

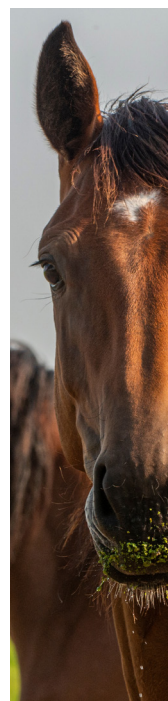
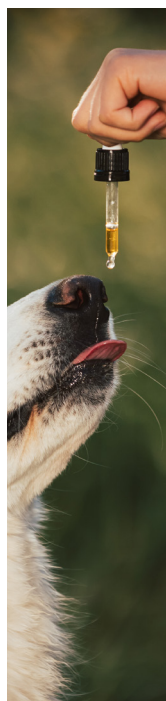


# SupplySide<sup>®</sup> Supplement Journal



## **Pet supplement** market report and 2026 outlook

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# Pet supplement market report and 2026 outlook

by Lisa Schofield

Connecting with dogs and cats can be a magical experience, so it's no surprise that Americans continue to embrace adding these and other pets to their families.

[Data](#) from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook 2024 showed 59.8 million U.S. households have dogs and 42.2 million have cats. According to the 2025 State of the Industry [Report](#) from the nonprofit American Pet Products Association (APPA), more than two-thirds of American households have pets. That amounts to 94 million households – a significant jump from 82 million only two years ago. And the Pew Research Center [reported](#) a majority of pet owners view their four-legged companions as family members – similar to their human family, rather than possessions.

Bill Bookout, president of the nonprofit trade association the National Animal Supplement Council (NASC), related that in 1999 when he initially entered the industry, the market was approximately \$500 million in consumer spending. Today, DataM Intelligence estimated the industry [exceeds](#) \$2.5 billion, which Bookout characterized as “steady and robust” industry growth.

Ingredient supplier ADM, in its proprietary ADM Outside Voice data, found in 2023 that 85% of global pet owners believed proper nutrition and supplements were as important for their pets as they were for themselves. In

more recent findings, 77% surveyed agreed it was worth paying more for pet products that feature ingredients offering potential functional benefits.

## Pet ownership data

Market research also indicates that young and middle-aged Americans are key category consumers. The APPA report found:

- Of all U.S. households that owned a pet, Gen Z comprised 20% (18.8 million), representing a 43.5% leap from 2023.
- Gen Z loves pets – 70% of Gen Z pet owners have two or more animals.



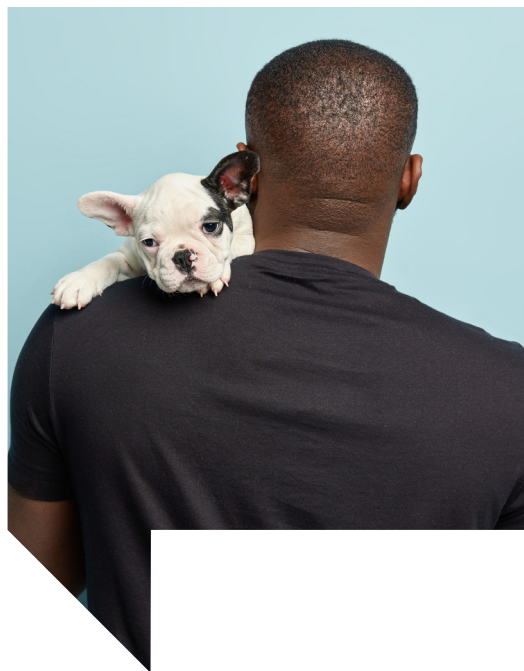
- More men are adopting dogs: 58% of Gen Z and 63% of Millennial dog owners are men, a significant rise of 15.2% and 18.6% from 2023, respectively.
- The meme of the “old cat lady” may be going extinct because in 2024, the most significant growth in cat ownership was among Gen Z and Millennial men, with 38% of Gen Z and 46% of Millennial cat owners being men, a 17.8% and 23.9% increase from 2023, respectively.

Ingrid Chu, APPA’s VP of insights and research, noted, “Gen Z is driving a remarkable shift in pet ownership, with a 43.5% increase in pet-owning households from 2023 to 2024. This generation is also leading in multi-pet ownership.”

Karen Hecht, Ph.D., VP of science at ingredient supplier AstaReal Inc., added, “Pet ownership continues to rise globally, fueled by the growing trend of pet humanization, where pets are seen as integral family members. This shift drives consumers to seek innovative food and supplement delivery forms that not only support their pets’ health, but also enhance the nurturing and bonding experience.”

### Trends in pet supplements

In line with the significant growth of more natural/less processed foods for dogs and cats, pet supplements too are showing high sales velocity. In 2024, the global pet supplement market reached approximately \$2.95 billion, expected to grow to \$3.14 billion by the end of 2025, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.34% through 2032,



according to a [report](#) from Fortune Business Insights.

The APPA report noted that 78% of Gen Z dog owners and 71% of Gen Z cat owners provide their pets with calming products, while 72% of Millennial dog owners and 66% of Millennial cat owners give them calming products.

For dogs, Hecht underscored, calming supplements and joint support are leading benefit categories, addressing common concerns like anxiety and mobility challenges, respectively.

