

2013 Growth Drivers: Oral Care

1. PetzLife 2. Tropiclean 3. Ark Naturals 4. International Dental

Enhanced educational programs, improving health and safety and simplifying consumers' options are key components driving growth in pet oral care into 2013. Market leaders are churning out oral care products that are easier to use without compromising on quality and safety.

"The fun is only beginning and with PetzLife's help, pets will live longer and healthier," said Bud Groth, owner of PetzLife/VetzLife Products. Developing trends in the pet industry include products offering an easy, quick fix, such as treats, Groth said. "I can see at least 10 new companies introducing oral care products of one kind or another," he said. "But we welcome the competition because it will increase over-all consumer awareness. When they Google or Bing the best oral care product out there, our brand is ranked as one of the best, if not the highest."

Another trend is an advance in toothbrush design that includes waterpiks and dental floss which are gaining momentum, noted Groth. "And I think one of the big trends is going to be going back to a much higher protein diet and more will be turning to raw diet to help promote healthier gums and teeth," he said.

The results of educating consumers about their pet's oral care are showing, said Ark Naturals Products for Pets' Susan Weiss. "The oral care category has always been a big category, but it's becoming a focal point for pet guardians," Weiss said.

The number of animals in need is growing as are the number of oral care products to choose from, Weiss said. "Ingredients with integrity make sense," she said. "A product has to step up to the plate and address the issue."

Consumers are trending toward natural ingredients in their oral care products, along with products that

are simple to use, noted Brian Collier, a Tropiclean spokesman. "Natural solutions seem to be a trend throughout the pet industry, oral care not excluded," Collier said. "However, we are also noticing an increasing trend that calls for products to be easy to use yet not compromising the efficacy of the product."

Tropiclean's focus for 2013 involves bolstering attempts to raise consumer awareness and education, Collier said. "If no one knew that periodontal diseases are the No. 1 disease among dogs and cats, then how would they know it needed to be treated? Similarly, many consumers do not know that poor oral health can lead to a number of more serious health problems involving the liver, kidney, lungs and other major organs. Providing consumers with proper education could lead to years of joyful companionship added to their pet's life."

The company is launching its new Fresh Breath + Plus line which features Hip & Joint with glucosamine, Skin & Coat featuring Omega 3 and 6, and Endurance with vitamins E, B6, and D3. "Recognizing that our Fresh Breath Water Additive can be used for an extremely effective delivery system for essential vitamins and minerals, we developed the +Plus line to not only improve oral health but promote complete pet wellness," Collier said.

Tropiclean looked to promote and build awareness about oral care products even before the easier-to-use trend was established, Collier said. "We recognized that there was an opportunity to provide pet owners with effective oral care products made easy," he said. "We found a direct connection with the lack of pet oral health and care to the difficulty owners were facing with traditional tools and products."

Ark Naturals is driving education by informing consumers as well as

retailers about their product's ingredients, affordability and impact on pet's well-being, Weiss said. "You have to have a partnership between merchandisers and retailers," she said. For retailers to become the go-to place for pet products, they have to educate themselves, Weiss said. "The worst thing is when a person senses personnel has no clue," she said. "Consumers lose confidence when someone is dithering over information." To make that easier, Ark Naturals provides key personnel with products to select to try out. "They're at the front lines and we really want them to have a personal experience and not feel like a charlatan."

In the coming months, PetzLife is launching a dental treat geared towards cats. The next steps involve reaching out to current and potential consumers to raise awareness of the PetzLife brand. "We are the only product that actually takes off the existing plaque and tartar and reverses gingival issues with a 100 percent money back guarantee," Groth said. For PetzLife, being part of the solution is an ongoing trend. When anesthetizing pets in order to clean their teeth was linked to unexpected pet deaths, PetzLife looked for safer options for owners to clean their pet's teeth. "I am proud to say that we have had an impact with pet owner awareness of the risks involving general anesthesia," he said. "We are also very concerned that we do not offend the veterinary community. We want to work with them and many are mentioning PetzLife is another tool in their overall oral care tool box."

When it comes to pet health, consumers demand more options, convenience and quality, without skimping on product efficacy. Market leaders are making strides to exceed these demands with products that make caring for pets faster, easier and safer.