

pbtnews

PET BUSINESS WORLD – THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE FOR THE PET INDUSTRY



Trade boosts aid for Ukraine pets



Volunteers deliver dog food to the Vinnytsia shelter in Ukraine. Picture credit: Four Paws

AS THE CRISIS in Ukraine deepens, the UK pet trade has rallied round to support efforts to reduce the suffering of pets caught up in the conflict or fleeing the country with their owners.

Pets at Home Group has pledged £100,000 to help the International Fund for Animal Welfare to support rescue centres caring for thousands of pets that have been left behind as refugees flee the country.

In addition, the retailer has created a fundraising page in partnership with the Pets at Home Foundation, with donations distributed to charities that are helping on the ground in Ukraine and bordering countries.

One intrepid couple, Kate Geernaert and Clint Sheppard from The Dog Groomery in Paulton, Somerset, collected £10,000 in cash and pet product donations and joined a convoy driving to the Ukrainian border to distribute to pets in need.

The convoy of vans, trailers and a horse box was filled with pet food as well as a selection of leads, harnesses, collars, cat carriers, bedding, blankets and medical supplies. Two vehicles have now crossed into Ukraine, with the remainder staying at the border post to help provide food and assistance to

owners and their pets entering Romania from Ukraine. Funds are being used to purchase more food in Romania, as well as diesel for the onward trip into Ukraine.

The convoy, which hopes to make six trips in total, is piloted by rescue charity Dogbus – Transporting paws, Saving Lives and the relief effort has been supported by pet retailer Natural Cornish Pet, based in St Erth, Cornwall. Kate and Clint have set up an Amazon wishlist for public donations.

Other small businesses are doing their bit to help. In Greenock, Scotland, pet store Raw Benefits has been collecting donations from locals in Inverclyde to send to pets in Ukraine, while manufacturer Su-Bridge Pet Supplies has sent three pallets of pet food via Waites & Stones to Ukraine.

SHELTER

Welfare charity Four Paws reports that the number of dogs requiring shelter is “increasing by the day” as more people flee the conflict and leave their pets behind.

Last week the organisation delivered 1.5 tonnes of dry dog food to the Vinnytsia shelter in Ukraine, enough to feed approximately 320 dogs in Vinnytsia and another local shelter for about one month.

In addition, Ukrainian pet food firm Kormotech has started a fundraising initiative, Save Pets of Ukraine, to attract donations from abroad. Volunteers are making deliveries of pet food to shelters in Ukraine, sometimes under fire from Russian soldiers.

A HUGE number of international and local charities, animal welfare organisations and volunteers are working to feed and care for animals both in Ukraine itself and those crossing the border with their owners.

To donate to any of the funds mentioned, visit:

- donorbox.org/dogbus/fundraiser/kate-geernaert
- www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/199YKP68AN405
- www.savepetsofukraine.kormotech.com/en
- www.petsathomefoundation.co.uk/pets-at-home-ukraine-appeal/

International charities are also raising funds, supporting animal shelters and co-ordinating efforts on the ground and at border crossing points, including: Four Paws, Happy Paw, Humane Society International (HSI), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), PETA and UAnimals. All organisations are accepting cash donations.



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WHOLESALE OF THE YEAR



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The war in Ukraine is a tragedy for pets too, says

David Rees

Helping where we can

AMONG THE most abiding images of the frightening invasion of Ukraine has been the flood of refugees crossing the Western border on foot or trying to squeeze into trains as they make their escape. And you cannot fail to notice that amongst their meagre but most treasured possessions, literally just what they could carry, are their pets.

Each one of these personal stories is a tragedy in its own right, but perhaps the even bigger tragedy is the situation of those left behind. For every pet lovingly cradled and carried over the border out of Ukraine, there is probably at least one more left behind, separated, abandoned or lost.

Fortunately, if one can use that word at a time of such monumental horror, the suffering of innocent human beings and their pets in the Ukraine has not gone unnoticed, and a huge humanitarian and welfare effort has begun, staffed by thousands of hard-working volunteers from across the world.

The pet trade has responded too, both in the UK and in Europe and many enterprises, both large and small, have started making donations and mobilised volunteers to help feed and care for the displaced pet population both in Ukraine itself and in neighbouring countries such as Poland where the refugee exodus has been at its most intense.

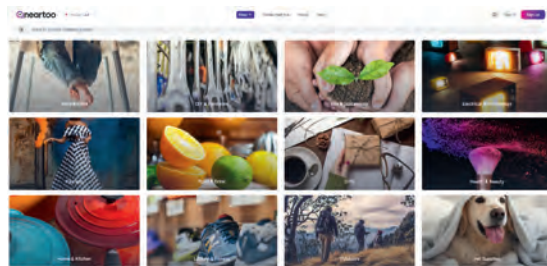
Many have donated stock, while others in the trade have volunteered to drive vanloads to the other side of Europe to help alleviate the problem. It's a huge challenge to solve but, in such circumstances, even the smallest gesture makes some kind of a difference and I know that people in the pet trade will be doing what they can to help.

Among the millions of innocent victims of the unfolding nightmare in Ukraine, animals are the most innocent of all and they need our support now.

AT THE SHOW

The pet trade will also be coming together, in a much happier context, at the PATS show at Sandown later this month (March 27-28) and we at pbwnews will be there too. It will be my first time at the event and I'm looking forward to meeting as many of you as I can during the two days.

So if you are coming to the show, please drop by stand F3 and say hello to the team at pbwnews.



Bira launches web platform for indies

INDEPENDENT retailers can boost their presence in the digital world thanks to a new online trading platform launched this month.

The Nearthoo platform allows shoppers to find out contact details and directions of stores they are 'near to', as well as allowing retailers to create their own online presence or integrate location details with their existing online sales platforms. The British Independent Retailers Association (Bira) has launched the site in order to support the High Street and help independent stores to recover from the pandemic by moving to a 'hybrid' model of retailing.

Each retailer on the platform has its own individual profile, with in-built Google mapping to show a store's location and help shoppers plan their route. There are also options for home delivery, click & collect, or in-person collection.

The platform, which has taken 12 months to develop and will be advertised nationally, also offers shoppers rewards when they shop at independent stores. Consumers collect Nearthoo Local Rewards with each purchase, creating points that can be redeemed with all Nearthoo Sellers.

Hundreds of independent shops have signed up for the system already, according to Bira's chief executive Andrew Goodacre.

He said: "The pandemic 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. This is a really exciting opportunity for independents throughout the UK to be able to start selling online or increase their own visibility and the fact so many of our members have already signed up and have seen the potential, is fantastic, we can't wait to see the site grow."

An estimated one in five independent retailers closed for good during the pandemic. According to ShopLocal, if every adult in the UK spent £5 per week at a local business, rather than in a supermarket or chain store, £13.5 billion would go back into town centres.

■ Visit Nearthoo.co.uk for more information.

AWARD NOMINATION RECOGNISES WORK OF PET CAMPAIGN GROUP

A GROUP OF campaigners who successfully lobbied to stiffen penalties for pet theft have been nominated for the Petition Campaign of the Year Award at the Your UK Parliament Awards.

Dr Daniel Allen, from Keele, Staffordshire, started the petition 'Make pet theft crime a specific offence with custodial sentences' in 2020, which received more than 143,000 signatures. This followed two earlier petitions, the first from 2018, which was signed by more than 107,000 people, and a second in 2019, which received over 117,000 signatures.

Dr Allen's campaign was set up in collaboration with Debbie Matthews, CEO of the Stolen and Missing Pets Alliance, and supported by a number of other animal rights campaigners, including Dr Marc Abraham OBE, founder of the Lucy's Law campaign to end puppy farming; Freya Woodhall, whose dog Willow was stolen in 2018; Beverley Cuddy, Editor of Dogs Today Magazine; and John Cooper QC. The campaign has also secured support from celebrities including Ricky Gervais and Clare Balding.

SPECIFIC CRIMINAL OFFENCE

A Parliamentary debate was held on two of Dr Allen's petitions in October 2020 led by Tom Hunt MP, who backed the campaign's call for a specific offence to be created, and for the relevant sentencing guidelines to be strengthened. In September 2021 the government announced that it would make 'pet abduction' a specific criminal offence.

A judging panel including MPs, members of the House of Lords, campaigning bodies, and previous award winners will decide on the winners shortly.

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Beef bone broth launched

KARNLEA HAS launched a new bone broth, supplied at ambient temperatures in plastic-free cartons.

Karnlea Beef Bone Broth is slow-cooked to extract high levels of protein, collagen and minerals and can be used as a supplement, treat or topper to support skin, coat and joint health for dogs and cats.

The product can be served as a liquid straight from the carton, chilled for use as a jelly topper, or frozen into treats or portions. It is supplied ambient in 500ml cartons, although it needs to be kept refrigerated once opened.

The brand has been launched by Belfast-based husband-and-wife team Lara and Ken McCullough, and the company is working with distributor Finer By Nature. Packs have an RRP of £8.99.

Store raiders spray animals with paint

BURGLARS sprayed animals with paint during a raid at a pet store in Lincolnshire last month.

In the early hours of February 10, thieves forced their way into Caves Pet Shop on Peterborough Road in Crowland. Several items including jackets, collars and leads were stolen but, most distressingly for owner Rebecca Cave, she found that chinchillas and a parrot named Buddy had been covered in blue spray paint. Another parrot, Charlie, was missing from his cage.

The paint covered Buddy's face and head, and got into his eyes, requiring Rebecca to regularly apply eye cream to the bird.

Rebecca, who has run the pet shop for more than 15 years, told the *Peterborough Telegraph*: "I just couldn't

believe it when I saw what has happened. They got in through the side and didn't appear on any of the cameras. The door has been smashed down and the metal peeled back.

"My first thought was for the animals though, and seeing the condition they were in just upset everyone. There was no need for that. I've been treating Buddy with eye cream but the paint won't wash out anymore, we will just have to wait (until he moults)."

Charlie, a 15-year old Orange-Winged Amazon, remained missing as pbwnews went to press. It was first thought that the thieves had stolen him but he has since been spotted flying free, and Rebecca is hoping he might be drawn to a bird feeding table in the local area.



Graham Smith with Riley and Sadie

INVESTOR TO DRIVE GROWTH AT FISH4PETS

FISH4PETS HAS received a substantial funding injection from Norwegian family-owned investment company DSD.

The senior team at Fish4Pets and principal shareholders FKRA were seeking a co-investor to provide additional financing to accelerate the growth of the business. DSD invests in a wide range of sectors, with interests ranging from mobility and ocean-linked businesses, to medical and tourism. The investment in Fish4Pets is its first in the pet food sector.

DSD chief executive Ingvald Loyning said: "As active owners, we have a strategic, dynamic company portfolio and Fish4Pets will be an exciting addition. DSD aims to join innovative companies with growth

potential that work for more sustainable solutions."

Fish4Pets' five-year plan includes product development, entry into new markets and increasing operational efficiencies, as well as environmental impact and responsibility.

GROWTH PLANS

Fish4Pets chief executive Graham Smith added: "We are delighted to have secured investment from DSD, as well as increased financial support from FKRA, to drive our ambitious growth plans. DSD bring with it a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm, and we hope to benefit from its experience in other industries, and particularly its commitment to environmental and social responsibility."

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Scottish Veterinary Service to be created

THE SCOTTISH government has announced plans to create a new Scottish Veterinary Service (SVS) within the lifetime of the current Parliament.

The new service, which was announced by Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon at NFU Scotland's AGM last month, will replace field animal health and welfare functions currently delivered by the Animal and Plant Health Agency in Scotland.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Scottish Government has said that it will strengthen delivery of tasks in a range of areas including disease control, as well as helping to create more opportunities for young people in Scotland who want to follow careers in veterinary, animal health and food safety services.