The Fortune Business Insights report noted that hip and joint-support supplements comprised the largest share, with glucosamine topping the list, followed by probiotics and prebiotics to support digestive health. Chewables were the top delivery system.



### WATCH

#### Animal supplements: A beginner’s primer

This SupplySide Fresh [video](#) explores the growing market for animal supplements designed to support the health and well-being of pets and livestock. Discover the hottest trends, ingredients and formulations driving market expansion.

## The **feline** wellness market is poised for growth with an **8.3%** CAGR through 2030.

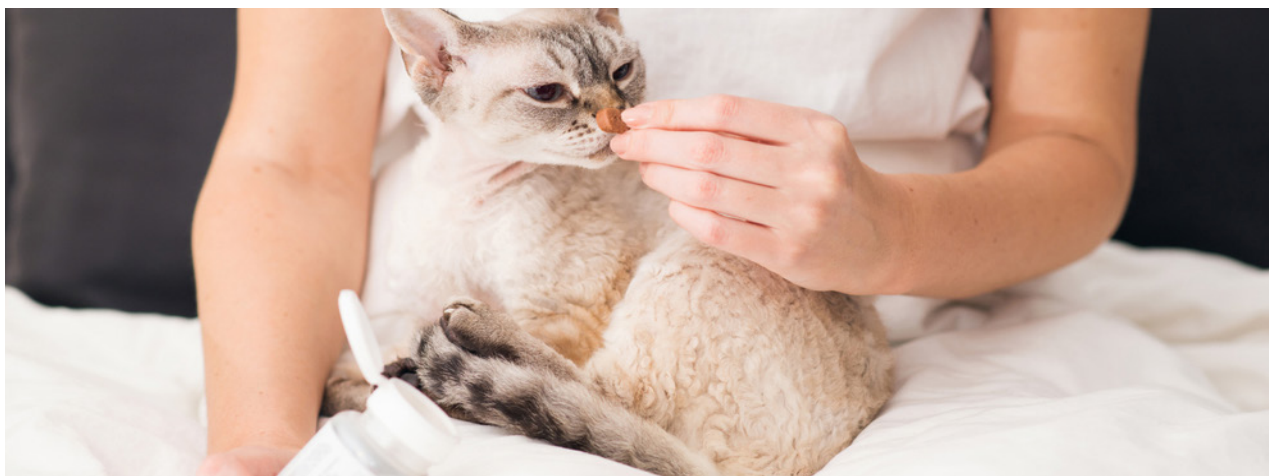
Several specific supplement groups have attracted increasing interest from pet owners. A new survey presented at the 2025 NASC conference found that 31% of dog owners prioritized, in descending order: joints, skin and coat, overall wellness, digestion, weight loss and allergy relief. Meanwhile, 26% of consumers who own cats look for supplements that address daily wellness, hairball control and digestion.

Doris Ip, marketing manager at supplier Layn Natural Ingredients, said in terms of traction, gut health supplements – particularly probiotics – are booming, with the pet probiotics category [forecasted](#) to experience over 8% CAGR through 2030, per Mordor Intelligence. Ip reiterated, “The major growth area is gut health – probiotics, prebiotics and now postbiotics are gaining traction as pet parents recognize the gut-immune [connection](#).” Additionally, MarketsandMarkets [indicated](#) joint health products (e.g., glucosamine), soft chews and calming/anxiety formulations are also seeing rapid uptake among pet owners.

Shanan M. Carney, chief branding officer at pet supplement manufacturer Petnutra, said the fastest growth is in supplements that support several interconnected systems rather than single-symptom solutions. “Precision nutraceuticals that recognize breed-specific health challenges and genetic predispositions are also emerging,” she added.

According to Colton Clason, senior marketing manager for pet nutrition at ADM, the fastest-growing pet supplement format is soft chews. “Much like functional gummies for humans, soft chews provide a tasty reward with the added advantages of convenience and wellness benefits,” he stated.

He also suggested that while there’s exceptional growth in condition-specific supplements for dogs, cats are no longer being left behind. According to Euromonitor International’s 2025 [report](#) on global pet care trends, the feline wellness market is poised for growth with an 8.3% CAGR through 2030. Cat owners are also expected to purchase





more premium wellness items that are priced 25% to 30% higher. The report highlighted the growing demand for holistic solutions addressing issues like obesity (affecting 61% of U.S. cats) and stress.

### Modern pet supplements

One trend that hasn't faded among pet care and ownership trends is humanization. As pet owners notice that animal companions seem to deal with body discomfort and issues similar to their own, it's only natural that they seek dog- and cat-friendly condition-specific supplements. Bookout observed, "As a general rule, the pet industry is a fast-follow industry. So with some exceptions, what we see trending in popularity on the human side – in a great many cases – these products or product categories also pick up steam on the pet side."

Lauren Clardy, senior director of branded ingredients at supplier Maypro, observed that similar human/animal areas of concern include stress, weight management and metabolic support, and immune support for senior pets.

Carney suggested the microbiome as another target, and that pet owners have moved from simple probiotics to targeted microbiome balancing for the additional potential to help promote immunity and metabolic health. She stated, "The microbiome

research in pets is just getting started, and we're excited to see what it shows."

