

First Take

Oral Care

Oral care leaders are headed into the new year with a clean slate. Companies have reflected on what worked during 2021 and are primed to apply those measures into the new year. Suppliers in oral care are eager to inject solutions and options into their product portfolios and open the doors to expanded manufacturing facilities. Supply chain issues were the bane of companies' existence last year. Going into a fresh start, oral care companies have developed strategies to address supply chain obstacles and are eager to implement their new ways of responding to this particularly disruptive issue. Impressing upon pet owners the importance of addressing oral care on a daily basis, along with giving pet owners oral care solutions in the form of treats and chews are making their efforts to care for their pets' teeth and gums impactful and conducive.

The new year means, "Renewal, growth and new offerings," said Dr. Emily Stein, CEO of Primal Health, which produces TEEF! for Life. "With the start of every new year, we look retrospectively to learn and carry our learnings into the coming year. We're excited to begin expanding our product line and technology beyond its current capabilities through increased investment in R&D to address market needs. It's an amplification of our commitment to improving the oral microbiome of pets for dental health and, ultimately, quality of life."

The start of a new year at Swedencare USA will encompass, "Ongoing growth and improving supply chain realities," said Scott Reinhardt VP Sales and Marketing for Swedencare USA. "We have exciting new products under development and more in the planning stage. We are looking to announce these at the Global Pet Expo show and are expecting a great 2022!"

"TropiClean Pet Products continues to innovate new products to address the needs of pets and their people," said James Brandy, Trade Marketing Communications Specialist for Cosmos Corporation, makers of TropiClean. "We will continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining a daily oral care routine

while offering new solutions that fit the lifestyle of pet parents."

"With the new year, everyone often has a focus on improved well-being," said Julie Creed, VP of Sales and Marketing for Pure and Natural Pet. "We would like to think that this also includes our pets and their wellness routine. We dovetail our blog and marketing to support this focus of pet health."

Pet's Best Life recently launched Yummy Combs and has formed partnerships across channels with some of the largest retailers in the pet industry including PetSmart, Amazon, Chewy, Pet Supermarket and MWI.

"As a new product, Yummy Combs survived the horrors of Covid-19 despite the challenges and winning business partners willing to work with us despite Covid-19," said CEO Joe Roetheli. "In brick-and-mortar stores, these partners sampled our products and trained their staff. We also upgraded our packaging."

"We started with a revolutionary new design 'borrowed' from nature—a beehive," Roetheli continued. "This was not the traditional bone or brush shape but a much more functional hexagonal shape that made a difference based on science, geometry, and engineering. As the dog chews on Yummy Combs, the teeth from both jaws drop into the interior pockets of the Yummy Combs for 360 degree flossing and scrubbing to the gum line. The product addresses safety as it is also wider than the oropharynx—the opening of the throat—to deter gulping and blockages. The shape is packed with excellent nutrition and 12 wellness ingredients."

Definitive areas of the oral care category TEEF! will tackle in 2022 consist of functional treats and chews. "Most of the products currently available are not built to be effective below the gumline, where 60 percent of the tooth exists," Stein said. "They're also chock full of carbohydrates, which bacteria love to convert into acid and plaque, making dental disease worse. Our technology has this in mind, and therefore our products will be mostly void of carbohydrates and aim to treat the whole tooth, even below the gumline."

"New product innovations are a priority," Reinhardt said. "Consumers are requesting more and varied product types containing PlaqueOff. Our consumers also expect healthful, clean label products that are natural and good to feed their furry friends. Consumers expect more relative to superior ingredients, and we have always followed this direction as reflected in our current product offerings."

"We relaunched our Dental Kits in 2020 and completely re-tooled the packaging for more than 50 percent less waste. Our new bamboo brush is also a replenishable resource and the dental-grade bristles can be recycled," Creed said. "It was well received and won four major industry awards."

Two areas that TEEF! plans to dive into to help the company improve are on R&D to give pet parents more delivery options and on educating veterinarian partners about the microbial drivers that are linked to dental health and disease. "Our emphasis this year will be on R&D to expand delivery options for pet parents," Stein said. "Treats, chews and other ways to get our formula in the mouths of pets while still maintaining the key microbial science behind our products. Walking the fine line between microbiology and market expectations can be challenging, as recent studies are showing that dental health is so much more complicated than plaque and tartar on teeth."

"2022 will also be focused on educating veterinary professionals about the microbial drivers of dental health and disease," she added. "The oral microbiome is a very complicated population of bacteria, fungi, etc. It is our goal to help these professionals learn and stay up to date on this key driver of optimal dental health."

"In 2022, we will continue to educate pet parents on the importance of maintaining an oral care routine," Brandy said. "We will also strive to educate our retail partners on everything TropiClean has to offer, so they can better serve pets and their people. As for specifics, we will especially be putting focus

□ *Cont'd on Pg. 52*