Gougeon said: "For a range of reasons – Brexit among them – we do not have enough of the right people with the right qualifications. The SVS will help us create opportunities for

more young people in Scotland to want to pursue rewarding careers in veterinary, animal health and food safety services."

Romain Pizzi, the British Veterinary Association's (BVA) Scottish branch president, welcomed the proposal, but said that it was important that vets were able to shape the plans.

He said: "We see advantages and potential risks in the creation of a new Scottish Veterinary Service.

"In Scotland we pride ourselves on high welfare, high quality agricultural produce so there are real opportunities for a more Scotland-centric approach that can really focus on our own animal health and welfare priorities.

"But we know that diseases and animal welfare problems don't respect borders, and so it will be critical that there are systems in place for a new service to collaborate and liaise with the rest of the UK, and beyond, on disease surveillance, data collection, and information sharing."

New scents make sense

PET CARE brand Animology has expanded its range of canine body mist sprays with the addition of three new fragrances.

Animology Flower Power is described as a fresh floral fragrance, with notes of Rose and Jasmine; Animology Hot Dog is a warm and spicy fragrance, with notes of Pomegranate and Pink Peppercorn; while Animology Puppy Powder offers a 'baby powder' scent.

The three new products, supplied in 150ml bottles, brings to six the number of fragrance body mists available in the Animology grooming range. The products carry a suggested retail price of £5.50.



Animals get full rights in Italy

THE ITALIAN Parliament has voted to include the protection of animals and the environment as part of the country's constitution.

A mandate to protect animals, biodiversity and the environment for the benefit of future generations has now been included alongside the existing commitment to preserve the landscape and historical and artistic heritage of the nation.

Thanks to this reform, animals have now been granted full rights in the Italian constitution, becoming the fifth country in the world to do so.

Google data shows dog owner concerns



According to Google data, the phrase 'dog separation anxiety' was searched 6,600 times

THE MOST common concerns that dog owners have about their pets are related to excessive barking and separation anxiety, according to a new study from dog walkers' insurance providers Cliverton.

The company looked at Google data from January 2020 to December 2020 to find out what dog owners were searching for the most online. The searches with the highest average monthly search volume were "dog barking", "dog separation anxiety", "dog noise", "dog anxiety", and "stop dog barking" with 27,100, 6,600, 5,400, 4,400, and 4,400

searches respectively.

Health concerns, especially those linked to obesity, also figure highly among the most searched-for topics. 'Anal glands in dogs' had 14,800 average monthly searches during the year while 'hip dysplasia in dogs' and 'cherry eye in dogs' also had high monthly search volumes. 'Dog kidney failure' also had an average monthly search volume of 3,600.

Behavioural issues also figured. Searches for "dog biting", "dog behaviour", and "dog aggression" had 6,600, 5,400, and 2,900 average monthly searches, respectively.

TRIXIE SHOWS SOFTER SIDE WITH NEW CAT LINES

TRIXIE HAS expanded its range of products for cats with the launch of new beds, cushions, soft caves and scratching posts under the Harvey brand.

Products feature the long-haired plush in two colours in line with the Harvey brand identity of having extra soft features suitable for kittens and larger cats.

RRPs range from £24.99-£89.99, and a selection of mats for shelves and window sills will also be available shortly.

The company also markets a range of products aimed at young and sensitive pets for recently-acquired puppies and



kittens under the Junior label.

The range includes bedding, scratching furniture, treats, shallow bowls toys plus products for first training or outings to the countryside.

A range of POS material, including magnetic fascias, side banners, posters and brochures, is available.

In brief

Exotic business celebrates first anniversary

A CAMBRIDGESHIRE retailer who opened a store for exotics while on furlough during the Covid lockdown has been celebrating a successful first year in business.

Tom Bailey opened Ely Exotics at Sedgeway Business Park in Witchford last February, and admitted to local newspaper the *Ely Standard* that he didn't know what to expect at first.

"We've had lockdowns, changing of rules, mask wearing, people want to go out then they don't," he said. "But the support we've had from local people has been fantastic."

"I've been very surprised with the amount of people that keep exotic pets in the area," he added. "I project that, in the next five years, we will be in a bigger facility – in the first year, we have packed the place out!"

Just For Pets opens twentieth store

JUST FOR PETS has opened its 20th store, at Leamington Shopping Park, Warwickshire.

The new store stocks a range of brands including Orijen, Acana, Carnilove, Canagan and Cooper & Co, as well as raw dog foods and natural treats, plus live and frozen foods for reptiles.

The Just for Pets teams are trained in pet nutrition to force-free harness fitting, and free weighing scales and treat samples are available for pets in store.

The new outlet is situated next to a 30,000 sq ft M&S Foodhall.

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Natural treats on show

DOG TREATS brand Frozzy's is going to be exhibiting its new Superbites range at PATS Sandown show.

The Superbites range was developed in response to consumer demands for dog treats that feature natural ingredients whilst supporting digestive health. Frozzy's Superbites with probiotics are available in three flavours – yogurt and blueberry; yogurt, banana and honey; and yogurt and cranberry.

All three Superbites recipes are made from 100% natural ingredients including added probiotics to help rebalance the gut microbiome. Products are grain-free, low-calorie and rich in Omega 3 and 6.

Frozzy's are at stand K2 at the PATS show, which runs on March 27-28 at Sandown Park, Esher.

Farmers given incentives to improve welfare

THE GOVERNMENT has published details of a new subsidy scheme which will see farmers incentivised for improving the welfare of farm animals in England.

The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway programme will give financial incentives for farmers to introduce cage-free systems for chickens, rear slower-growing breeds of birds that have better health and welfare and end the need for routine tail docking in pigs by providing them with a less stressful environment.

As part of the Pathway, the Government will also fund annual independent vet visits to farmers focused on improving the health and improving the welfare of their animals.

German firm acquires Arden Grange

ALPHAPET Ventures has acquired Leander International Pet Foods Ltd, which trades as Arden Grange.

The acquisition of the UK super-premium dog and cat food firm marks AlphaPet's entry into the UK market. The company is a distributor of pet food in Europe and also sells direct to over one million shoppers throughout the DACH region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) via its web platform.

The AlphaPet Ventures brand portfolio comprises eight premium brands, including Wolfsblut, Wildes Land, Primum and Müller's Naturhof.

GREAT POTENTIAL

Marco Hierling, founder and managing director of AlphaPet Ventures, said: "Arden Grange is a strong and well-positioned premium brand for which we see great potential not only in the UK but also in DACH.

"Above all, we can make a good contribution to the further growth of the brand. We are building on the existing and long-standing supplier and customer relationships in the UK and look forward to expanding these further in the coming years."

Wendy Stephens, founder of Arden Grange, said: "Together with my late husband, Graham, we founded the



Wendy Stephens with Harvey

Arden Grange brand 25 years ago to counter the dog food offerings of the big manufacturers with a high-quality nutritional dog food. The claim of Arden Grange shows this clearly, 'nutrition without compromise', and we have always remained faithful to this. This has enabled us to build up a large and loyal group of customers in the UK."

Emma Stephens, daughter of Wendy Stephens and director of Arden Grange, added: "The high quality and innovative recipes have enabled us to successfully establish the brand in the premium market and make it one of the most popular dog food brands in the UK. Through the team at AlphaPet, I see great potential in further building the brand, not only nationally but also internationally."



Arden Grange's stand at Crufts 2020

VETS4PETS EXPANDS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

THE PETS AT Home group has committed to providing a trained Mental Health First Aider in every Vets4Pets practice to support the profession as it deals with a wave of pressures.

The commitment comes as the retail group published its inaugural 'Project Listen' report on the UK's veterinary sector. Vets4Pets engaged with over 700 vets, nurses and support teams to better understand the key challenges facing the profession and the potential opportunities to drive positive change.

The report was conducted amidst a backdrop of increasing demand for veterinary care which showed that 47% of veterinary professionals are expressing concerns over their work/life balance. As many as 40% of veterinary professionals described their current health and wellbeing as 'not that good' or 'poor', the report says.

CLIENT BEHAVIOUR

Respondents also highlighted the negative impact that client behaviour can have, with 61% citing the need for more support in this area as the most important factor in achieving good health and wellbeing. This was ahead of mental health support, which was acknowledged as the second most important factor.

The organisation has committed to a partnership with the veterinary flexible working group Flexee to better support practices with operational demands, along with the implementation of a new practice model to optimise the client experience and improve the overall work/life balance within practices.

Vets4Pets is also developing an enhanced leadership development programme and partnering with VetLed for additional training to support teams. It is also aligning its working values and behaviours with those of the British Veterinary Association's Good Veterinary Workplaces Code.

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Dog treat packs for gifting occasions

SNIFFE & LIKKIT has created two new gift packs aimed at spring occasions such as Easter and Mother's Day.

The Inn The Dog House (RRP £17.00) gift set features four of Sniffe & Likkit's products – Fragrant Fur Coat shampoo, Wippets wipes, Give a Dog a Cologne fragrance spray and a scented hanging sachet Scent Something Nice. The second gift item is the Paw Kit Treat Tin (RRP £10), a metal tin full snacks made from sweet potato and chicken liver.

Easter is the UK's second biggest present-giving occasion, and the holiday period and Mother's Day are expected to trigger thousands of family and friend visits, creating a big opportunity for gifting.

Sniffe & Likkit items are available from Pedigree Wholesale.

Peanut butter style joins chew range

ORAL HYGIENE supplement brand ProDen PlaqueOff has expanded the Dental Bones range with a new Peanut Butter & Banana flavour.

The new flavour is the seventh variety in the company's dental chew range and is designed for small and toy breed dogs under 10kg. The chews can be added to an oral hygiene routine to help bad breath, plaque and tartar.



CAT GROUPS JOIN FORCES FOR SPAY DAY

CAT charities fear that an increase in demand for pets and a lack of neutering services being available during the pandemic, could result in a "cat breeding explosion" and add to the population of unowned cats living on the streets, or in rescue centres, across the UK.

The warning came as welfare organisations came together on World Spay Day (February 22) to urge owners to get their cats spayed.

The Cat-Kind Group, made up of a number of cat welfare charities, joined forces to highlight the importance of neutering, which dropped significantly during the pandemic.

There are an estimated 10 million cats in the UK, with an average

Dismissed pet store worker awarded £20K

LEIGH BEST, who was dismissed from her job at pet store Embark on Raw in Billericay, Essex, in May last year, has been awarded more than £20,000 by an employment tribunal.

The tribunal had earlier ruled that Leigh was harassed due to her age and sex and unfairly dismissed after raising concerns over inadequate Covid safety measures.

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-work-

ers were not wearing face coverings or following social distancing guidelines.

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."

Employment judge Bernice Elgot added: "Part of the reason for the company's decision to dismiss Mrs Best is that she made a significant allegation of sexism and ageism."

Leigh, who now runs her own raw dog and cat food business, RawKings Premium, was awarded £20,057.74.

Burns backs rescue centres

BURNS PET Nutrition has launched a new support scheme for rescue centres, rescue pets and their new owners.

Under the Burns Pet Rescue initiative, shelters will offer a bundle of Burns products to new pet owners, including 2kg of food, a measuring cup and access to advice and training sessions from the Burns team. Owners will also receive a money-off voucher

for use on the Burns website, while the company will send a food donation to the centre where each owner adopted their pet.

A broadening of the scheme in the summer will see pet owners being given vouchers to spend at independent retailers.

John Burns, founder of Burns Pet Nutrition, said: "We've always believed that our pets need good nutrition, but we also know that every pet deserves a kind owner, a loving home and plenty of head scratches along the way. That's why we started our woofing great Burns Pet Rescue initiative, to help more pets find support in their new forever homes".

DOG OWNERSHIP

The initiative has launched in the wake of a growing surge in abandoned puppies, following the huge increase in dog ownership over the past two years.