Mushrooms are another ingredient booming in the human and pet supplement markets. Robert J. Silver, DVM, chief veterinary officer at ingredient supplier Nammex/Real Mushrooms, maintained, "Mushrooms are having their moment in the pet marketplace, much like CBD had previously, without the onerous regulatory complexity and confusion that hindered marketing and selling CBD." Silver holds an FACVBM certification, a specialty that involves using medicinal plants to treat animals. He reported seeing increased inclusion of turkey tail (*Trametes versicolor*), reishi (*Ganoderma lucidum*), shiitake (*Lentinus edodes*), maitake (*Grifola frondose*) and chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*) in immune-support products; lion's mane (*Hericium erinaceus*) and reishi in calming formulas; and cordyceps (*Cordyceps sinensis*) and reishi in mobility support products.

Pet supplement brand Dr. Fossom's Pet Care provides formulas – many of which include CBD – for canine mobility, itching/allergies, calming, cognitive function and more. According to COO Sean Ford, "We always start with a specific indication. We look at the current market to see if there is an unmet need, and if so, we work with experts to develop their 'dream' product." He continued, "Longevity and

overall long-term health are top concerns for pet parents. Rising veterinary care costs are influencing decisions, as pet owners look for preventive solutions that can help manage health and reduce future expenses.”

### Emerging niches

One niche being explored for pets is supplements that support master signaling molecules, Carney observed. “The most compelling opportunity lies in ingredients that support internal communication networks – hormones like GLP-1 [glucagon-like peptide-1], adiponectin and insulin signaling pathways. This represents a fundamental paradigm shift from symptom management to upstream biological optimization.”

Promoting vibrant longevity is a growing priority, with the average pet lifespan ranging 10 to 15 years. Ip concurred, “While still emerging, longevity-focused biotech innovations – like supplements aimed at extending pets’ healthy lifespans – represent an exciting frontier.”

Beyond condition-specific niches, other factors are impacting pet supplement use and trends. Pet health trackers, for example, can monitor a pet’s activity, heart rate, respiratory rate, rest, drinking habits, itch behaviors and more. Carney pointed out the potential of biomarker-driven products. “Pet parents are increasingly data-driven in their purchasing decisions. With at-home testing becoming more accessible, supplements targeting specific biomarker improvements such as inflammatory markers, oxidative stress indicators, etc., represent a significant opportunity,” she maintained.

One example for cat enthusiasts is Petivity, an AI (artificial intelligence)-driven health monitoring app that delivers alerts about urinary tract infections (UTIs), diabetes, hyperthyroidism and kidney disease through the cat’s deposits in kitty litter and provides monthly health profile reports.



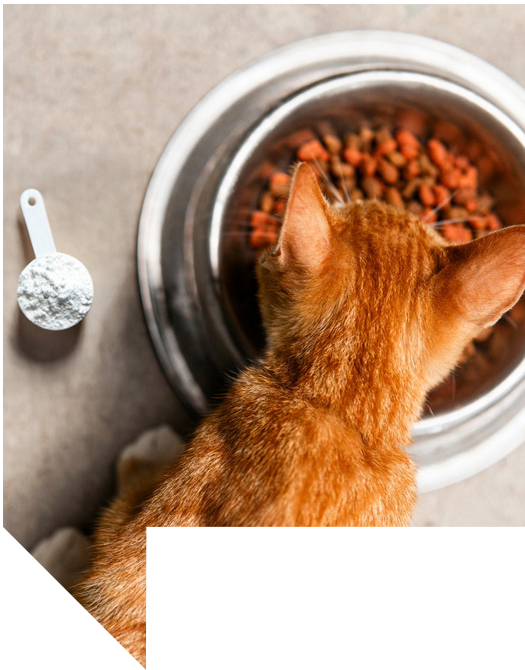
## Hemp redefined: Pet product alert

The government funding package President Donald Trump signed into law on Nov. 12, 2025, did more than end the government shutdown. It also contained a provision that will affect most THC and many CBD products – including those for pets – even with relatively low levels of hemp actives. Effective 12 months after the law’s enactment, federally legal hemp products can only contain:

- **0.4 mg or less of total THC per container.**
- **Plant-extracted (as opposed to synthesized) cannabinoids – irrespective of the concentration.**

Additionally, pet supplement manufacturers will be responsible for safely disposing of THC byproducts involved in processing, as they may qualify as controlled substances.

Pro-hemp and other industry groups are exploring next steps, whether trying to advocate for less stringent standards and/or to help pet supplement brands navigate implementation. -KB



### Navigating the regulatory landscape

Historically, Clason pointed out, pet supplement development tended to be based on data extrapolated from human studies – operating under the assumption that similar effects would translate across species. This is changing quickly as more pet owners begin to understand that supplements often work differently in dogs and cats. These consumers also want to know exactly what to expect as the outcome (e.g., improved stools within a week, more energy after two days, etc.).

Clason said the pet care industry as a whole needs to commit to validating ingredient

efficacy through clinical trials designed specifically for dog and cat populations to ensure products are safe and truly effective for pet health. “This is especially needed for cats, as both clinical trials and product development have typically centered on dogs.”

The regulatory environment for creating dietary supplements to support pet health is somewhat labyrinthine. Clardy noted, “One of the biggest challenges for brands entering the pet health supplement market is navigating its regulatory ‘gray zone.’ Pet supplements don’t have a dedicated federal category – living somewhere between feed and veterinary products – so companies have to tread carefully with claims, labeling and approved ingredients.”

