

# FIRST TAKE

## Dental Care

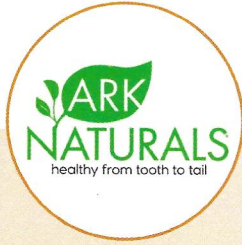
While pet parents are knowledgeable about the benefits of investing in dental hygiene products for their pets, oral care vendors have not achieved their full potential in the category. Increasing their engagement with retailers and consumers to talk about implementing a daily dental hygiene routine with a combination of products and supplements that are effective, convenient and easy to use will give the category a much-needed boost.

TropiClean would like to change the unfamiliarity among dental products in 2019. "There are 32 million households that haven't used oral care products on their pets. Of the pet parents who do seek out oral care solutions, 55 percent struggle to find effective solutions," said James Brandy of TropiClean citing figures from a recent APPA survey. "We have ample opportunity to educate consumers about the importance of proper dental hygiene for their furry loved ones," Brandy said.

For Pura Naturals Pet, education to the end consumer on the importance of dental wellness for their family pets is vital. "Good dental care is important to us and it's even more critical for your pets who rely on you for their dental hygiene," said Julie Creed of Pura Natural Pet.

Michael Stoeckle of Ark Naturals believes that associating a joint health product with dental care is not something most retailers or consumers think of, but it can have a huge effect on the pet's overall wellbeing. "We recommend starting young animals on one-third or half doses of glucosamine, chondroitin, hyaluronic acid supplements and using them regularly throughout the animal's life," Stoeckle said. "Similarly, essential fatty acid supplements that most retailers and consumers associate primarily with improving coat conditions are helpful for oral health, too. They reduce inflammation, are needed to create bone cells, and most importantly enhance immunity," he added.

TropiClean is focused on driving awareness of the importance of our pet's dental health. "We're committed to creating healthy products to improve and enrich the lives of pets and their



*"Essential fatty acid supplements that most retailers and consumers associate primarily with improving coat conditions are helpful for oral health, too. They reduce inflammation, are needed to create bone cells, and most importantly enhance immunity,"*

**Michael Stoeckle,  
Ark Naturals**

people," Brandy said. To do this, the company has developed meaningful and fruitful partnerships among its retail and distribution partners. "We look to continue building and strengthening these relationships. We look forward to providing our partners with more resources and education to better serve them which in turn helps them serve pets and their people," he said.

Loving Pets is cognizant of retailer feedback that indicates pet parents are increasingly looking for dental care products that help avoid brushing their pets' teeth daily and has developed dental treats which use a combination of mechanical cleaning surfaces and ingredients that promote dental health. "Loving Pets makes the dental chew impactful from two areas rather than just one, whereas most dental products only focus on one area," Dan Nagy of Loving Pets said.

Creed said, "We'd like to see more in-store events with our retailers that we can participate in and meet with their staff and customers." For distributors, Creed feels more contact and training of their team on our products would be better. "While we do offer a variety of training tools on our website—nothing beats personal interaction," she said.

"Loving Pets has multiple in-house

salesman that go on the road to promote products and educate our retail partners on the benefits of our dental items," Nagy said, adding that the company also produces content focused on dental care to educate consumers on the subject.

Ark Naturals would like to see the distribution and retail partnership take advantage of the promotional programs it offers on its line of products to ultimately get to the consumer. "We spend a considerable amount of money each year to provide discounts and advertising to get our brand in the hands of the consumer. We want to be a good partner but would also like to see consumers benefit more from the discounts and educational advertising we provide," Stoeckle said.

Stoeckle reveals that Ark Naturals will expand its dental care line to be the most comprehensive solution in the oral care category. "Our latest innovations are Brushless Toothpaste formulations for sensitive gums and deep cleaning, which will be unveiled at this year's Global Pet Expo. The products are totally unique; nothing else like them exists," he said.

Nagy points out that Loving Pets is always coming out with new natural chews to improve dental hygiene among pets. "Recently Loving Pets launched True Venison which features hypoallergenic natural chews made with venison shin and femur bones. These natural chews are extremely long lasting and help prevent destructive chewing on top of aiding in dental health," he said. We will also be launching Taste Buddies, a new product line that features fun flavor combinations like PB&J, Mac' N Cheese and Hamburger and Fries," Nagy added.

When it comes to trends in the coming year, Brandy believes that awareness and education within the dental category will play a vital role for TropiClean. "Pet parents are seeking dental products that are safe, effective and that their dogs will truly enjoy. We are seeing this trend and striving to innovate a variety of product solutions that are effective, easy to use and improve and enrich the lives of pets and their people," he said.