Burns Pet Nutrition supports over 30 rescue centres, donating a portion of profits and resources to charitable initiatives every year including its own in-house charity, the John Burns Foundation.

CALL FOR CLEAR MESSAGES ON COVID

INDEPENDENT retailers are calling for more clarity from the government on the behaviour expected from shoppers following the lifting of Covid-related restrictions in England.

People with Covid will no longer be legally required to self-isolate or notify their employers as part of the "Living with Covid" policy. Routine contact tracing will end, but guidance will remain in place for those who test positive to stay at home and avoid contact with others for at least five full days. People in contact with someone with Covid will no longer be advised to self-isolate or take daily tests.

From April 1, employers will no longer have to explicitly consider Covid in their health and safety risk assessments. At the same time, Covid tests will no longer be free for most people.



Andrew Goodacre

In response to the changes, British Independent Retailers Association (Bira) chief executive Andrew Goodacre said: "In general, we welcome the further reduction in restrictions and we hope the science supports such moves. With consumer confidence being so fragile due to the financial squeeze, to gain the maximum positive impact from 'Living with Covid' we must have clear messages on the behaviours expected and clarity on things like face coverings.

REASSURANCE

We also need clear messages on the isolation rules, especially for retail workers, and are concerned that free testing will no longer be available from April 1. Employers have a duty of care and need to know if they are required to provide testing facilities to employees – if yes, then the kits should be free to employers."

He continued: "I doubt that shops will remove the perspex screens just yet, they may be needed in the future, and we need reassurance that we can look forward with positivity, whilst accepting that Covid has not gone away.

The removal of restrictions currently only applies to England. Face coverings remain compulsory in shops in Scotland, although this legal requirement is expected to be lifted on March 21. In Wales, a gradual easing of Covid restrictions is underway but face coverings remain compulsory in shops. People with symptoms are still required to self-isolate and get a test.

In Northern Ireland, legal measures have been replaced by guidance, such as recommending face masks are still worn in certain public settings.



The Cat-Kind group has created a toolkit to communicate with the public about neutering

neutering level of 91% in recent years, but this figure dropped to 86% during the pandemic in 2020.

Members of Cat-Kind include RSPCA, iCat Care, Cats Protection, PDSA, Battersea, Blue Cross, the Scottish SPCA, Wood Green, Mayhew, Celia Hammond and Pets at Home.

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Pet retail chain plans 400 new stores

EUROPE'S leading pet store chain, Fressnapf, plans to open 400 new stores in the next three years, the company has reported.

The German-based group, which operates across 11 countries across Europe including France, Poland, Austria, Denmark, Italy and the Republic of Ireland, achieved annual sales of €3.17 billion in 2021, representing growth of 19.8%.

During the year 120 new stores were opened, and businesses were acquired in Denmark and Ireland. Sales totalling €245 million were generated online, an increase of 54% on the previous year.

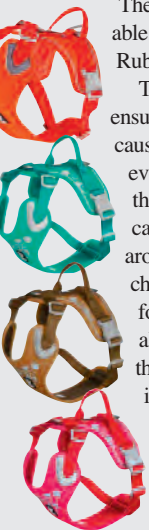
The group aims to expand its online services in the next year with further developments to initiatives such as a video chat veterinarian, GPS trackers, animal insurance and a digital platform for animal advice and adoption.

Hurtta adds rainbow of colours to harness range

FOUR NEW colours and designs have been added to the range of Hurtta Weekend Warrior Harnesses.

The product is now available in Desert, Peacock, Ruby, and Eco Rosehip.

The harness design ensures the pressure caused by pulling is evenly distributed across the dog's chest, and it can be fully adjusted around the neck and chest to create a comfortable fit. The harness also has clip buckles on the chest strap to make it easier to attach, and the surface material is made of polyester with a weatherproof Houndtex lamination.



Shop owner facing jail term

A YORKSHIRE pet shop owner has been given a 20-week prison sentence after admitting causing unnecessary suffering to animals.

Andrew Garth, ex-owner of Allpets and The Bradford Birdman, subjected animals to "squalid conditions" and "prolonged ill-treatment", Bradford and Keighley magistrates said. During the hearing, magistrates were told how, during an inspectors' visit in January 2020, guinea pigs, rabbits and mice were found living in poor conditions, with many having died because of a lack of food and water.

Bradford Council's Environmental Health Team had been alerted after receiving reports of animal welfare issues at the shop.

When environmental health inspectors visited his shop in Bradford they found

a number of issues including food not being provided to several animals; dead animals found in bins and the freezer storage area; guinea pigs being

mixed in enclosures with rabbits with no attempt at separating male and female animals; and no records being kept for feeding or health checks.

Magistrates said the case was exacerbated by the fact that Garth was providing college students with experience working with animals.

Handing down their sentence, magistrates said they took into account his previous good character and his guilty plea. They imposed a 20-week prison sentence and ordered him to pay a £128 fine when he is released.

APPEAL

He was also given a life-long ban from keeping animals, with a minimum of five years before he can appeal.

His defence told the court they would be appealing the sentence, and Garth's detention will be delayed pending this process. He claimed he was suffering with ill-health during the period in question.

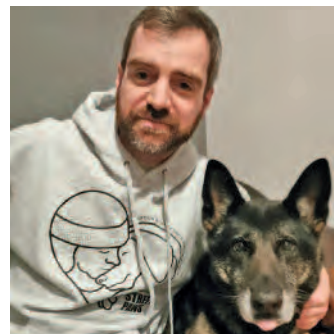
STREET PAWS CHARITY ASKS FOR 274,000 STEPS

THE STREET PAWS charity is launching a walking challenge next month to help fund its work supporting rough sleepers across the north of England helping them to take care of their pets.

The charity is inviting supporters to walk, jog or dance 274,000 steps during the month of April to raise funds for its work. Recent figures estimate that more than 274,000 people in England are homeless.

Street Paws has recruited celebrity support for the challenge in the form of Antilly, the German Shepherd who plays Brandy in the Ricky Gervais Netflix TV programme *After Life*, and her owner Ashley.

It costs £25 to register for the challenge, and all participants receive a t-shirt to wear while they are out



Antilly who plays Brandy in the Ricky Gervais Netflix TV programme *After Life* with her owner, Ashley. Picture credit: Street Paws

taking part. They also get access to the challenge Facebook group, and throughout the month there will be a range of prizes on offer for creative posts and activities.

PIF creates new insurance partnership

THE PET INDUSTRY Federation (PIF) has signed a new insurance partnership with animal business insurance specialists Cliverton, which will also lead to an expansion of a benevolent fund to help those in need in the industry.

For members in the grooming, boarding, daycare and pet services sectors, Cliverton will offer members bespoke business insurance, as well as home insurance, for those running a business from home. For larger members with more complex insurance needs, Cliverton's sister company Lycetts Insurance Brokers & Financial Services will provide a full service.

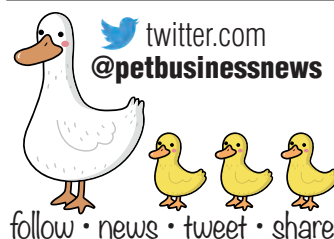
For each member who takes out an insurance policy, Cliverton and Lycetts will contribute to PIF's Benevolent Fund, which is currently being established to help support the pet industry during hard times.

PIF chief executive Nigel Baker said: "We were impressed by Cliverton and Lycetts approach from the outset. They are not your typical insurance people, they talk plain English, really care and are genuinely looking to create a strong and mutually collaborative partnership with PIF."

"We were really excited by the opportunity to set up the Benevolent Fund and be able to support those of our members who fall on hard times."



Nigel Baker



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Paleo Ridge expands into treats

RAW DOG FOOD business Paleo Ridge has entered the treats sector with two new products.

The new lines - Fish Skin Cubes and Sprats – are initially available trade partners only ahead of a general release later this month.

The new treats contain no grain or additives and have been naturally air-dried to preserve nutritional value. Fish skin contains omega-3 to boost heart function as well as eye and brain development, while sprats are similarly good for dogs' hearts, joint health and improving the glossiness of their coats, the company maintains.

Products are supplied in 100g, fully recyclable pouches.

Krill product achieves sustainability status

QRILL PET, a functional marine ingredient for pet food from Aker BioMarine, has received accreditation from the Pet Sustainability Coalition (PSC) for its "outstanding sustainability efforts".

The PSC, in conjunction with verification partner Planet+Purpose Solutions, awarded the accreditation for the Qrill Pet's commitment to sustainable krill harvesting practices and its dedication to the pet industry.

The accreditation means that a company has measured, third party verified, and committed to continuously improving the impact of its business operations by aligning the assessment and improvement of its impact with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Qrill Pet became a member of the PSC in 2020.

Spottydog becomes PFMA associate

THE PET FOOD Manufacturers' Association (PFMA) has welcomed Spottydog Communications as its latest associate member.

The company provides services across PR, social media and digital and has a wealth of experience in the pet sector, working with pet food brands such as Arden Grange, HiLife, Autarky, and Fish4Dogs.

PFMA's other Associate Members include Anthesis, Pollen Consulting Group and Pets At Home.

Trusty Pet takes top spot on the menu

DERBY INDEPENDENT pet superstore Trusty Pet Supplies has been named as Natures Menu 'Retailer of the Month' for February.

The award was in recognition of the store's customer service and growth throughout the pandemic, according to the manufacturer.

Trusty Pet Supplies retained its customer base during the pandemic through a loyalty card scheme and by ensuring the warehouse store remained open as much as possible. Blessed with a large floor space, the retailer was able to implement strict safe-shopping distancing guidelines without hindering footfall.

Trusty Pet Supplies has been trading since 1999, with its first store opening in Mickleover in 2006. The company currently operates out of three large warehouses, with one warehouse being converted in 2021 into the Trusty Superstore, with 7,500 sq ft of floor space and more than 35 freezers for raw food.



Trusty Pet Supplies currently operates out of three large warehouses, with one warehouse being converted in 2021 into the Trusty Superstore

Hannah Edmondson, owner and director of Trusty Pet Supplies, said: "We are a three-generation family run business, and our customer service is well recognised in our shops and online.

"It is incredibly humbling to be awarded Retailer of the Month by such a well-renowned company like Natures Menu. We stock their full range in our store and online, and we frequently sell their products in great quantities, so we have built a really great relationship with the trade team."

Through the awards scheme, Natures Menu aims to celebrate the work of retailers across the pet industry that have adapted to implement outstanding safety measures since the start of the pandemic.



CONCERN OVER SOCIALISATION OF PANDEMIC PUPS

A GENERATION of young dogs could suffer from behavioural issues due to lack of social contact during the pandemic, according to a new study by the Royal Veterinary College (RVC).

The Pandemic Puppies study, funded by the BVA Animal Welfare Foundation, compiled data from more than 5,500 UK owners via an online survey. It explored the early socialisation, health and behaviour of 'pandemic puppies' purchased in 2020 compared to before the lockdown in 2019.

Many of the health and socialisation experiences examined by the study didn't vary significantly between puppies purchased in 2019 and 2020. However, because of lockdown restrictions, 2020 puppies were less likely than 2019 puppies to have attended puppy training classes or to have experienced visitors to their homes.

SOCIALISATION

The RVC's researchers believe these differences between 2019 and 2020 puppies could potentially lead to the development of future behavioural problems in some animals. For example, pandemic puppies may experience stranger-related fear and other behavioural problems related to insufficient socialisation.

Dr Claire Brand, Researcher in Canine Welfare at RVC said: "For many of us, life over the past two years changed in countless ways due to the pandemic. Despite many owners' concerted efforts to raise their puppies as well as possible, some puppies missed out on key experiences of puppyhood, such as going to puppy classes, or experiencing visitors in their homes.