According to Bookout, it is imperative that both ingredient suppliers and finished products companies understand the regulatory requirements for animal products and the differences from human supplements. Three significant points he provided about the market are:

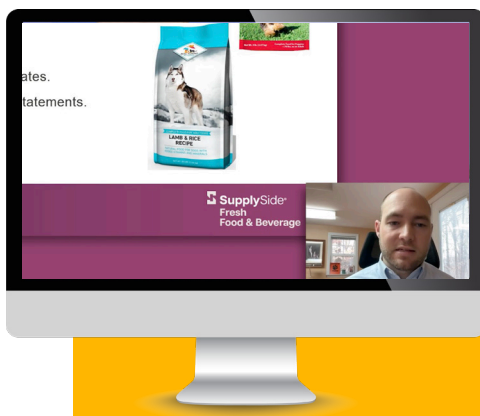
1. The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA) does not apply to animals, as pet supplements are not regulated the same as human dietary supplements.

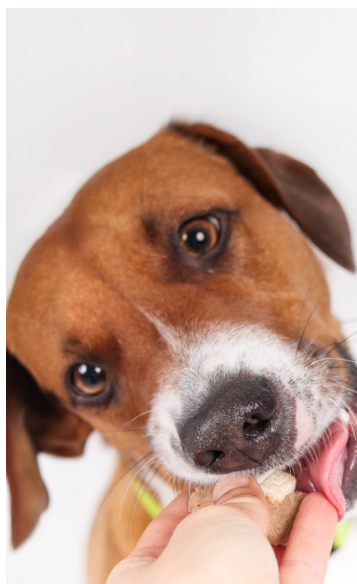


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### Pet food formulation: Information for newcomers

This [video](#) from SupplySide Fresh delves into the dynamic and expanding pet food market. Learn about the latest (ever-changing) regulatory guidelines around ingredients and pet food labeling requirements shaping innovation in this space.





## The animal supplement industry **is regulated** at two levels.

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2. The animal supplement and food industry is regulated at two levels – FDA’s Center for Veterinary Medicine (FDA-CVM) on the federal level, and potentially via additional oversight at the state level, depending on individual state statutes. Bookout underscored, “This means you may have 51 different regulatory agencies to deal with, depending on the positioning of your product based on the intended use.”
3. Ingredient suppliers need to understand that GRAS (generally recognized as safe) is species-specific, meaning GRAS for humans does not mean the ingredient is GRAS for animals. Further, GRAS determinations also consider the intended use or benefit of the ingredient when used in animal food.

Susan Hamrahi, N.D., scientific communications specialist at AstaReal Inc., suggested, “The absence of a unified, legally binding labeling framework for pet health supplements is a major operational

and strategic challenge for manufacturers.” Currently, pet supplement brands must comply with AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) regulatory requirements; however, these specifications are in the process of changing. If a pet supplement is positioned as a nutritional product, states may require it to comply with AAFCO’s “Guaranteed Analysis” format. Hamrahi said one major challenge is that this labeling system was built for traditional feeds, not complex supplement formulations.

For example, for human supplements, the Supplement Facts panel is mandated by FDA. In contrast, pet supplements lack a formal labeling framework, unless treated as either animal feed (which uses AAFCO’s Guaranteed Analysis format), or animal drugs, which require FDA-reviewed labeling.

“This leads to inconsistent and often noncompliant labels in the marketplace,” she asserted. “Manufacturers must proactively bridge this gap through voluntary standards,

Clinical veterinarians are becoming **more sophisticated** in their knowledge about natural ingredient mechanisms.

legal expertise and scientifically responsible marketing, while advocating for clearer federal regulations that would mirror the transparency and consistency of the human supplement industry.”

But Clardy is optimistic, saying she expects regulatory oversight will become more formalized and align more closely with human supplement standards, which will raise the bar but also help legitimize the category. “Consumer expectations will keep pushing the market toward transparency, sustainability and condition-specific solutions, creating opportunities for brands that are proactive, science-forward and willing to go beyond minimum compliance,” she predicted.

### What about the science?

Consumers expect quality studies that support the claims on the supplements they purchase for their own use, and this applies to supplements for their pets, too. But the scientific evidence for animals is not as plentiful and can be murky.

Silver observed, “In many cases, as in the human realm, science is used to market products. But it’s not always being used accurately, rather more of in a pseudo-science

context,” a trend he noted seeing regularly on TikTok.

One example he offered is people claiming turkey tail mushroom helps reduce the size of (or even eliminate) lipomas, when little objective evidence supports it.

Clardy pointed out that pet owners – and retailers – are increasingly skeptical of borrowed science from human studies; they want to see clinical research showing the supplement works to support the health of dogs or cats. “Brands that commit to generating their own species-specific data will build stronger credibility, differentiate themselves in a crowded market and create a foundation for meaningful, compliant marketing claims,” she said.

According to Carney, more supplement companies are funding companion animal studies rather than relying solely on human or rodent data.

Additionally, veterinary colleges have begun establishing nutraceutical research programs, and clinical veterinarians are becoming more sophisticated in their knowledge about natural ingredient mechanisms. Biomarker validation tools like canine frailty index (CFI) and health-related quality of life (HRQOL) scores are also being employed in research settings and



veterinarian clinical practice, which she said provides measurable endpoints for supplement efficacy.

