harper – who works at the scrap yard – and Charlotte Drablow have now adopted the kittens and named them Garfield and Odie.

Tommy said: "We crush hundreds of cars every day and line all of them up ready for the crusher. As I walked past the cars waiting to enter the crusher, I heard an unusual noise coming from one of the vehicles. I soon realised it was meowing and opened the bonnet of an old Ford Mondeo.

"I could see a tiny grey tabby kitten and further down inside the engine was another ginger tabby kitten that was well and truly stuck! The grey kitten was really stressed and hissing a lot, I think he was trying to protect his

mate. I rang my partner and asked her to come straight down to help.

"Both the kittens were tiny and looked really ill... Both were hissing at us as they were obviously very frightened. We looked everywhere to see if there were any other kittens in the other cars and hoped we might find the mum, but it was just the two of them."

FREE OF CHARGE

Charlotte headed straight to Harrison Family Vets at The Point on Shepherds Hill in Woodley so they could be checked over, where the team, after diagnosing the kittens with cat flu, supplied antibiotics, eye ointment and worm and flea treatments free of charge.

Charlotte said: "I think they have a bit of a crush on me now as they follow me all around the house. They are like a pair of little ducklings and treat me as their mum!"

CAT BURGLAR FINDS SACHET STASH

AN ELDERLY family pet has turned cat burglar and been setting out on missions to steal sachets of food.

Tammy (13) has been amazing owner Tara Harris by bringing back the packets to their home in Long Sutton,

Lincolnshire, according to *Spalding Today*.

She pierces them with her teeth and has usually eaten some by the time she gets home, finishing them off by ripping them up to get the last of the food out.

Although amused by the incidents, Tara told *Spalding Today* that she wanted to apologise to the owner of the

stolen pet food pouches.

"I am truly sorry for the manners of my elderly cat," she said. "I'm guessing these pouches are probably stored outside and that is how she is managing to get hold of them.

"I obviously cannot tell her not to but I would sincerely like to apologise for her! "I promise I do feed her and she cannot be hungry – she must enjoy the thrill of stealing!"

Tara said that in her younger days, Tammy would bring home pigeons and once a live frog.



The long and winding road

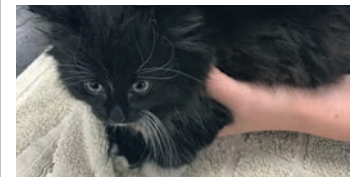
A TINY, 0.6 kilogramme kitten that climbed into the engine of a van has been driven from Liverpool to Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Telecoms engineer Dwayne Ofoeme and his two colleagues stopped at Cambridge Drive, Newcastle-upon-Lyme, to begin work when they heard meowing coming from the van's engine. On realising there was a kitten hiding in the engine, the men attempted to catch him, but he kept disappearing into the vehicle's undercarriage.

After phoning the RSPCA, and an hour of coaxing, the kitten, now named Ringo, was caught.

"Despite his diminutive size, Ringo was an extremely vocal little guy who is in good health," said RSPCA inspector Jackie.

"He was such a character and we're so pleased he's ok," said Dwayne.



Stricken cat rescued

SHROPSHIRE Fire and Rescue Service came to the aid of 18-month-old cat that spent three days stuck up a 30-foot oak tree after chasing a squirrel.

Amanda Holland, Ruben's owner, had tried to coax the cat down with no luck, so Amanda phoned the RSPCA.

RSPCA inspector Nayman Dunderdale attempted to retrieve Ruben, however, could not get to the cat who had nestled himself in a crook. The fire brigade then had to be called, and Ruben was safely removed from the tree and returned to his owner.



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PATS Sandown

Sandown Park, Surrey

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PATS Telford

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email: pat@petquip.com

17 November 2022

PIF Awards

Whittlebury Hall Hotel, Northamptonshire

www.petfederation.co.uk

11-12 October 2023

Aqua Telford

Telford, Shropshire

www.aquatelford.co.uk

email: gordon.thomas@impact-exhibitions.com



Simon Smethurst

● **WHM PET GROUP** has appointed a new northern account manager.