CROSSBREEDS

"This has potential consequences for the future behaviour of 'pandemic puppies' and so we encourage owners to seek out training and behaviour advice from accredited professionals so that these dogs can learn to live happily in our post-lockdown world."

The report also shows that puppies purchased during the pandemic in 2020 were more likely to have been designer crossbreeds such as Cockapoos or Cavapoos instead of Kennel Club-registered purebred dogs.

The 2020 generation were also more likely to already hold a pet passport at purchase, indicating they may have been imported from Europe – perhaps in some cases illegally – to meet the greatly increased demand and prices for puppies during the pandemic.

Celebrity designer backs Innocent Hound

DOG FOOD brand The Innocent Hound has teamed up with leading floral designer and broadcaster Jonathan Moseley for a new campaign.

The #MyInnocentHound campaign is intended to celebrate the special bond between dogs and their owners and explore why "Life is Better with a Dog". The campaign will introduce Moseley's pet Allegra as well as dogs from the team at The Innocent Hound.

The programme focuses on a range of enrichment activities that are designed to stimulate and entertain, making dogs happier, healthier and more confident.

As part of the campaign, all dog lovers are being encouraged to share a photo of the dog that makes their life better at #MyInnocentHound.

The Innocent Hound is the main brand from The Innocent Pet, a Yorkshire-based business producing air-dried complete food and treats for dogs.

Jonathan Moseley is one of the UK's leading designers within the floral art world.



Jonathan Moseley and Allegra

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Jollyes to open in Wrexham

NATIONAL PET retailer Jollyes is opening a new store in Wrexham, North Wales, in April.

The company has taken over a lease at Border Retail Park from Bensons for Beds, which closed its branch at the end of February. Jollyes is currently recruiting in the area for 10 staff positions and has offered job interviews to any interested Bensons colleagues.

As well as selling a wide range of pet food and accessories, the new Wrexham store will feature the latest version of "The Spa", Jollyes' dedicated dog grooming salon.

It will be the company's second store in North Wales, complementing its outlet at the Flintshire Retail Park, Flint.

Backed by Kester Capital, Jollyes operates more than 70 stores across the UK. The company announced in January it had a pipeline of 20 new store openings over the next 19 months.

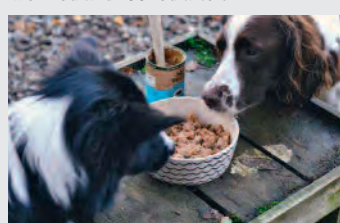
Beco donates meals to homeless dog owners

SUSTAINABLE pet care company Beco is on course to donate more than 4,000 meals to dogs belonging to the UK's homeless community.

Under the Get One, Gift One initiative, the company is donating a wet food meal for every online order placed throughout February and March.

Beco is working in partnership with charity Dogs On The Street (DOTS), who will distribute products to those most in need. In addition to donating meals, volunteers from Beco will also be supporting DOTS on upcoming drop-in clinics in London over the next months.

George Bramble, founder of Beco, said: "I am so proud to be launching Beco's Get One, Gift One initiative to help provide nutritious meals to support those faithful friends that provide many of the homeless community with invaluable loyalty, and ensure these valuable dogs kept well fed and looked after."



PIF asks members for help on licensing review

THE PET Industry Federation (PIF) is setting up working parties to contribute to the review of the Animal Activities Licensing Regulations, scheduled to take place in 2023.

The working parties will cover each separately licensed activity within PIF's membership and will discuss the suggestions from members about what changes should be made to the regulations, including the star-rating system, premises standards and the guidance documentation.

Outcomes from these working parties will then be used to inform the PIF's contribution to the Canine & Feline Sector Group, which is co-ordinating the review on behalf of government department DEFRA.

UNLICENSED AREAS

There will also be an opportunity to put forward views on currently unlicensed areas of the pet industry, such as dog walking and pet grooming about whether these sectors should be incorporated into the regulatory framework. Opportunities to participate in the licensing working parties will only be available to active members of the Federation.

PIF chief executive Nigel Baker said: "The post-implementation

review will be a wholesale review of the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 and will be the first real opportunity for our members to influence the shape of the legislation which has such an



Working parties will cover each separately licensed activity

impact on their businesses.

"We would strongly encourage each of our members to respond to the survey when they receive it, and for those who would like to be involved on the working parties to express their interest."



TRAINING TOOL IS BACKED WITH NEW CAMPAIGN

COMPANY OF Animals has relaunched its Pet Corrector brand with a new campaign featuring an avatar of the firm's founder, Dr Roger Mugford.

Pet Corrector emits a hiss of air to get the pet's attention, enabling dog owners to positively reinforce an alternative behaviour that is more desirable.

The device is being promoted through the W.A.G. campaign – 'Witness bad behaviour, Act immediately, Give a reward' – emphasising the need for immediate action and positive reinforcement as a means to address

undesirable behaviour.

Over six million Pet Corrector units have been sold worldwide, and the product has been updated with recycled packaging and enhanced actuator cap. As a result, the Pet Corrector no longer requires an extra safety cover, making it quicker and more convenient to use than earlier versions.

Company of Animals was founded in 1979 by Dr Roger Mugford and supplies a range of muzzles and training accessories as well as the grooming brand Pet Head.

Vets warn of staffing crisis

THE BRITISH Veterinary Association (BVA) is warning of a severe shortage of veterinary surgeons and nursing staff in the UK due to the impact of Brexit and the Covid pandemic, as well as the surge in pet ownership.

Figures released by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) reveal that the number of new EU registrants coming to work in the UK has fallen by 68% in two years, from 1,132 in 2019 to 364 in 2021. BVA, which is the UK's largest membership body for vets, is warning that this drop could result in wide-ranging direct and knock-on impacts across the sector.

DEMAND

The UK's veterinary workforce has been highly reliant on EU registrants in recent years, with RCVS data from 2021 indicating that 29% of the total existing workforce graduated in the EU. In 2019, RCVS data suggested that nearly half of new registrants (48%) graduated in the EU, compared to 42% graduating in the UK.

At the same time as the number of new registrants is falling, demand for veterinary certification of animal products for export to the EU has rocketed as a result of new post-Brexit requirements, with applications for food-related export health certificates increasing by 1,255% from 2020 to the end of 2021 (APHA data).

BVA is now warning that a range of long-term solutions is needed to tackle recruitment and retention challenges in the profession.

Global food brand reports strong sales growth

PURINA PETCARE achieved double-digit growth in its global sales last year, according to 2021 full-year results from parent company Nestlé.

Globally within pet care, sales grew by 12.7%, with 9.4% due to underlying growth and 3.4% due to price inflation. Worldwide sales of the company's pet food brands reached 15.6bn Swiss Francs (£12.8bn).

In the company's EMENA zone, comprising Europe, Middle East and North Africa, double-digit growth was led by premium brands Gourmet, Felix and Purina Pro Plan. Growth was strong across all channels, particularly in e-commerce and pet specialist stores. Sales across new platforms Tails.com, Lily's Kitchen and Terra Canis combined increased by nearly 40%.

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WHEN pbwnews visited Paws on Track in Haywards Heath, West Sussex, just three weeks after opening, the store was already proving popular with local shoppers and, judging by the succession of happy and healthy dogs pulling their owners around the store, popular with their pets, too.

Jacqui Wingfield's smart and well-organised store offers a neatly-displayed range of natural products, two freezers for raw food and a display of loose treats, as well as a selection of leads, harnesses and toys. The walls are decorated with framed photographs of pets – all owned by family and friends, including Jacqui's own two dogs.

"We have had a brilliant response from the shoppers, all very positive," says Jacqui. "It's been even better than expected, it's blown me away."

"The feedback we are getting from customers is that they are loving what we are trying to do."

What Jacqui is trying to do is to run a pet store selling purely all-natural foods. Only brands with no artificial ingredients are stocked, the vast majority also grain-free (the exception being insect protein lines which include rolled oats).

"We might have a smaller range than some stores, but it is good quality and 100% natural," she says.

Jacqui is from the Sussex area originally, but until recently was running a dog training business in four sites across Middlesex and Surrey.

"I wanted to move back home, I found this unit and thought it was perfect."

LOCAL DEMAND

Jacqui has been retailing on a small scale since April 2019 by selling natural treats at market stalls and dog events. For the past six months she ran a stall at the market in Haywards Heath, which like the new store operates inside the Orchards shopping centre, and saw it as a useful way to gauge local demand for the products she wanted to sell.

"It all grew organically from the training business," she explains. "I was seeing a lack of response from dogs given poor quality treats, as well as leads, collars and harnesses not fitting properly."

"There are shops out there that will sell you something without giving any advice. I wanted to see if I could do it differently, and to give that advice and to make sure that collars fit properly and so on, all at the right price."

"Nutrition is everything – it affects how dogs behave, and how they perform. So I took some courses on the subject and started looking into what products were available. I am always learning. I do this for the love of dogs, that's the driving ethos."

Despite the whole unit only measuring only 747sq ft, there is a large open floor area for dogs to explore and feel welcome.

"I didn't want this to be a traditional pet shop," she continues. "I wanted open space, so it was as welcoming as possible. It's all geared towards the animals."

Following a successful career as a dog trainer, Jacqui Wingfield switched to retailing and opened Paws on Track, a shop focusing on all-natural dog food and treats, last month. And local pet owners have already taken the store's philosophy and service to their hearts

Nicely on track

A range of foods and training treats are sold under the Paws on Track label.

"All products fulfil the criteria we have set – natural ingredients, real meat, no filler. We keep the packaging simple and cost-effective, so we can give customers a cheaper product that is just as good. We are trying to allow people to give dogs the best, even on a smaller budget."

Packaging for the own-brand lines is recyclable and loose treats are sold in paper bags. Plastic bags are biodegradable, and electricity in the store comes from a supplier committed to sustainable and renewable energy.

The store's attractive display of open treats is the best seller. As well as being a point of difference, they work well in the location.



Jacqui Wingfield is applying to retailing what she learned as a dog trainer

The store is located in a shopping centre with high footfall



Customers can donate to a local rescue centre



Two freezers offer raw food



"We are in a shopping area so people might buy a treat for themselves as part of a shopping trip, and for the dog too," explains Jacqui. "People can buy just one at a time too, which they like."

Weekends are particularly good for business: Saturdays are busy all day and Sunday is the second busiest day, despite the store only being open for four hours.

"We get footfall because of location, and we get a lot of repeat business too," says Jacqui. "There are people I used to serve in the market that are now regular customers in the shop."

"I try to be different, and to give a really personal service," she continues. "I actively encourage people to bring dogs into the shop, and I greet the dogs and learn their names."

"I am here to be friendly – even if people just want advice and don't purchase anything that's fine, I'm happy to help."

Another key aspect of the ethos of the business is to be a positive part of the community. Shoppers can donate in store to a food bank for the Kit Wilson Trust,

local rescue organisation, and Jacqui has also taken on a work placement student from a local college.

The shop also includes a 'Community Corner' in store – a fixture dedicated to products made by local people. Jacqui has also set up a website for the shop, with a limited range of products available for online sale and home delivery.

Overall, things are going very well, she says.

"Sales ahead of where we needed to be, in fact they are ahead of where we thought we would be after a few months, let alone weeks."

INCREASE AND ADAPT

Since opening, Jacqui has added some cat products and small animal food too.

"As I learn more, I will increase and adapt the range," she says.

A key step-change is scheduled for the beginning of April, when a grooming parlour will be added to the back of the store. Experienced groomer Emma Burrows, who worked with Jacqui at the training company, will provide the service, which is certain to bring in additional footfall to the retail side of the business.