In addition, she noted, recent peer-reviewed research on canine aging biomarkers is directly informing supplement development. A 2025 [study](#) examining metabolic aging in 451 companion dogs identified specific signaling molecule changes that correlate with frailty and quality of life decline. “Notably, these patterns reflect sustained dysfunction (declining adiponectin, compensatory hyperinsulinemia) rather than transient fluctuations, reinforcing the translational logic for interventions that sustain signaling molecules, just as human longevity research has shown sustained signaling to be more protective than short-term shifts,” Carney explained.

### Pondering pet product development

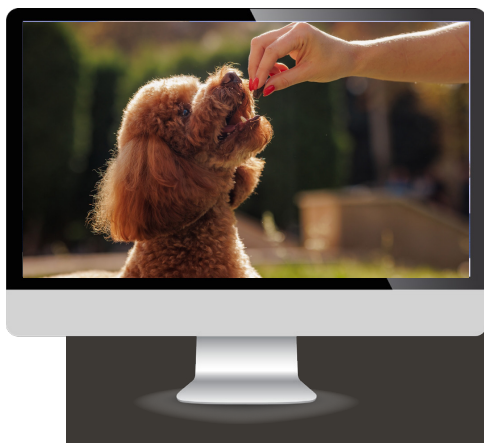
Clinical support for the potential impact of a range of ingredients on human health abounds, but the number of ingredients being studied for pets (primarily dogs) is also on the rise. These ingredients address common concerns ranging from “doggie breath” to metabolic health. Consider the following examples:

**Energy:** Both young and geriatric dogs that were given 20 mg astaxanthin daily for 16 weeks [showed](#) improved mitochondrial function via increased ATP (adenosine triphosphate) production, mitochondria mass and cytochrome c oxidoreductase activity,



especially in geriatric dogs, Hecht reported. Astaxanthin feeding also increased the reduced-glutathione-to-oxidized-glutathione ratio in young dogs, and reduced nitric oxide (NO) in both young and geriatric dogs.

**Immune system support:** Astaxanthin supports a healthy immune response in both cats and dogs, according to Hecht. In dogs, dietary astaxanthin [increased](#) concentrations of



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### Functional or forbidden? Navigating the gray area of pet treats with health benefits

As pet brands blur the line between treats and supplements, they're entering an often-murky area where innovation can outpace regulation. In this recorded session from SupplySide Global 2025, experts discuss the regulatory status of pet products and how to navigate the nuances.

IgG and IgM, and B cells. Further, plasma concentrations of c-reactive protein (CRP) were lower in astaxanthin-fed dogs. Similarly, cats fed astaxanthin [showed](#) increased concentrations of plasma IgG and IgM.

**Digestion:** When it comes to gut health, Clardy maintained, “A healthy gut is foundational to overall pet wellness.” In a 2021 [study](#), 22 healthy dogs were given antibiotics. An hour later, half the dogs received a placebo, and the other half got a probiotic and prebiotic combination. The results showed that dogs receiving the synbiotic (prebiotic, probiotic combo) supplement experienced improved stool quality and reduced digestive upset.

**Microbiota:** Researchers examined the role of green tea polyphenols in canine microbiota in an 18-week [study](#). Dogs were fed either a normal diet or high-fat diet with low (0.48% g/kg), medium (0.96% g/kg) or high (1.92% g/kg) doses of green tea polyphenols for 18 weeks. These polyphenols decreased the relative abundance of Bacteroidetes and Fusobacteria and increased the relative abundance of Firmicutes. Ip said, “In addition, the modulation of several bacteria species were significantly associated with [green tea polyphenol]-induced weight loss, and green tea polyphenols were found to reduce expression of inflammatory cytokines.”

In another example, Silver said lion’s mane mushroom was [shown](#) to improve the health of the microbiome in dogs.

**Weight and metabolic health:** A 12-week [study](#) showed that dogs who were fed nutritional doses of green tea extract for 12 weeks experienced improved insulin sensitivity and lipid profiles, and altered expression of the genes involved in glucose and lipid homeostasis.

In an unpublished study, ADM’s PRIOME Metabolic Health (heat-treated *Bifidobacterium animalis* subsp. *lactis* CECT



## The **nuances** of ingredient **marketing** for pet ‘supplements’

by Asa Waldstein

The pet “supplement” ingredient market is evolving, led by groups such as the National Animal Supplement Council ([NASC](#)). Ingredient companies should proceed carefully, though: The legal pathways are narrow, and noncompliance can trigger FDA action or retailer rejection. Under federal law, the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA) does not apply to animals, where products are regulated as animal food (using AAFCO [Association of American Feed Control Officials]-defined ingredients that provide nutrition, flavor, aroma or a technical effect), or as drugs if claims imply treatment or prevention of disease. For nonnutritive botanicals (e.g., ashwagandha, aka *Withania somnifera*), NASC helps members document species-specific safety, such as using certain ingredients in cat or dog products. NASC also helps define intended use.

Most FDA enforcement in this space focuses on finished product marketing. However, ingredient suppliers aiming to equip their customers for success should provide compliant information, including avoiding disease claims such as arthritis or anxiety. The animal supplement space is a vibrant and continually progressing category, thanks to groups like NASC who are helping to guide the way.

*Asa Waldstein is the principal of consulting company [Supplement Advisory Group](#).*



**Pomegranate peel extract** as an oral paste was found by researchers to be a viable option for use to improve **oral hygiene.**



8145) demonstrated a significant reduction in postprandial blood glucose levels in adult dogs, which suggests the postbiotic's potential to support metabolic health.