Simon Smethurst has joined the group and brings extensive managerial experience to the role having previously worked as the key account manager for Miracle-Gro and most recently northern field sales manager at Evergreen Garden Care, managing territory managers and key independent garden centre businesses in Northern England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

At the same time, **Lucy Taylor** has joined **W&H Marriage & Sons**, WHM Pet Group's sister company, as feed sales coordinator. Lucy will be involved in farm account management, sales orders, customer enquiries, technical support and product innovation.

Lucy has a BSc in Animal Management with Livestock Production and has had experience in various animal management fields, such as zookeeping at Colchester Zoo, managing and training animals such as tigers, wolves and birds of prey.



Lucy Taylor



David Tracey

● **David Tracey** has said farewell to **The Hatchwell Company** after 17 years as sales manager.

David said: "I have really enjoyed working with Dave Taylor and the team at Hatchwells during this time and it has been a pleasure to be part of this growing business.

"Hatchwells has recently invested significantly in new machinery which will considerably increase its capabilities in the pet treats sector and the new owners, Pets Choice, are well placed to maximise the opportunities that lie ahead.

"I wish Dave and his wife Emma all the very best for the future and the same for the team in the factory."

David confirmed he will remain as sales manager of Brambles Pet and Wildlife, adding: "It's full steam ahead with Brambles."

● **ROLAND JOHNSON** has joined **Wilsons Pet Food** as national account manager.

In his new role he will be in direct contact with a wide array of stockists across the country, including pet shops, groomers and dog walkers.

2022 marks the 18th year Roland has worked in the pet trade. He started out working in-store at a branch of Jollies and moving on to a head office roles for Pets Choice UK, Hills Science Plan and more recently at Forthglade.

Roland and his partner recently rescued a nine-month old German Shephard called Lando, who was originally a lockdown puppy.



Roland Johnson

● **IVC Evidensia** has appointed a new Equine Group Veterinary Advisor (GVA).

Mark Tabachnik has joined the team of GVAs, who work to influence policy and practice at every level, to help shape the future for the group's Equine Vets teams and the clients they work with. He joins long-standing Equine GVA, Graham Hunter.

Mark graduated from Edinburgh University in 1995, and worked in mixed practice in South Wales, where he ran a branch surgery, before joining Wright & Morten in 1999. He is now the equine clinical director with specialism in dentistry.

The equine side of the IVC Evidensia business has grown to over 50 sites, including equine hospitals and more than 300 vets and in his new role Mark will help to guide the team and act as a link between practices and IVC Evidensia.

Mark said: "I'm very interested in coaching for wellbeing, mental fitness, and the link between better business and happier people.

"We have a lot to offer, some great practices, some inspirational clinicians, and aspirational hospitals. I believe that IVC Evidensia Equine can offer a fulfilling career for anybody wanting to immerse themselves in equine practice, and I would like to be part of the team that delivers this."

IVC Evidensia has also met the profession's growing appetite for quality improvement by appointing a senior leader dedicated to this area.

Laura Playforth will take up the role, moving from her current position as professional standards director at Vets Now, the group's flagship emergency and critical care provider. During her time at Vets Now, she has played a key part in the progression of clinical standards, in addition to quality improvement, while undertaking a post-graduate master's degree in Advancing Healthcare Practice.

Laura is also the vice-chair of RCVS Knowledge's Quality Improvement Advisory Board, which is the charity partner of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in the UK, dedicated to the advancement of veterinary care.

Lesley Moore will also be joining IVC Evidensia as QI co-ordinator.

Lesley qualified as an RVN in 2013 and joined Vets Now in 2015. She has been the principal nurse manager at the Macclesfield clinic in Cheshire since 2016, the same year she passed her Emergency and Critical Care Certificate.

