



IN THIS ISSUE:

Tracking Treats (Page 56)
Hot Products for Summer (Page 88)
Purrfecting Play (Page 94)

GUT FEELING

Lucy Pet Products enters the food market with gut-healthy options for pets. (Page 6)

TABLE TALK

Three experts weigh in on the evolution of the exotics food market. (Page 120)

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Expanded marketplace featuring the top trends and need-to-know tips on merchandising the latest in summer apparel, outdoor gear, collars and leashes, and spa products. **STARTING ON PAGE 100**



Coming Out of the Coop

Backyard chicken-keeping is gaining momentum, making the chicken supply category one for retailers to consider. **PAGE 26**



Powered by Protein

High-protein diets are fueling the dog food market, driven by demand for grain-free, limited-ingredient and raw fare. **STARTING ON PAGE 48**



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Natural Pioneer Gets Back in the Game

Lucy Pet Products' Joey Herrick brings gut health for pets into the spotlight in the quest for better nutrition.

BY LARUE PALMER

Gut health and digestion take center stage with Thousand Oaks, Calif.-based Lucy Pet Products' first pet food

offering. Joey Herrick, Lucy Pet Foundation's president and founder, has returned to the pet food category with another innovative product for cats and dogs that helps what researchers

call the "second brain," the gut. The debut of Lucy Pet Formulas for Life aims to break through the fad appeal related to gut health and the presence of pre-biotics and probiotics in food for

both humans and pets.

Herrick is no stranger to pet food innovation, having pioneered the natural pet food industry almost 30 years ago with his trademark brand Natural

Balance. He developed many innovative products with unique formulations that improved the baseline quality of pet food at a time when many pet foods were using inferior, potentially harmful ingredients, according to Lucy Pet. Always one to innovate and never copy, Herrick



Lucy Pet executive vice president Rick Rockhill (left) with president Joey Herrick.

started researching what was missing in today's diets for dogs and cats. Herrick said he discovered that the pet food market is saturated with foods



Dr. George Fahey was instrumental in the development of Lucy Pet's new food offerings.

all making the same claims in their marketing, so he started looking at it from a different point of view.

Some of the leading brands of pet foods on the market today were developed more than 20 years ago. The use of common ingredients and fillers, combined with consumer tendencies to overfeed, have led to increased rates of chronic disease, obesity and other conditions that affect the quality of life for many pets, according to Lucy Pet. Fortunately, during that time, there have been major discoveries and advancements in the sci-

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ence of nutrition, as well as in the production and sourcing of pet food and the ingredients that go into them.

"Until recently, the importance of the gut in overall health wasn't fully understood," Herrick said. "Today, we know that the digestive tract goes far beyond just processing the food your dog eats. A dog's intestinal tract handles challenges every day, so it is important

to ensure that your dog's diet supports the digestive system based on the latest nutritional advancements that exist today. A diverse population of bacteria provides varied nourishment for the good gut bacteria, which, in turn, helps the body absorb nutrients more efficiently. That's why we developed our Lucy Pet Formulas for Life."

According to Herrick and his research team, the gut plays a key

role in strengthening the body's immunity to chronic disease for both dogs and cats. By feeding them a food that helps maintain a healthy gut, they can be expected to live a longer, healthier life.

Researchers know that fiber is important to a pet's diet because it promotes the movement of food through the digestive system and produces consistent stools. However, according to the company, new research shows

that having a variety of fibers with a precise blend can produce an optimal environment in the digestive tract that leads to the ideal balance of beneficial probiotic and pathogenic bacteria in the gut. Code word: "healthy gut."

Prebiotics are fermentable fibers, which includes resistant

starch. Resistant starches are dietary fibers naturally found in foods such as whole grains and legumes, such as beans, lentils and peas. A pet's gastrointestinal system uses acids, enzymes and other secretions to break down food as it passes along. As the fibers break down and ferment, they feed the bacteria. With more beneficial bacteria in the gut, it goes a long way to improving digestion, keeping the body healthy and helping other systems perform optimally, according to Lucy Pet. And the fiber ingredients will, ultimately, encourage better nutrient balance.