The grooming service already has some bookings, so it is easy to assume that Jacqui's new venture is firmly on track to continue to go from strength to strength. ■



Only brands with no artificial ingredients are stocked



The store's attractive display of open treats is the best seller

Community Corner: an area dedicated to products made by local people



Since opening, Jaqui has added small animal food



High street sales recover in January

SALES ON the UK high street rebounded by 1.9% in January as shoppers returned after the disruption of the Omnicron variant.

New figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that department stores, garden centres and other non-food shops outshone food stores, and grew sales in January by 3.4%. This follows a 4% fall in December following new pandemic restrictions.

Responding to the figures, British Independent Retailers Association (Bira) chief executive Andrew Goodacre said: "We are pleased to see a rise in retail sales in January, and it is also reassuring to see on-line sales decline – down to 25% of retail sales. This is further evidence that people are reminding themselves of the benefits of shopping on high streets.

"However, it is important that we avoid the trap of thinking that all is well on the High Street. The squeeze on the cost of living and the increasing costs of running a business are a real threat to any recovery.

"Consumer confidence is fragile and more needs to be done to address the financial pressures faced by the public and businesses alike. The Chancellor's Spring statement is an opportunity to reverse the proposed increase on business rates for small businesses this year."

Scruffs launches luxury feeding bowls

PET LIFESTYLE brand Scruffs has unveiled a new range of pet feeding and drinking solutions available to order this Spring.

The pet bowls have been designed to suit a variety of sizes and breeds of dog, cat and small animals while being comfortable and easy to handle for owners, the company says. Contemporary fashion and how the bowls' shape, colour, and finish will fit into interior décor schemes has also been addressed.

The new range includes straight-sided food bowls from 8cm to 25cm in diameter, water bowls, long eared dog bowls, flat-faced pet bowls and hand-dipped Scandi bowls with a Nordic design.

The new range is completed by a cat saucer and 'My First Bowl', a 13cm food bowl suitable for kittens, puppies, rabbits and Guinea pigs.



Pet superstore wins national retail award



Deborah Burrows, Healthy Pet Store's managing director with the award

A SOUTHAMPTON pet food and accessories superstore has won a national accolade at the Modern Retail Awards.

Healthy Pet Store was presented with the Bricks 'N' Clicks award in recognition of its seamless and innovative customer service through a number of fun, educational and engaging initiatives both in store and online.

Modern Retail judge Holly Worthington said: "Healthy Pet Store is a perfect example of a retailer that has made ambitious goals and achieved exactly what it set out to do. It is able to provide an incredible experience for customers while informing and engaging through fun initiatives."

DEDICATION

Healthy Pet Store managing director Deborah Burrows added: "I was absolutely delighted that Healthy Pet Store won a national award which recognises our hard work and dedication to excellent customer service. Our customers and the wellbeing of their pets are at the heart of everything we do.

"We are excited to see where we will take Healthy Pet Store within the next year. Thank you to our teams and suppliers for their hard work in making Healthy Pet Store such a success."

Healthy Pet Store delivers to customers in Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight as well as opening for shoppers from 9am until 8pm six days per week.

TAILS.COM MOVES INTO STORES WITH SAINSBURY'S

DOG FOOD subscription service Tails.com has launched its first retail range, in partnership with Sainsbury's.

The Tails.com Nourish & Protect range has been launched into 108

Sainsbury's supermarkets as part of the multiple grocer's 'Future Brands' programme.

The new retail range comprises 22 wet and dry food lines including 400g single cans, 6 x 400g multipack cans, 150g alutrays and 2kg bags of kibble.

HEALTH NEEDS

Each recipe has been crafted to support specific health needs and the range is paired with a digital service allowing customers to access a personalised portion guide and measuring scoop for their dog via a QR code on the bag or directly at tails.com.

James Davidson, chief executive and co-founder of tails.com said: "Owners are increasingly aware of the



The Nourish & Protect range will be launched into 108 Sainsbury's supermarkets

role that nutrition plays in keeping their dogs happy and healthy for longer and we're thrilled to be working with Sainsbury's and the Future Brands team to make innovative new products available.

"I'm personally very proud to see the expertise and insight we've gained on dog health and nutrition from our subscription service brought to bear to create the Nourish & Protect range for people to access in-store."

Sainsbury's buyer Nicole Tipping added: "At Sainsbury's we are passionate about helping our customers eat better, and the same goes for their pets. We're excited to partner with tails.com who, from their inception, have pioneered new ways of feeding dogs."



Fish flake toppers added to food range

FISH4PETS has expanded the Fish4Dogs brand with an addition to its Finest wet food range.

Fish4Dogs Finest Fish Flakes are aimed at dog owners who like the convenience of a complete dry food but worry that their dog's diet lacks interest and moisture. Instead of adding table scraps that can often contain unexpected calories or ingredients not suitable for a dog's diet, by reducing the amount of kibble and adding a topper of the flakes, dog owners can be assured their dog is maintaining a healthy lifestyle with no hidden extras, whilst benefiting from added omega-3 in their diet, the company maintains.

There are three flavours in the range - Mackerel Flakes with Squid, Tuna Flakes with Anchovy or White Fish and Salmon – served in a broth.

Finest Fish Flakes are formulated without any chicken, beef, pork, or lamb, and are suitable for dogs with intolerances to certain proteins. The products are made from grain-free recipes with natural ingredients and contain no added artificial colours or flavours.

The range is supplied in shelf-ready boxes of 6 x 100g pouches.

Retailers in line for equine awards

SIX RETAILERS have made it to the list of finalists for The British Equestrian Trade Association's (BETA) Retailer of the Year award, sponsored by wholesaler Zebra Products.

The finalists are: Millwheel Tack Shop, Warfield, Berkshire; Griggs Equestrian, St. Austell, Cornwall; Riseholme Feeds, Wysall, Nottinghamshire; North Wales Tack Shop, Llandudno Junction, Conwy; Redpost Equestrian, Totnes, Devon; Manor Equestrian, Annesley, Nottinghamshire.

The Zebra Products Retailer of the Year award is open to BETA and non-BETA members nominated by customers or by themselves. The award has been split with one award going to those with physical retail stores and another to online/mail order retailers.

The winners will be announced at the BETA Business Awards, which will be held after the association's annual conference on March 24.



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Midlands vet practice improves facilities



CHARTER Vets in Biddulph, Staffordshire, has undergone a major renovation to improve facilities for pets and their owners.

The practice now features a refurbished reception and waiting area, a larger operating theatre and consulting room, and a more spacious cattery. Air conditioning has also been installed throughout the building to improve the air quality.

Charter Vets is part of VetPartners, which funded the £350,000 redevelopment project.

Head vet Marcus Johnstone said: "We are delighted with the practice's new look and have had lots of positive feedback from clients.

"We have also changed the layout of the building, to make better use of the space and create a nicer working environment for our hardworking veterinary team. It has transformed what we are able to do at Charter Vets."

Dogs in demand for dating profiles

MORE THAN half of single pet owners admit to including their dogs in their profile on dating apps, according to a new survey from Rover.com.

The online pet care platform surveyed over 1,000 pet owners earlier this month during the run-up to Valentine's Day. As many as 51% of singleton pet owners confessed to including a dog in their dating profile while 27% admitted they have featured a dog that wasn't even their own to boost their appeal. Golden retrievers and labradors were found to be the breeds most likely to positively

influence matches on apps.

More than a third (36%) of pet owners have gone on a "doggy date" where either person brought a dog the first time they met, with one in 10



The survey found that 51% admitted to including a dog in their dating profile

claiming the experience to be such a success that they are still dating that person.

Ask the expert...

ADVICE ON HOW TO COMMUNICATE TO YOUR CUSTOMERS EFFICIENTLY AND COST-EFFECTIVELY

PR IS RELEVANT TO PET SHOPS

We've seen in PBW recently cases where a pet shop has fallen victim to attacks on their reputation. While we do help businesses and vet practices manage issues around negative publicity, both on and offline, it's so much easier to do this when a business has built a strong positive reputation and has good relationships with local journalists.

Actively encouraging positive reviews, talking to local press about your good news stories and generally contributing to the community is the very best defence. We'd encourage retailers to think about doing all of those things and to not be too shy about talking about the good that they do.

One of the primary drivers for setting up the agency was around our belief that great copy is based on insights into the mindset of your audience. Without that, brands become bland and formulaic and are less likely to connect with those they most want to appeal to. These days, marketing based on 'insights' has become fashionable but it's something we have always believed is important.

Retailers can use their intrinsic knowledge of their 'typical' customer profiles (eg male/female, rural/urban, age group, income) to think about the messages they will be most receptive to and how they want to receive information (eg email, leaflet, social media), rather than just what the retailer wants to get across. It's really useful to change perspective in this way and 'see ourselves as others see us' (as the Scottish poet Robert Burns puts it!).

SIMPLE MARKETING TECHNIQUES

Email marketing is a good thing to consider as it's one of the most cost-effective marketing tools. Once a customer has purchased from you once, they might not visit again for some time. By collecting their email and asking for permission to contact them (there has to be a positive opt in, not an assumption based on not opting out) retailers have the opportunity to continue the conversation and build the relationship. An email client like Mailchimp is relatively easy to use and is free for up to 2000 contacts – so all it costs is your time!

We're also great fans of having a monthly or even weekly focus where an article on a website can also be linked to from an emailer and chopped up to use in

social media. It's time efficient and also means your customers potentially receive reminders of the same topic in different places.

Provide interesting and educational content as well as promotional offers so that people learn to value the contact as a useful update rather than just a sales mechanic. An emailer can also help build the retailer's expert credentials so they are front of mind when it comes to problem solution.

Anyone who uses social media for their business will appreciate how time consuming it can be to do well. Canva is a great tool that allows anyone to create social posts and apply their own logos and texts or even animate their posts. It also offers thousands of images and music for post creation. The platform is not restricted to social and includes templates for letters, leaflets and all sorts of marketing material. It's simple to use and no graphic design experience is required – although a good eye for design will help!

THE FUTURE OF MARKETING

The digital environment is changing so quickly. However, we believe that

expertise will be key to many pet brands. Search engine optimisation will be increasingly driven by longer, more authoritative but well written and illustrated articles on websites. This is good news for anyone who is an expert in their field.

People are active in more digital spaces than ever before, and it will be increasingly hard for brands to be everywhere, therefore high-quality content owned by the brand and collaborations with expert brand endorsers should be on the marketing agenda, as well as a presence on hubs on publishers' platforms. Local content will also be increasingly popping up on search engines and for this reason every shop should have a website, even if it is a very basic one without an online shopping experience.

On the design side, our team is already working on some of the latest 3D and animation programmes (including developing cartoon animations of physical products). The use of video (including 360-degree product videos) on ecommerce sites will increase in pet, and in other sectors already generates incremental sales. ■



SUSAN MCKAY is a vet and the founder and managing director of Companion Consultancy, a public relations and marketing agency that services the needs of businesses in the vet and pet space. As well as dedicated design, digital marketing and copywriting teams, the agency employs five veterinary surgeons. This May, the company will celebrate its 20th birthday

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Survey explores pandemic puppy boom

THE ROYAL Veterinary College (RVC) is again calling on dog owners to take part in a national online survey to understand the motivations of purchasers of puppies during 2021.

The results will be compared to similar surveys in 2019 and 2020 to determine whether the changes in puppy buying in the UK seen during the pandemic are still present, or whether behaviour has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Results from the 2020 survey, which involved more than 7,500 respondents, showed that owners were more likely to buy a younger puppy, pay a deposit without seeing their puppy, be first-time dog owners with children in their household, and pay more than £2,000. Other factors included owners being more likely to see their puppy without their littermates and collecting their puppy from outside their breeders' property or having it delivered.

Vets are concerned that the 'Pandemic Puppy' boom is persisting, adding pressure to veterinary services in the UK. The findings of the new study will be used to help support owners regarding their dogs' future welfare as well as informing the approach that key players within the veterinary and animal welfare sectors should take when sharing educational messaging with prospective owners to better promote canine welfare.