She led her nursing team to success in the 2019 RCVS Knowledge QI awards where they were named 'Champion Practice' for their general anaesthetic and sedation audit process. While taking the role as QI Co-ordinator, Lesley will be keeping her hand in with clinical work with a weekend role at the Macclesfield branch.



Mark Tabachnik



Laura Playforth



Lesley Moore

If you would like your news featuring in our people watching column, please email words and high-resolution images to editor@pbwnews.com There is no charge for this service.

BEHIND THE COUNTER

True tales of everyday life in a pet shop

A year to remember

WELL, 2021 was a year to remember and I'm sure everyone will have their own memories of coping with Covid on top of everything else it takes to run an independent pet shop!

For us, it's dancing around customers still trying to give that high level of personal service while at the same time not getting too close to them.

It's great fun trying on dog harnesses with the customer helping rather than standing back and letting me get on with it. It's still alien for me to point customers in the general direction of collars and leads and leave them to it when what I want to do is show them the full range and try to fit the perfect collar on the dog and find a matching lead.

Also, my recoil in horror as a customer licks their fingers to separate out a £10 note from a wad of notes and their complete surprise when I ask them, very politely, to pay by another method.

The customer who, when told there are a few stock shortages due to the pandemic and Brexit, look at you as if you're bonkers and expect you to produce what they want immediately out of thin air.

I shall never forget the lady who, when I asked to enter her PIN number in the card reader, had no idea what I was talking about and looked on her card to find this mythical number. Apparently four of the sixteen numbers on her card are the PIN number!

Then, in all fairness, there was this other lady who always told me her PIN number in a loud voice, usually in front of a shop full of customers,

as she thought it was easier for me to put it in the reader than her.

And, for the first time in thirty years of trading, our favourite wholesaler could not deliver one week due to a combination of lack of driver and lack of lorry.

So, as we move into 2022 what could we expect? Covid will rumble on, face masks and social distancing will surely be in place for the foreseeable future, and we will continue to avoid unnecessary human contact. Brexit troubles will hopefully settle down as we all get used to the new normal. Oh wishful thinking...

Carrier bags

When the 5p charge for carrier bags came in, our use of single use plastic carrier bags almost disappeared. But just recently it's started to rise again. While the odd person asks for a bag, quite a few just stand and look at their purchases as if a carrier bag will magically appear. Of course if you say 'do you need a bag?' the answer is always yes, quite often in the manner of well it's obvious I need a bag. The other little trick is they ask for a bag after they've paid, knowing full well you don't want to put a card sale through for 10p, and of course they don't carry cash. And they know full well the shopkeeper isn't going to alienate a customer over the cost of a plastic bag.

Goldfish

A customer asked about goldfish, and was most put out when we told her it's well over a year since we stopped selling fish. Apparently she buys all her fish from us - except for when she

goes to the aquatic centre in the nearby town.

Pet breeding

The laws on breeding of pets and licensing of pet shops is different in Scotland than it is in England. It would be far easier if animal welfare legislation was harmonised across the UK, but it's not. For breeders of cats and dogs, anyone who breeds more than three litters a year will have to be licensed, while for rabbits it's more than six litters a year. This new legislation also covers animal rehoming centres, so for the first time in the UK, rabbit breeders and rescue centres will need to be licensed and inspected to the same standard as pet shops. Well, best of luck to local councils not only having to identify these breeders and rescue centres but also finding the time to inspect them, alongside a Vet or SSPCA, and issue a license. As for costs, each council charges differently but the Scottish Borders Council states a fee of £360 on their website.

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pbwnnews

Editorial
David Rees

**Advertisement sales
& subscriptions**
Nicola Jardine & Mark Paxton

Design and Production
Rachel Wood &
Robin Page

Telephone
Editorial & Production: 01234 714644
Sales & subscriptions: 01234 714404
Accounts: 01825 983125
E: info@lewisbusinessmedia.co.uk
W: www.petbusinessworld.co.uk

Address
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