**Skin and coat health:** Dogs may often endure dry, itchy skin, which can create dandruff-like flakes, as well as excessive shedding and dull-looking coats. Clardy said, “Maypro’s L-92 *Lactobacillus acidophilus* is a postbiotic that has been shown to be effective in providing dogs with relief from skin.” An unpublished study indicated L92 significantly improved skin conditions in dogs presenting suspected allergies. Additionally, L-92 was validated through multiple human studies for supporting [immune](#) health and skin [allergies](#), demonstrating its potential in modulating the gut microbiome and supporting immune health.

Oligonol, also from Maypro, is a “patented, low-molecular-weight polyphenol for excellent absorption, as typical flavonoids have limited bioavailability due to high molecular weights,” she explained. In an unpublished study, Oligonol demonstrated to be beneficial in supporting dogs with dermatological conditions.

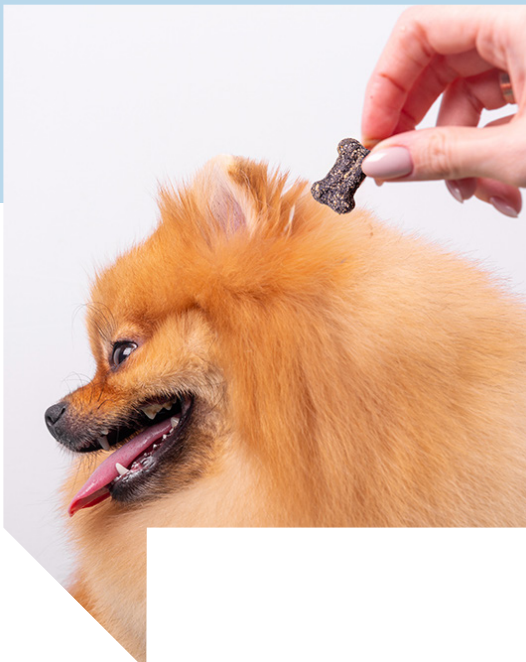
According to Clason, ADM’s PRIOME Skin Health, a postbiotic blend of heat-

treated *Bifidobacterium longum* CECT 7347, *Lactiseibacillus casei* CECT 9104 and *Bifidobacterium animalis* subsp. *lactis* CECT 8145, showed in unpublished research to support healthy skin.

**Oral health:** A new [study](#) on *Lactiplantibacillus plantarum* CECT 9161 strain in its heat-treated postbiotic form (as ADM’s PRIOME Oral Care) demonstrated its potential to support oral health in adult dogs by contributing to a healthy oral microbiome and reduced dental plaque formation. In the randomized blinded placebo-controlled clinical trial, 60 healthy adult dogs were fed a dry kibble diet with low-dose or high-dose PRIOME Oral Care for 57 days.

Dogs receiving the high-dose postbiotic showed a 10% reduction in dental plaque accumulation. An overall trend toward reduced dental plaque formation was observed in the low-dose group compared to placebo. Clason noted this was the first clinical trial of the ingredient’s ability to reduce dental plaque formation in dogs and support their oral microbiome.

And pomegranate peel extract as an oral paste was [found](#) by researchers to be “a viable option for use to improve oral hygiene, helping



If a dog or cat won't eat the product, it **doesn't matter** how good the science is.

to reduce the bacterial component of dental plaque in dogs.”

Results of a canine oral-bacteria [study](#) showed that EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate) can inhibit the growth and biofilm formation of *S. mutans* and that it interacts with other components of the bacterial membrane to inhibit biofilm formation.

### Critical considerations for formulating

Much like small children, if a supplement isn't appealing to the tastebuds, a dog or cat will go to great lengths to ensure the nutraceutical isn't swallowed.

The palatability problem is often the most critical priority to resolve. Clardy agreed, “If a dog or cat won't eat the product, it doesn't matter how good the science is. We always recommend that manufacturers work with

our contract manufacturing partners and our technical team early in the pet supplement R&D [research and development] process to make sure our ingredient's taste, smell and texture fit the finished product. Sometimes that means tweaking the dosage form, using natural flavor maskers, or choosing delivery formats like soft chews or toppers that pets naturally love.”

She also suggested running simple palatability tests – such as a two-bowl choice test – to see if a formulation is tolerated or if the dogs show excitement about eating it. For canines, chicken, peanut butter and bacon flavors are tried-and-true winners, while cats often prefer salmon, tuna or chicken profiles with a savory umami note. “At the end of the day, a supplement has to be something pets look forward to, because that's what keeps compliance high and ensures they actually get the benefit of the ingredients,” Clardy commented.

Silver claimed that many mushroom extracts can be palatable, such as shiitake, maitake, oyster [*Pleurotus ostreatus*], cordyceps and lion's mane. “These mushrooms need only a





One **red-flag caution** Bookout mentioned when brands are developing pet supplements is to avoid calling them a **“functional treat”** – a term he would like to see banished.

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minor amount of help in a formula to ensure palatability,” he said. Reishi, turkey tail as well as chaga, to some extent, have more challenging taste profiles, and will need more tweaking to enhance palatability.