The RVC is interested in whether pandemic-related changes in puppy buying persisted into 2021



First to the table was Maisie, a beagle from Liverpool owned by Alix Johnson who shared her first date with Odie, a Jack Russell owned by Jollyes' store manager of the year Lynsey Fearn

STORE BECOMES A DINER FOR VALENTINE'S

DOGS AND THEIR owners queued up outside Jollyes store in Runcorn, Cheshire on Valentine's Day for a blind date at "C'est Jollyes" – an in-store doggy diner specially created for the occasion.

Dogs enjoyed a three-course dinner featuring a menu from Jollyes Lifestage range including angus beef with sweet potato, venison and salmon, and duck with sweet potato, while being serenaded with Parisian love songs by a street accordionist.

Phil Turner-Naylor, Jollyes head of marketing, said: "While music may be the food of love, for a Jollyes dog, there's nothing quite like a bowl of Lifestage treats and good rendition of a Bach melody."

Owners taking their dog into Jollyes stores on February 14 received a free sample of the company's Lifestage range.

Assisi acquires Polish treat supplier

PET FOODS and treats supplier Assisi Pet Care has acquired Polish firm Maced Sp. Z.o.o., described as the leading manufacturer of natural dog treats with a focus on dried animal parts in Europe.

Assisi Pet Care, a manufacturer and supplier of natural cat and dog foods and treats, was established in September 2020 as a joint venture between founder Peter Mangion and Harwood Capital with the objective of creating a significant player in the European pet care market. In order to complete the purchase of Maced and to make further acquisitions, the company has been refinanced by Harwood Private Equity

and Crescent Capital Group LP.

The purchase of Maced represents Assisi's third acquisition following the October 2020 acquisition of Hollings and the March 2021 acquisition of Town and Country Petfoods, which operates primarily under the Hi-Life brand.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSIFICATION

Established in 1993, Maced serves retailers and distributors in more than 20 countries primarily across continental Europe and the UK and has been a supplier to Hollings for more than 20 years.

Christine Vanden Beukel, managing director and head of Crescent's European Specialty Lending strategy, said: "As a result of the transaction and with Crescent's financing support, Assisi Pet Care will be able to gain more control over its manufacturing process and further increase the company's geographical diversification and coverage across all major European pet food markets. We believe this will strongly position the company within the attractive, fast-growing natural treats and pet food segment with a premium brand presence."

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS GROWTH IN PET INSURANCE

THE UK PET insurance market grew by 6.4% in 2020 to reach a value of £1.3bn, according to a new report from Research And Markets.

The valuation is based on Gross Written Premiums (GWP) in the industry. The number of subscribers increased by 1% in 2020 compared to the previous year, the report adds.

Growth in the sector was driven by the cat insurance market, which experienced a 6.2% increase in the

number of subscribers during the year says the report, as well as a general expansion of the UK cat and dog populations. For the insurance industry, 2020 compared favourably to 2019, when the number of subscribers decreased and the cost of claims grew. The report suggests there is plenty of room for further growth as, in 2020, only 11% of dogs and 22% of cats in the UK were insured. Petplan remains the market leader with 27.3% of total GWP.

Pedigree stocks new cat toys

FOLLOWING the successful launch of the GiGwi dog toy range last year, Pedigree Wholesale is now stocking a range of cat toys under the same brand.

The cat range features 14 products across seven collections, including a variety of motion-activated sound chip toys, toys full of catnip, and toys made with feathers, retailing from £3.99 to £6.99. The wholesaler will be exhibiting the range on its stand at PATS Sandown later this month.

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10 questions with...

ADAM MOORE

category controller – pet, Bestpets



1 What do you see as the key trends in the pet food sector today?

As always, key trends are mirroring the same trends in the human food sector. More people are looking to eat healthier, natural, or plant-based foods, and those that do inevitably look to buy healthier foods for their pets.

The same trends can be seen in the toy and accessory categories – consumers are more socially conscious than ever before, meaning the care about where their products come from and the raw materials used to make them.

The sharp increase in pet ownership across the UK means that all categories will be important for the foreseeable future and that the sector will remain strong. However, the cost of living is on the rise so we may see shifts in spend due to inflationary pressures.

2 Which are the emerging product categories that are achieving sales growth ahead of the market?

In line with the key trends, the natural treats product category is seeing strong growth, as is the frozen food category.

The humanisation of pets was strong pre-Covid, and the mindset of seeing pets as members of the family has only increased since the pandemic. As such, we've seen a big increase for demand around occasions such as Easter and Christmas, not to mention the treats category.

3 What are the best opportunities for retailers to secure the necessary profit margins to keep their businesses healthy?

All products within Bestpets show the POR% that a retailer can expect based on the RRP. However, retailers should try and have a good balance between products that have a lower POR but sell quickly and those that have very juicy POR but see slower or fewer sales.

Retailers can use their specialist knowledge to educate customers about products and in that process, encourage customers to trade up to products that not only offer better health benefits for the pet but also deliver a higher margin for the retailer.

4 What advice can you give on the most effective way for retailers to introduce new products into their stores?

New products should always be part of a window display and highlighted in store. For those retailers who have a website, ensure that you have an area dedicated to new products. We also suggest that retailers make good use of social media – shout about your new products and highlight promotions or discounts.

For new food products, especially treats, offering free samples is a fantastic way to engage with and entice customers. Retailers can contact suppliers directly to see if there are sampling packs available for them to use. Suppliers also usually support new products with instore POS, so this should be utilised by retailers too.

With the new generation of pet owners growing, consumer behaviour is changing and there might also be the opportunity to try different experiences such as tasting events.

5 How has Bestpets met the challenges in product sourcing and distribution arising from the pandemic and Brexit?

Good communication and working closely with our supply partners has been key. The Bestpets team

continue to engage with suppliers to ensure the best possible product availability for our customers, while our depot teams have worked tirelessly to make sure deliveries were met as promised. We have focused on ensuring good stock availability, excellent customer service and ensured that our doors remained open for all customers.

6 What do you think are the most important things for retailers to focus on now that most of the pandemic restrictions have been lifted?

It's important that retailers keep up the great rapport they have built with customers during the pandemic. That's one of the big unique selling points for an independent retailer – the personal service. Retailers can use the personal relationships to ask about the health of a pet, remind owners about pet flea, tick & wormer treatments, recommend new products and celebrate special occasions.

To compete against the multiples and discounters, we would always recommend retailers pass on any promotional discounts to remain competitive within the marketplace. We know that some retailers do not like to stock big brand name products that are available in bigger stores, but we would say that these brand names do generate footfall. Once a customer is inside the shop, it's an ideal opportunity to talk to the customer and encourage a switch in brand or a potential additional purchase that would not be possible in a multiple.

For those retailers who can offer a delivery service, we suggest that they do so as there is now an expectation of home deliveries.

7 Aside from the product range, what other forms of support is Bestpets able to offer retailers?

For pet retailers looking to leverage the support of a recognised brand and to access 15 additional bespoke promotions, we have the Bestpets Local retailer club. As the only pet industry wholesaler retail club, Bestpets Local is designed to drive footfall, raise the profile of independent stores through keen promotions, and impactful point of sale. Joining Bestpets Local ensures retailers can stay competitive and maximise profits.

8 How important is it for retailers to embrace technology, and in what ways is it helping Bestpets to achieve successful growth?

Bestpets introduced our app in 2019 which has been well received by retailers. Customers can check prices, determine stock availability, see promotions and check out new products on offer. Delivered customers can also place orders via the app, and we have seen a year on year increase in orders placed. The app also allows us to send information about offers and new products from both Bestpets and our suppliers directly to customers mobile phones.

Technology will continue to be important and we highly recommend retailers embrace it. Have a presence online and make use of social media to gain followers and drive repeat followers.

9 What do you see as the most important recent innovations that are going to drive change in the pet food market in the future?

In line with the continued trend of pets being a part of the family, pet supplements is a category worth keeping an eye on. Owners want their pets to be fit and healthy, and we have already seen this impact the treats category. Environmentally-friendly food packaging will also make an impact on choices consumers make.

Outside of food, tech will be on the rise too. Products such as pet trackers, and automated food/water/treat dispensers that work with apps for remote feeding and interaction will become more popular. Likewise, environmentally-conscious consumers will drive change and we will likely see a rise in eco-friendly products such as bamboo feeding dishes and compostable dog waste bags.

10 Can you share any details of Bestpets' future plans and any exciting developments scheduled for 2022 and beyond?

There's a lot going on at Bestpets; we've just introduced an exciting range of 20 new own label toys for cats & dogs, and some PMP that offer great value for money for both retailers and consumers, with more to follow soon. We're expanding the Bestpets team in both head office and the sales team to allow us to keep working hard and delivering the very best for our customers. ■

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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

Whitelists on the horizon

Once again, we don't need to look too far to see how unfair legislation could easily harm the interests of reptile keepers and traders. New amendments to the Lacey Act being proposed in the USA aim to ban all newly imported species unless it can be proven that they represent no invasive risk. This is essentially a 'whitelist' that bans any species not on a pre-determined list, as opposed to a blacklist, which bans only those species which are proven to be invasive and harmful.

In the words of EUARK's chairperson, Chris Newman, "Don't dismiss this because it's the States – it's happening here in the UK rights now. Whitelists, or as they are more commonly known here in the UK and Europe, 'positive lists', are the single biggest threat to animal keepers and businesses we have ever faced."

The concept of a positive list has become the holy grail of the animal rights movement who essentially believe that humans and animals should be segregated. In the UK the Scottish government is currently considering implementing a positive list. Public consultations have already taken place and Defra has indicated that if the Scottish government decides to implement such a list, then England and almost certainly Wales would follow suit.

Mark Amey retires – sort of...

It was quite a surprise to hear that Mark Amey is semi-retiring, given that he and I started in the trade at around the same time. Mark and his specialist reptile store Ameyzoo have been a big name in the reptile world for decades and, if I remember correctly, Mark was one of the first store owners to hold a zoology degree.

While Mark is retiring from Ameyzoo he'll be continuing with his work supplying animals for TV and film projects. We wish you all the best Mark. And remember, you're supposed to be taking it easy!

What's happening with the RSPCA

National Centre for Reptile Welfare has often received referrals from the RSPCA, mainly taking in and rehoming unpopular species with no resale value, such as turtles and boa constrictors. In 2021 the NCRW took in well over 100 animals referred from the RSPCA.

Then, late last year, referrals from the RSPCA suddenly stopped. The situation was highlighted when the NCRW was contacted by the executor of a will belonging to a turtle owner. The executors had approached the RSPCA hoping to rehome the turtle in accordance with the wishes of the deceased. Instead of referring them to the NCRW as they had in the past, the RSPCA told the executors that the turtle could not be rehomed due to invasive species laws, and that their only option was to allow the RSPCA to euthanize the animal.

Thankfully the executors were determined to find another solution for Tirpitz, the yellow-bellied slider who was apparently named after a German warship. Upon finding a receipt for turtle food, they called the pet store who put them in touch with the NCRW. The turtle was subsequently rehomed and will live out the rest of its life at the NCRW.

I can't for the life of me understand why the RSPCA would decide to act like this. Has there been a change in policy since last year? If so, it flies in the face of a statement by the RSPCA's new chief executive Chris Sherwood, who said that "We recognise that we need to work in partnership with others." I'd say this is a great opportunity to do just that, because if they don't, many turtles will potentially be euthanized unnecessarily.

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Agria moves into Ireland and Holland

SWEDISH pet insurance company Agria has expanded into two new territories with the acquisition of Irish firm Capstone Financial Services.

