

2021 CATEGORY CATALYSTS

Oral Care: Pet King Brands

Pet King Brands ventured into the oral care category 20 years ago with its Oratene Brushless Oral Care line, and it's no coincidence the company has not deviated from its original formula. In these last two decades, the formulations have made their way into veterinary clinics and become a reliable and proven way to protect pets' teeth and gums while meeting the needs of pet parents for ease-of-application so they can develop and stick to a regular dental health routine.

"The trust we have established began with veterinarians who have recommended and used our products at their clinics in conjunction with a dental prophylaxis," said Debra Decker, Director of Marketing. "Our Oratene Oral Gel has gained a great deal of popularity as a key solution used for pet dental cleaning process as an effective chlorhexidine antiseptic replacement while our other products are recommended for daily maintenance. The veterinary community recommends our products for their brushless ease-of-use for at-home care. Veterinarians know that more of their clients will continue a dental care program if it's easy and does not stress out their dog or cat."



Veterinarians—as well as retailers who are on the ground interacting with pet owners—are primary messengers in advocating for proper oral care. "It's important to remember that good oral care is as important as diet and food selections and should be discussed at every interaction with a pet parent," said Decker. "There are several oral care products on the market and the options can be overwhelming. We've found that the retailers experiencing the healthiest sales in the oral care category have associates with good product knowledge."

The company is helping to support those retailers in this climate of unpredictable supply issues by not only

ensuring there are no disruptions in its supply chain but to provide effective tools to educate pet owners about dental health. "In fact, we have increased production to keep pace with increased sales and while doing so, refused to compromise the quality of our ingredients for profits," said Decker. "In addition, while other manufacturers were reducing their marketing spends, Pet King Brands has ramped up our brand presence and expanded our marketing focus to include a library of assets to assist our retail partners with product knowledge and how to recommend what product a pet parent should use."

Pet King Brands' enzyme-based, non-drug wellness products also include its ZYMOX line for ears and skin care. Both product lines are meeting the growing needs of pet parents to better care for their companions in today's modern world. "The demands from the pet owners are not new demands but ones that are gaining great momentum, fueled in part by the humanization of our pets, the elevated role our pets serve and the increased awareness of the companionship they have provided us through very isolating times of the Covid pandemic," Decker said.

Jerky Treats: Hillside Farms

Hillside Farms entered this year ready for a fresh start while simultaneously staying true to and not veering away from the company's values and vision. This year, Hillside Farms has focused on continuing to try to understand pet parents and their priorities when it comes to the treats they feed their dogs. The company has planned to continue offering pets treats that are limited ingredient, meat-based and a treat that combines flavors with health benefits.

"Since we dehydrate all of our own dog treats in our Southern California facility, safety is at the forefront," said Scott Wu VP for Hillside Farms. "Since the middle of last year, we have had to update policies and procedures to ensure safety for our employees. Along with always wearing a mask, we have also reduced the work staff to ensure



there is enough space to be safe. Despite losing efficiencies, we understand that our employees' safety comes first."

"At Hillside Farms, we have identified that pet parents that purchase training treats sometimes buy these treats not only for training but also for toppers and more frequent rewards," Wu said. "That said, in 2020, we launched our Farmland Traditions Tiny Loves dog treats which are all natural, limited in-

redient with 95 percent meat or poultry in each bite. The best way to educate pet parents is with your packaging but doing so in a crafty manner where the message is not lost. Along with informative packaging, our sales team are always trying to be in store and educating the staff so they can pass the message along to pet parents."

"Retailers should understand that pet parents that buy training treats may not only buy for training purposes but also as a topper in dog food and sometimes just want to reward their dogs more frequently without exceeding the feeding recommendations," Wu said. "With the 'new normal,' pet parents have much more time with their furry friends since most folks are at home. That said, pet parents like to appease their pets and providing more training treats throughout the day is a great way to do so."