Astaxanthin, Hecht said, can present challenges in taste and smell, which are critical factors for pet acceptance. To ensure the ingredient’s organoleptic attributes are appealing to dogs and cats, she recommended five tips for manufacturer success:

**1. Use flavor-masking agents:** Formulations can incorporate masking agents to neutralize algal oils.

**2. Embrace microencapsulation:** Encapsulating astaxanthin can help mask its natural odor and taste while also protecting the ingredient from oxidation.

**3. Blend with high-palatability ingredients:** Combine astaxanthin with highly palatable carriers, such as peanut butter, cheese or liver powder.

**4. Test with target species:** Conduct palatability trials with dogs and cats to fine-tune formulations.

**5. Incorporate into treat-like formats:** Deliver astaxanthin in formats pets enjoy, such as soft chews, biscuits or flavored powders, to make supplementation feel like a reward.

While it has been historically difficult to include functional ingredients in thermally extruded products due to challenges with ingredient degradation, ADM’s Clason assured that PRIOME postbiotics maintain functionality through extrusion, providing an opportunity to create cat supplements in a palatable format.

And here’s where the differences between cats and dogs may be more visible. “Cats are notoriously picky eaters and require a specialized approach to supplements,” Clason said. Therefore, ADM created what he calls “pillow” supplements that consist of a crunchy pillow-shaped exterior with a creamy and flavorful filling, offering a texture and flavor that cats should find appealing. “As a new spin on this popular format, our scientists are



formulating functional fillings for pillows, so cat parents can deliver health and wellness benefits in a supplement format.”

One red-flag caution Bookout mentioned when brands are developing pet supplements is to avoid calling them a “functional treat” – a term he would like to see banished. He explained that “treat” is a food term, and “this one word defines the regulatory path as food. Any ‘function or claim’ for a benefit other than taste, aroma, nutritional value (like calories) or technical effect (a preservative for example) could cause the product to be considered ‘misbranded.’”

Additionally, Bookout emphasized, if the finished product contains ingredients not approved for use in animal food, it would be considered adulterated and subject to regulatory action. “Most of these products are ‘health supplements’ in larger delivery forms to

facilitate animal acceptance and palatability,” he noted.

## Fresh forces to shape the market in 2026

The pet supplement market is rapidly evolving, galvanized by a heightened respect and appreciation for the family dog and cat. As consumers continue to incorporate new supplements into their own routines, they are extending that behavior to their pets, typically seeking out multiple specific nutraceutical products. Ip expects to see stronger demand from pet owners for gut health products (especially probiotics), longevity and healthy aging formulas (joint, cognitive, antioxidant support), and calming/stress management solutions.

Carney believes 2026 will be the year of “biological sophistication” in pet supplements. “The market is moving beyond ingredient lists toward mechanism understanding,” she added.

She predicted three major forces will drive the upcoming trends:

### 1. Biomarker-driven purchasing:

- At-home testing will become mainstream, allowing pet owners to measure inflammatory markers, oxidative stress and metabolic indicators.
- Dietary supplements will be positioned not just for general health but for specific biomarker improvement.
- “Before and after” blood-panel marketing may become standard.

### 2. Master signaling molecule adoption:

- The paradigm shift from symptom-specific to systems-based supplementation will accelerate.
- Rather than separate joint, digestive and cognitive products, formulators will focus on upstream mechanisms – think master signaling molecules like GLP-1, adiponectin and inflammatory mediators that influence multiple systems simultaneously with the emphasis shifting toward sustained, not transient, effects.



## The line between **supplements** and **veterinary** **therapeutics** will blur.

### 3. Veterinary integration evolution:

- The line between supplements and veterinary therapeutics will blur.
- More veterinarians will recommend specific supplement protocols based on individual pet biomarkers and genetic predispositions.
- This clinical integration will drive quality standards toward pharmaceutical-grade requirements.

Carney noted, “Several forces seem likely to influence where the market goes next. Regulators are signaling interest in clearer, more unified standards, and large pet-food companies are beginning to invest more in companion-animal research. We’re also watching technology push toward greater personalization, with AI opening the door to recommendations tailored by breed, age and lifestyle.”

Ip offered her take on four trends that could direct and shape the pet supplement market throughout 2026:

1. Pet humanization will continue to become normalized as consumers expect human-grade quality and clinical validation for dog and cat supplements. In tandem, animal owners are looking for products that are sustainable, clean label, traceable and transparent.
2. Regulatory support will keep developing, as NASC and AAFCO move toward clearer frameworks that help raise standards.
3. Innovation will progress in delivery formats such as powders and subscription-based personalized packs.
4. Veterinarians will become more confident recommending supplements as evidence-based studies supporting their use increase.

“In short,” she concluded, “the natural pet health product market of 2026 will be more science-driven, transparent and tailored – shaped by consumer expectations that their pets receive the same standard of care and innovation they demand for themselves.” ■



# The story of the **NASC Quality Seal:** A conversation with **Bill Bookout**



SupplySide Supplement Journal recently sat down with Bill Bookout – the knowledgeable and occasionally outspoken president of the National Animal Supplement Council – to discuss the NASC Quality Seal and its relevance in the pet supplement space.