Capstone offers insurance for dogs and cats, trading under the brands Petinsure in Ireland and Zoopo in the Netherlands.

Agria was founded in Sweden in 1890, and is now also active in Norway, Denmark, Finland, UK, France, Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands.

Agnes Fabricius, CEO at Agria

Djurförsäkring, explained that there are approximately 455,000 dogs and 325,000 cats in Ireland, but currently only around 10% of them are insured.

He said: "I see huge potential to increase the level of insured pets in Europe and I am pleased to accelerate our international growth strategy by adding Ireland and the Netherlands to our operations. We have an ambitious growth plan and Capstone is a profitable and well-functioning company that fits perfectly into our business portfolio."

BEDDING TO SUPPORT BATTERSEA

DANISH DESIGN Pet Products will be showcasing its range of pet bedding supporting Battersea at the PATS show at Sandown Park later this month.

The Battersea Pet Bedding Range has been developed under licence from the rescue organisation and a percentage of every sale goes to Battersea as a royalty payment. All product designs have been created from Battersea Artwork in collaboration with the Battersea team.

The range features three styles of bedding for both dogs and cats, with RRP's starting from £31.99.



Initially launched last Autumn, the partnership with Battersea will run for the next two years as a minimum.

PATS Sandown runs from March 27-28 at Sandown Park, Esher.

Jubilee celebrations at dog festival

DOG OWNERS' festival Dogstival will celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a 'Jubilee Tea Pawty' this summer.

Dogs and their owners will be able to enjoy a traditional British afternoon tea experience at the event, which takes place on June 4-5 at Broadlands Park, Romsey, Hampshire.

As well as the tea party, the festival will feature stand-up comedy, live music, street performers and a funfair, plus an array of food and drink for pets and their owners and more than 140 independent stalls selling toys, treats and equipment. The festival will also feature talks, demonstrations and crowd interaction on a variety of topics such as the growth of raw dog food.

Dogs can enjoy themselves at an adventure playground, a 10m splash pool and a range of 'scurries' to run around.

The event will also raise funds for StreetVet and Pets As Therapy.

PET OWNERS OPEN TO INSECT-BASED FOOD

NEARLY three quarters of dog owners and four out of five cat owners would consider feeding their pets food based on insect protein, according to a new survey from Tailster.

The survey of 1,200 owners in the company's Pet Panel in January this year asked about attitudes to innovation in pet feeding, particularly regarding insect protein and plant-based products. Among dog owners, 28% said they would definitely try an insect-based product with 49% saying they may try it. Among cat owners, half of respondents were aware of insect protein being used in cat food and 41% of owners said they would definitely consider trying it.

While there was a generally positive response to the idea of innovation in pet feeding, 43% of dog owners and 55% of cat owners expressed concern that new products would be more expensive to purchase.



Peregrine dives into aquatics sector

REPTILE supplies wholesaler Peregrine Livefoods has expanded into the aquatics sector with the acquisition of sustainable fish food brand FishScience.

The Essex-based business, which claims to be the UK's largest reptile wholesaler, has stocked FishScience products for a number of years and exercised the opportunity to buy the business when company founder Dr David Pool announced his retirement.

Dr Pool created FishScience in October 2013 when he saw a necessity to create a more sustainable fish food brand. The products use black soldier fly larvae (*Hermetia illucens*) instead of fish meal in order to deliver an eco-friendly alternative, while also being palatable for the fish. The range now includes more than 70 products.

He said: "The use of insect meal in the formulation of FishScience foods, along with its focus on natural and sustainable ingredients, has been central to the brand's success.

"When Peregrine Livefoods expressed an interest in purchasing FishScience, it felt like a natural fit. The business focuses on insects, and it recognises the many opportunities that this ingredient offers. Added to this, Peregrine Livefoods is a young and dynamic company that has the resources and expertise to take the



Dr Dave Pool, left, with Chris Jones following the acquisition

FishScience brand to the next level."

Chris Jones, managing director of Peregrine Livefoods added: "When David approached us, we jumped at the opportunity for two key reasons. Firstly, we have ambitions to expand our portfolio and market reach beyond reptiles and into the aquatic sector. Secondly, both FishScience and Peregrine Livefoods' foundations are built on the use of insects as part of our foods. This synergy allows for a myriad of opportunities in the future.

ALTERNATIVE PROTEIN SOURCE

"Although many reptiles don't have sensible alternatives of food other than live insects, the aquatic market does have a range of possibilities. Many foods in the market use fishmeal, often derived through ocean trawled fish, which is incredibly damaging to the environment. We're excited at the possibility to utilise insects as an

alternative protein source and reduce our impact on both the oceans and the planet. The nature of this business means we do not need to transport that protein source around the world, since we breed all our own insects on our farm here in Essex."

While retiring from full-time employment, Dr Pool will continue working on a consultancy basis with Peregrine Livefoods, which hopes to use his use his knowledge for the benefit of customers and end consumers, particularly as many reptile and amphibian owners now also keep fish in semi-aquatic enclosures.

EXPERIENCE

Jones added: "At Peregrine we have a large team of experts who have a collective wealth of experience when it comes to insects and reptiles, but we're very limited in specialist aquatic knowledge. David's experience will be invaluable to assist Peregrine in pushing the brand and developing new products that allow FishScience to become a market-leading fish food brand."

Peregrine Livefoods is an employee-owned trust, meaning all 192 employees at the Harlow-based company have a stake in the future success of the business.

In brief

Double threat to marine life

THE TWIN issues of global warming and plastic pollution could be having an even greater impact on marine populations than previously thought, according to new research.

Academics at the University of Sydney have found that fish exposed to the industrial chemical BPA and living in higher temperature waters grow more slowly and require more energy.

BPA is a common chemical used in plastics manufacturing, with millions of tonnes produced every year. It is released into the marine environment from manufacturing effluent and from the breakdown of plastic material and is already known to disrupt the metabolism and growth of marine animals.

The scientists exposed zebrafish to a level of BPA commonly found in waterways and found that the chemical decreased the amount of energy the fish needed to grow at 24 degrees Celcius, but hampered growth for those at 30C – the more likely temperature for their natural habitat following prolonged global warming.

The study's author, Frank Seebacher, professor of biology at the University of Sydney, said the findings highlighted the need for both climate change mitigation and plastic waste reduction.

French retailer exits bowls

LEADING French pet care retailer AgroBiothers Laboratoire has ended sales of fish bowls on welfare grounds.

The firm says it will no longer sell any aquariums with a capacity of less than 15 litres and will only sell rectangular ones in future, as putting fish in small bowls without filtration and oxygenation is a form of animal abuse.

AgroBiothers chief executive Matthieu Lambeaux told Reuters that goldfish are social animals who need the company of other fish, ample space and clean water.

He said: "People buy a goldfish for their kids on impulse, but if they knew what a torture it is, they would not do it. Turning round and round in a small bowl drives fish crazy and kills them quickly."

France is reportedly Europe's number one market for red aquarium fish, with about 2.3 million fish in people's homes. AgroBiothers, which has a French market share of about 27% in pet care products, previously sold around 50,000 fish bowls per year at about 20 euros a piece.

Germany and other European countries have banned the sale of fish bowls, but France currently has no legislation on the issue.

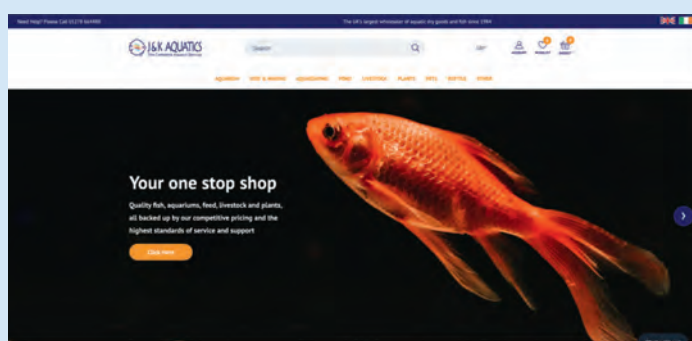
NEW E-COMMERCE WEBSITE FOR J&K AQUATICS

WHOLESALE J&K Aquatics will launch a new e-commerce website on March 31.

In addition to having a brighter, cleaner look, the new website will be easier to navigate, the company maintains. It will offer more functionality to trade customers including detailed account and order information; automated order confirmations and reminders; bulk CSV orders; quick order forms and a more powerful search function.

The site will also feature a new online learning centre featuring FAQs, useful resources, and a library of J&K Aquatics' newsletters, catalogues and fish lists. There will also be a dedicated website for J&K Aquatics' customers in the Republic of Ireland, simplifying import processes and providing a better ordering experience.

J&K Aquatics was founded in 1984 by Paul and Judy



The new J&K Aquatics e-commerce website will launch on March 31

James, initially as a part-time venture with a small retail shop. In 2013, the company moved to a 2.3-acre site with a purpose-built warehouse, fish house and office facilities in North Petherton, Somerset.

It now claims to be the UK's largest wholesaler of aquatic dry goods and fish, serving the whole of the UK and Ireland.

The new website can be found at: www.jnk-aquatics.co.uk.

WILD ANIMALS

Baby orangutan given gym routine

ROUX IS A critically endangered orangutan, who was born on Christmas Eve 2021, though, even at two months old, is still so small that infant-sized nappies hang off him.

Because of his size, staff at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, where Roux lives, have developed a 'baby boot camp' regime that he must complete numerous times a day.

Kelsey Forbes, the Zoo's assistant curator of primates, said that Roux's mum is the "wild child" of the orangutans, reports *ABC News*. "She is our biggest acrobat – a little bit crazy," Kelsey added, which is why Roux must build up enough strength to hang on to 12-year-old Menari, for 24 hours a day.

REGIME

Roux's regime includes pull-ups to strengthen his grip and arms, in his den he crawls around on various sizes of fire hose and other objects, and when the zoo is closed, he gets taken on walks around the zoo.

Roux is an incredibly important baby; he and his two half-sisters make up one-third of all orangutans born since the start of 2019, as part of the Orangutan Species Survival Program. However, Roux has taken to his new regime 'fantastically', said Kelsey.



DOGS



GOING TO SEE A DOG ABOUT A GHOST

A SIX-YEAR-OLD dog has been named the real-life Scooby Doo, as his owners have discovered that he has a real talent for hunting troublesome spirits.

The dog goes by the name Bond during the day, but Scooby at night, when he assists his owners, Helen and Brian Sterling-Vete, with their paranormal investigations.

Brian first began investigations into the paranormal in 2012, after he stayed at Lilford Hall in Northamptonshire, and experienced paranormal activity in the derelict 110-room mansion. Brian now runs the Manchester-based ghost hunting agency, Paranormal Rescue, with the help of his four-legged companion, sharing their discoveries through documentaries, TV shows and books.

Bond was a race dog for three years before he was rescued by Greyhound Gap and adopted by Brian and Helen. He is a sighthound (also known as a gazehound), which is a type of dog that hunts primarily by sight and speed.

Brian says that Bond's vision is exceptionally good in dark and semi-dark conditions – a helpful skill when searching for ghosts at night, "when he detects something, he's off like a rocket," his owner noted.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Bond has had a few close encounters with the paranormal, during his enquiries. Brian described one instance: "We were visiting an abandoned prison and as soon as my wife took Bond inside, he ran to an open jail cell where he started growling. He went inside and started choking so we rushed him outside and were about to call a vet when he suddenly recovered. We later found out that in that particular cell two prisoners had died by suicide, by hanging."

Bond now accompanies Brian and Helen to every investigation. "I would say around 3-5% of what I've experienced has been genuinely defying rational explanation," concluded Brian.

The Queen's coastal-scented corgis

THE QUEEN has recently added to her 'Happy Hound' collection of dog toys, treats and grooming products, by introducing her 'Happy Hound Dog Cologne'.

