

Purina Awards \$125,000 to Five U.S.-Based Pet Startups through 2025 Pet Care Innovation Prize

Winning startups across the pet industry – from veterinary care to treats and e-commerce – will compete for an additional \$25,000 Grand Prize in March

ST. LOUIS, Jan. 15, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, five pet care startups from across the country have been named finalists in the ninth annual Pet Care Innovation Prize powered by Purina. Each finalist – which represent startups across the entire pet care spectrum – will receive \$25,000 and mentorship support from Purina, a global leader in pet care, as the startups work to scale their businesses in the growing \$324.19 billion* global pet care industry.

The 2025 Pet Care Innovation Prize Winners were selected from nearly 150 applicants from around the world. This year's winners are:

- **VEA:** Based in **Alexandria, Va.**, VEA is an AI-driven platform designed to predict disease, generate diagnostic plans and support nutrition for longevity. VEA also aims to solve workflow and documentation challenges for clinical staff, reducing the number of clicks it takes to complete exams and enabling veterinary teams to focus more on patient care.
- **Maven:** **New York-based** Maven is the first vet-recommended health sensor capable of continuously monitoring pets' well-being and identifying early, clinically relevant changes. With these insights, pet owners and clinic teams can diagnose issues sooner and treat more effectively, helping pets live healthier, happier lives.
- **Ten Lives:** **San Francisco-based** Ten Lives produces the cleanest animal proteins for cats. Using microbes to convert sugar to protein, Ten Lives develops the same proteins naturally found in prey such as rabbit, fish and lamb, made without animals in human-grade precision fermentation facilities.
- **ShopDot Pet:** Based in **Missoula, Mont.**, ShopDot Pet is a platform that allows neighborhood pet care providers such as groomers, trainers and vets to generate additional revenue by easily selling pet essentials without the heavy costs of inventory or shipping. ShopDot Pet enables pet service businesses and great pet brands to collaborate and sell more together.
- **Yak9 Chews:** Based in **Austin, Tex.**, Yak9 Chews is an award-winning premium pet brand dedicated to crafting all-natural, long-lasting cheese chews for dogs, made from simple, real and ethically sourced ingredients.

In addition to the \$25,000 in non-dilutive prize money, each of the five startup winners also receives mentorship from the Pet Care Innovation team at Purina and Active Capital, as well as the opportunity to participate in an accelerator boot camp at Purina's headquarters in St. Louis, MO, which features sessions with Purina's top pet experts and influential voices across the pet care industry.

"At Purina, our commitment to enriching the lives of pets and their people is strengthened through collaboration with innovative startups, such as the incredible cohort of this year's Pet Care Innovation Prize finalists," said Patrick Mullen, co-lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures group and vice president of strategic planning at Purina. "These passionate pet care entrepreneurs are tackling challenges in a variety of areas that all have the opportunity to help pets and those who are passionate about them thrive. We are excited to partner with these companies to foster their growth and success in the continuously growing and competitive pet care landscape."

The five finalists will compete for an additional \$25,000 grand prize this March at a pitch competition at Global Pet Expo, an annual trade show presented by the American Pet Products Association and the Pet Industry Distributors Association, where each startup will present to Purina executives, industry influencers and investors.

Purina, through its 9 Square Ventures corporate venturing group, partnered with investing leaders at [Active](#)

Purina, through its 9 Square Ventures corporate venturing group, partnered with investing leaders at [Active Capital](#) to create the [Pet Care Innovation Prize](#) in 2016. The effort provides financial support and mentorship opportunities for early-stage companies that are defining the future of pet care through novel products or services that provide meaningful solutions in the areas of pet health and wellness, services, technology, food, treats and litter.

[9 Square Ventures](#) leverages Purina's knowledge, experience, and financial resources to help emerging pet care startups scale their businesses and make a positive impact on the lives of as many pets and their owners as possible. The group has been steadily investing millions of dollars in a diverse set of early-stage pet care startups since it was founded in 2014.

For more information about the Pet Care Innovation Prize powered by Purina, visit <https://petcareinnovation.net>.

**From [Precedence Research](#)*

About Purina

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations.

Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than \$150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive. Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or [subscribe here](#) to get the latest Purina news.

About Active Capital:

Active Capital is a St. Louis-based impact investing leader, helping startups and investors come together to grow innovative products and initiatives. Active Capital manages the Pet Care Innovation Prize.

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