## **SupplySide Supplement Journal: What's the foundation behind your organization?**

**Bill Bookout:** Members of the National Animal Supplement Council (NASC) are responsible suppliers of animal health and nutritional supplements from around the globe. They are committed to quality, vigilance, and continuous improvement for their companies and the animal supplement industry. When you see the NASC Quality Seal on a pet supplement, you'll know it comes from a responsible supplier that has passed a comprehensive third-party quality audit and maintains ongoing compliance with rigorous NASC quality standards, including product quality assurance, adverse event reporting, stringent labeling compliance and random product testing.

## **Supplement Journal: Can you share more about the basis for the 'rigorous quality standards?'**

**Bookout:** There are published quality standards for many different types of products. For example:

- Drug manufacturers must comply with 21 CFR Part 211.
- Food Safety Modernization Act for Human Food (FSMA) – 21 CFR Part 117.
- Human Dietary Supplements – 21 CFR Part 111.
- Food Safety Modernization Act for Animal Food (FSMA) – 21 CFR Part 507.
- NASC Quality Standards are a hybrid standard derived from 21 CFR Part 111 and some components of 21 CFR Part 507 for food safety and preventive controls.

So, when someone tells you, "We follow cGMPs [current good manufacturing practices]," the very next question one should ask is, "What standards do you follow?" Unless you know the specific standard, just saying "We follow cGMPs" is meaningless.



### Supplement Journal: What's involved when a company wants to become a member of your organization?

**Bookout:** Many companies call and would like to join NASC because they initially think joining will grant them permission to use the NASC Quality Seal. Joining NASC is really a two-step process. First, companies must qualify to join and agree to uphold our quality standards for cGMPs, labeling, claims, independent product testing and adverse event reporting. The seal can only be used once the member company passes our independent audit, where the implementation steps are verified in a process similar to an inspection by a regulatory agency like FDA.

Currently, nearly 70% of our members complete the audit, and the process takes about 120 days. The seal is becoming more and more recognized by both pet owners as well as retailers, and is becoming a factor in their buying decision – for pet supplement users, or retailers when they decide what products to carry. Quality products start with quality raw materials, produced to written quality processes and verified through audits and inspections. Quality is always a journey and never a destination, and the NASC Quality Audit helps answer the “trust but verify” question.

### Supplement Journal: What's one thing that often surprises companies when they come on board with NASC?

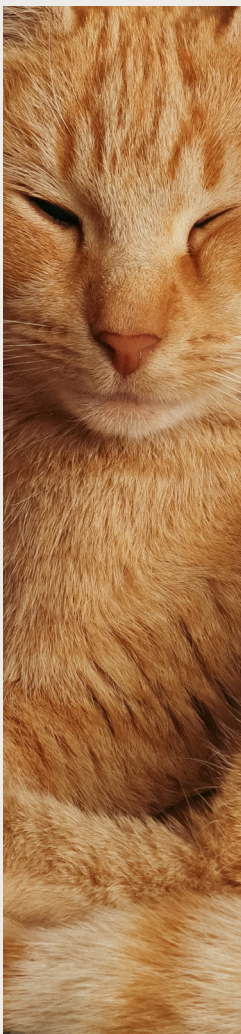
**Bookout:** The greatest hurdle or possibly epiphany moment for most companies I talk with about the NASC requirements – labeling products properly, acceptable claims, having a written quality manual, etc. – is that they are all requirements under the law, with or without NASC. There are many companies when I first speak to them and I ask if they have a written quality manual, they will say, no, our contract manufacturer has one.

Surprise! The company that markets the product and offers it for sale is responsible for verifying all upstream processes that are being performed satisfactorily, as well as having written documentation for the processes that they are responsible for – and those requirements are different for the contract manufacturer than they are for the brand/marketing company. The brand bears the ultimate responsibility for quality, [regardless of] whether they actually manufacture the product. Putting together their written quality manual usually takes the longest step to complete in getting ready for the actual audit.

### Supplement Journal: What are some of the new topics for your annual continuing education program?

**Bookout:** We have various continuing education programs and initiatives that we routinely conduct. A few examples are:





- Labeling/claims training webinars for both industry and regulators.
- Webinars to spotlight new Preferred Suppliers to highlight new research, testing methods, production processes or new ingredients.
- We have conducted training/educational programs for the new pet food labeling and modernization initiatives from AAFCO [Association of American Feed Control Officials] and FDA-CVM (Center for Veterinary Medicine).
- We have an annual conference, which is really more of an executive business event and not a trade show.
- We participate and speak regularly in various trade shows, regulatory meetings, or at colleges and universities.
- We offer to conduct training and educational programs for retailers or retail groups.
- We also have individual training programs for NASC member companies.

### Supplement Journal: What areas will NASC be advocating for in 2026?

**Bookout:** I will give you some breaking news. NASC is going to expand our scope to also include companies marketing true “treats” for animals, in addition to the nutritional and health supplement products our members currently provide.

We are certainly industry advocates for issues that impact the entire industry – such as the impact of tariffs, consistency in regulating the products under our scope – and we will certainly continue to advocate for quality processes and responsible conduct within our industry. Our entire team takes great pride in knowing that through our members’ products, we make a positive difference in the lives of millions of animals every day. At our core, this is what drives our organization and our team. ■



Lisa Schofield is a veteran writer and editor who got her start interviewing rock stars for national music magazines. She now writes and edits content for B2B media and suppliers in the natural health product industry. She has served as editor for Vitamin Retailer and Nutrition Industry Executive, and prior to that as associate editor for Whole Foods.

  
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