The cologne smells of 'coastal walks' and has a 'rich, musky scent with citrus notes of bergamot', and is advertised as 'the ideal present for dog lovers and their furry friends'.

The scent will be on offer for £9.99,

in the gift shop of Her Majesty's Norfolk estate, Sandringham House, alongside her range of dog biscuits which were released in August 2021 in collaboration with Norfolk Natural Living.

As a well-known dog lover, the Queen will, no doubt, be pampering her beloved troop of corgis and dorgis (a cross between a dachshund and a corgi) to the new luxury scent.

Viagra for dogs?

SCIENTISTS HAVE been investigating the use of sildenafil (more commonly known as Viagra) as a treatment for a rare and potentially fatal eating disorder found in dogs.

Megaesophagus is a condition that causes the expansion of a canine's oesophagus, which prevents the food pipe from being able to contract and squeeze food down to the dog's stomach, it can lead to serious health problems for dogs.

In a study led by Washington State University, scientists found that they could use sildenafil to relax and open a dog's oesophagus muscle, allowing food to pass safely through to the stomach.

At the end of the study, nine out of 10 owners reported reduced regurgitation during the two weeks when their dogs were taking liquid sildenafil.



WIN CUSHIONS THE BLOW FOR NAUGHTIEST PET

ONE-YEAR-OLD Laya has been named the UK's naughtiest pet, in a nationwide competition put on by the content's insurance providers, So-Sure.

Laya's owners submitted an image of her amid a sea of feathers from the sofa cushions she had destroyed, with a note stating that she had also ruined over 20 pairs of shoes.

Her owners will now receive a £200 Next voucher, to replace the cushions chewed through by Laya, possibly?

ORPHANS' OTTER-LY ADORE EACH OTHER



TWO ORPHANED otter pups have been paired up by 'cupid' (also known as a wildlife expert), at the Stapeley Grange Wildlife Centre, near Nantwich in Cheshire. The female otter pup, named Eve, and the male, named Juniper, spent their first day together on Valentine's Day.

Eve was discovered on Christmas Eve, in a bin near Sunderland Road in Durham. A member of the public found her and rushed her to a nearby vets where she was treated for hypothermia, before being handed over to the Stapeley wildlife centre. Juniper was then found a few days later, alone, near Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire. He was also taken to a vet, then transferred to Stapeley on January 7.

To help the otter pups prepare for their return to the wild, staff at the wildlife centre have paired them up, and so far, so good.

Stapeley manager, Lee Stewart said: "To help the otters' social well-being, we recently paired up Eve and Juniper, who are loving spending time together."

Eve and Juniper will be re-released into the wild together, at a suitable location later in the year.

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eventsdiary

23-25 March 2022

Global Pet Expo

Orlando, Florida, USA.
www.globalpetexpo.org

27-28 March 2022

PATS Sandown

Sandown Park, Surrey
www.patshow.co.uk
email: gordon.thomas@impact-exhibitions.com

31 March 2022

Pet Huddle

Edgbaston Park Hotel, Birmingham
www.productguru.co.uk/huddles-events/pet
email: chris@productguru.co.uk

2-3 April 2022

Dog Lover Show

SEC, Glasgow
www.thedoglovershow.co.uk

17-18 May 2022

Petcare Innovation Summit

London
petcareinnovationsummit.com

24-27 May 2022

Interzoo

Exhibition Centre, Nuremburg, Germany
www.interzoo.com/en

28-30 June 2022

PAWExpo

National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham
www.gleebirmingham.com

2-3 July 2022

The Great British Rabbit Show

Newark Showground
Newark, Nottinghamshire
www.greatbritishrabbit.co.uk

22-25 August 2022

Superzoo

Las Vegas, USA
British pavilion information: www.petquip.com

4-5 September 2022

ANIDO 2022

Kortrijk Xpo, Belgium.
www.kortrijkxpo.com

11-13 September 2022

BETA International

NAEC Stoneleigh, Warwickshire
www.beta-int.com

25-26 September 2022

PATS Telford

Telford, Shropshire
www.patshow.co.uk
email: gordon.thomas@impact-exhibitions.com

25 September 2022

The PetQuip Awards

Telford, Shropshire
www.petquip.com
email: pat@petquip.com

peoplewatching

● **PEDIGREE WHOLESALE** has appointed **Wayne Kinton** as its new head of operations.

Beginning his career as an Army driver, Wayne has built up experience across a number of companies including DHL and Rank Hovis McDougall.

He said: "I thrive on the opportunity to influence change; all I want to do is be better than I was yesterday."

"Joining Pedigree Wholesale after an expansive career across several roles in operations was like coming home, the growth and journey ahead of the company is very exciting, and I'm thrilled to be part of that journey."

Gerard O'Mahony, managing director at Pedigree Wholesale, added: "Operations is the backbone of our business and improving our offering, to better serve our customers is a key focus for us in 2022 and beyond. Wayne brings with him a vast amount of experience that will prove instrumental in strengthening our operations."

● **THE ANIMAL Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA)** has selected **Michael Seals MBE, FRAGS** as its new chair, taking over the post following the AMTRA Council and Board meeting in London on March 1.

Seals succeeds Phil Sketchley as independent chair following his retirement after forty-eight years in the industry, serving as AMTRA Council chair since 2014.

A livestock and arable farmer in south Derbyshire, Seals recently ended a 10-year term at Defra as chair of the Animal Health & Welfare Board England, and as the lead in the development of the Animal Health & Welfare Pathway.

He has experience as chair in a number of other roles including the not-for-profit National Fallen Stock Company, and is also the owner of a sports horse show jumping team, with breeding, training and livery facilities.

Seals said: "My intention is to take a proactive approach, working with the Board and Council to review AMTRA's current work and identify opportunities for the future, adapting to changes and helping to defend and deliver AMTRA's role within the sector."

● **GLOBAL PET** care organisation **National Veterinary Associates (NVA)** has announced the appointment of **Tami Majer** as chief people officer, reporting to chief executive officer Greg Hartmann.

NVA is a community of more than 1,400 veterinary hospitals and pet resorts, and Majer will lead the organisation's global efforts to attract the best veterinarians, pet care professionals and business leaders while furthering NVA's investment in people, teams and culture.

Majer has more than 20 years of experience in the field, including leading human resources functions within Banfield Pet Hospital, Danone North America and 24 Hour Fitness across the U.S. and Canada.

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.



Michael Seals MBE

pbwnews



Separation anxiety rises as lockdown eases

NEARLY THREE quarters of UK dog owners have reported their pets are suffering from separation anxiety as the lockdown eases and people return to workplaces.

A survey by pet product retailer and online community Lovimall carried out by YouGov found that 73% of UK dog owners said that their dog has experienced separation anxiety.

The survey also showed that 11% of UK dog owners with a dog who experiences separation anxiety have turned to giving their pup supplements or medication to help manage the problem, with 17% of these spending over £100 on treatment for their dog's anxiety – 4% on prescribed medication and 7% on anti-anxiety supplements.

The issue has also impacted on the wellbeing of dog owners, with almost all those surveyed with a dog who experiences separation anxiety (94%) saying that it affects their life to some extent. In doing so, 60% of these say they feel guilty when they leave their dog alone, and 22% admitting to not leaving the house as much as they'd like to as a result.

Olly Johnson, managing director of commerce at brand owner Jungle Creations, said: "The rise in dog ownership through the pandemic is well documented, but we must remember that for many dogs having their owners around constantly will be all they've ever known. Being left alone all day or in the evening will be a real shock to the system so it is no surprise at all that there is a surge in separation anxiety among our pets."

Veterinary surgeon Clarisse Berardier added: "We're seeing more dogs than usual who are experiencing anxiety, which can present itself as aggressive or destructive behaviour, barking or panting more than usual and repetitive or compulsive behaviours."

Great British Grooming Show returns

THE GREAT British Grooming Show is to stage a second event in May following the success of the inaugural show in October 2021.

The show will also host four large seminars per day with live demonstrations from expert groomers, plus a number of small-scale seminars known as 'Fireside Rooms' offering bespoke training.

The competition element will feature classes such as Beginner, Intermediate, Gundog, Pure Breed Scissor, Hand Strip, and Poodle. These will be supplemented by additional categories including Salon Creative, Asian Freestyle, and Diamond in the Rough.

Groomers in training will have the chance to achieve ICMG Certification by entering the competition and booking an accredited member of ICMG staff to qualify their groom.

The event will take place on May 28-29 in the Premier Suite of the Bolton Whites Hotel.

BEHIND THE COUNTER

True tales of everyday life in a pet shop

Electricity

Knowing my electricity contract was up for renewal at the end of March, my broker had a quick look round in December and found a couple of suppliers who were offering slightly cheaper prices than I was currently paying. It was just pennies cheaper but I thought at least our

electricity bill should remain stable for the foreseeable future – how wrong I was!

Unfortunately, I could not sign up for a new deal until February, but by then as we all know prices were going up. My current supplier offered a renewal contract at just over double what my current charges are, so I asked my broker to have another look around and mentioned the company we looked at just before Christmas. Well, it turns out they are now offering a contract at over three times what I currently pay, and the best deal I can get is to stay with my current supplier at double the current charges.

So, as of April 1, my electricity bill will double to just over four thousand five hundred pounds a year. And I don't think there is anything I can cut back on to reduce the bill.

Most of our lighting is LED and, as we do not have gas in the shop, we rely on electricity for heating and we keep that to a minimum as it is. So it looks like it's an increased overhead we will just have to accept.

We now get a phone call from our electricity supplier telling us our meter was disconnected last August so can they get the details of our

current working meter? I did try and explain that the meter was updated with one of these fancy new ones last August but it certainly has not been disconnected as the lights are still on and we are still paying the bills! Goodness knows what is going on here, but the sooner the power company sorts this out, the better.

Christmas

Reps know that they should never talk to me about stock for the dreaded C word (Christmas) before July or August. We are in full swing with the holidaymakers from Easter to October so the last thing I want to think about is Christmas stock. If the reps have Christmas stock to sell they always seek out the wife, as she's more of a soft touch! So I was a little bit taken aback when I was presented with a new range of Christmas 2022 stock in January. I was even more surprised when the other half appeared from out the back storeroom and gleefully put in an order. So we've ordered our Christmas stock for 2022 in January, just at the same time as we put away unsold Christmas stock from 2021.

Refunds

During last summer we had some Italian visitors in the shop and, after having a good look round, bought a dog harness on the understanding that if it did not fit they could return it. As this is a promise we give to all our customers it was not a problem and, as the dog was back in Italy, there was no chance of them coming back to the UK just to return a £16.99 dog harness. How wrong I was! In February they returned the harness as being too small and bought the next size up.

Squirrel proof

A customer was very keen to get a good quality squirrel-proof feeder for their garden as they were fed up with squirrels wrecking their standard feeders. We found some really good ones and got them in and phoned the customer. When she came to get them she was impressed with the quality and actually bought two of them. Then she saw something else on the shelf that she had to have – squirrel food!

The mousetrap

I was carrying a bag of horse feed to a customer's car and she asked me to be careful when I put it in the boot as there was a live mouse trap in it and she did not want me to set it off.

Not many people I know have a live mousetrap in the boot of their car. Apparently she had taken the car into the garage for a service and they told her that mice had eaten away a substantial amount of the sound deadening lining in the car.

When she got home she set a mousetrap in the boot and in the first week caught 10 mice. In the second week none were caught, so hopefully they are now all gone, but she left the trap in the boot for a few more days, just to make sure.

*Newshound,
March 2022*

Share your own retail views and experiences. Write to The Editor, pbwnews, Suite A, Arun House, Office Village, River Way, Uckfield TN22 1SL or email editor@pbwnews.com. Alternatively, have your say on our trade-only Forum www.petbusinessworld.co.uk

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