When discussing the features and benefits of Lucy Pet Formulas for Life with Herrick, one can't help but notice the enthusiasm with which he promotes his product—and for good reason. Herrick assembled a diverse team of pet food and nutrition experts, who, combined, have more than 200 years of experience. Herrick said he is excited to be working with the most recognized expert in the field of companion animal health and nutrition, Dr. George C. Fahey, whose significant body of research contributed to Lucy Pet Formulas for Life. Dr. Fahey is professor emeritus of animal nutritional sciences at the University of Illinois. For more than 40 years, Fahey has conducted extensive research of gastrointestinal tract health and the role of macronutrients in digestive physiology and health of the gut.

Fahey has pioneered research on companion animal health and nutrition. He discovered the optimal sources and concentrations of dietary fibers in pet food, to include identification of the relationship between fiber fermentability, nutrient digestibility, digestive tract upset, and prebiotic efficacy in dogs and cats. His contribution to the trademarked formula called Lucy Pet P.B.F. Prebiotic Balanced Fiber uses advanced technology and goes far beyond other pet foods, according to the company.



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Regarding the opportunity to work with Fahey on developing the unique pet food formula, Herrick said, "Lucy Pet is proud to work with the world's leading expert on digestive health whose research is the cornerstone of our Lucy Pet P.B.F. Prebiotic Balanced Fiber technology."

In recent years, the pet industry has been plagued by product recalls, which has put a lot of pressure on pet food pro-

ducers to regain the trust of the buying public that is very interested in providing the best and safest products for their animal companions. Herrick was all too eager to address this matter as it relates to Lucy Pet Formulas for Life.

"Our foods are made with truth in labeling, honesty in formulations and attention to detail," Herrick said. "Our Quality Assurance Program gives you

peace of mind that what you feed your cat or dog is safe and of the highest quality. Our ingredients are sourced globally from reputable suppliers that we know and trust and have worked with for years. We do not source any ingredients from China. Our formulas contain no meat byproducts, corn, wheat or soy, and no artificial preservatives, flavors or coloring. In addition, we use high-quality animal proteins and

unique superfoods in our formula that provide nutrient density. I'm also proud that our formulas are manufactured in American facilities, providing jobs for Americans.

"I love all my animals and would never want to be in a position where they were not healthy because I wasn't feeding them the best food possible," Herrick added. "I'm so thankful for Dr. Fahey's incredible direction

about the role of fiber in Lucy Pet's Formulas for Life. I want independent pet specialty retailers to thrive and grow for years to come, so it is important that they have food brands like Lucy Pet Formulas for Life that are committed to the pet specialty brick-and-mortar channel."

For more information about the product launch, visit Lucy Pet Products (lucypetproducts.com) at Global Pet Expo in booth 1435.

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For some, there is a light that appears at the toughest moments of being a doctor. Dr. Dani McVety found that light early in her career, and it sparked an idea that has become one of the most unique and fastest growing businesses in the veterinary space. Lap of Love Veterinary Hospice, a service that has visited the homes of over 50,000 families, is now a nationwide network of over 90 passionate doctors and a full time interdisciplinary support staff dedicated to making the end of life experience for pets, and the people that love them, as dignified and peaceful as possible.

She proudly graduated from the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine and is the youngest recipient of both the college's Distinguished Young Alumni Award (2013) and the Florida Veterinary Medical Association's President's Award (2014).



ENDCAP

BRAND UPDATE

American Pet Nutrition of Ogden, Utah, acquired the My Little Lion and My Little Wolf product lines in 2016. The company has updated the packaging to coincide with an enhanced formulation to remove certain unnecessary ingredients and to reflect the quality of the



product inside. The food and treats now have a made-in-the-USA claim placed at the top of every package, and the layout has been modernized to make the important product benefits more obvious to the shopper.

The food is made without any grains or starches, contains up to 30 percent moisture, and more than 70 percent of the protein is from specific animal sources. The material of the food bag now has a soft, matte texture to give it a premium feel.

Treat benefits include up to 30 percent real meat, grain free and as little as 2 calories per treat. The company added a different color to each of the variants to help differentiate each protein source. A window on the front of the package is shaped like the specific protein source of the formula to showcase the soft, meaty treat.

CLEAR CONSCIENCE MAKEOVER

Clear Conscience Pet of Cape Coral, Fla., has relaunched its award-winning line of treats, chews and pet food toppers with a complete makeover.