

6 MARCH 2021

The Grocer Guide to...

The Grocer

Petcare


WHICH PET BRAND IS GROWING MORE THAN 10X FASTER THAN THE CATEGORY?*

Butcher'sTM
NOURISHING
FOOD
FOR DOGS




OUR BIGGEST ATL INVESTMENT TO DATE FUELLING GROWTH IN 2021

*IRI, SIG Pet Food Category, Value Sales, to 52 w/e 30th January 2021 – Total Market



Claws for concern?

With Covid-19 helping to accelerate pet ownership in 2020, how are petcare suppliers feeling about their performance last year as they face into the economic realities of 2021

 Generally considered a doggedly recession-proof industry, the petcare sector is facing into the UK's current economic woes with a certain degree of confidence.

Having marked up 5% growth¹ during the global economic recession of 2009, its resilience is noteworthy. UK consumers love their pets – of that there is little doubt – and the sheer increase in dog ownership during the Covid-19 lockdowns of 2020 is just one indicator of how much canine companionship brings to families otherwise starved of wider external familial affection.

“Dog food has always been the most recession-proof category,” says Forthglade Foods sales director James Kennedy. “In the last recession it was one of the very few categories that didn't decline... and that includes baby

food. As a business and brand we're incredibly fortunate to operate in a category that has performed robustly throughout the challenges of 2020 and into the new year.”

As such, the petcare industry is estimated to have grown 20% year-on-year, according to Tim Hansell, CEO at Skinner's. “With over 9.9 million dogs in the UK, the pet food care industry has gone from strength to strength in recent years. It's now a powerhouse worth over £2.9bn²,” he says.

“While every business has had real challenges throughout the pandemic, it's fair to say that petcare and pet food has been a relatively resilient category, only showing signs of future growth as not only does pet ownership continue to increase, but owners are paying more attention than ever to the quality of their pets' food,” adds Jurgen

Degrande, founder and top dog sales pack leader at Edgard & Cooper.

Meanwhile, dog food suppliers are not the only ones to benefit from positive market trends.

Paul Trott, UK marketing manager for accessories brand Catit, which has only recently entered the pet food market, says it has seen double-digit growth over the past 12 months. “The pet market overall has benefited from the pandemic and lockdown measures, with people spending more time at home with their pets, many of whom have acquired a new pet during 2020, leading to a greater overall spend on pet products,” he says.

“Quality time together” means pet owners are truly getting to know their pets' daily routines and favourite places, adds HiLife managing director Tony Parkinson. “Growing by more



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than 40% over the past year, our HiLife its only natural treats are clearly hitting the spot with cats and their owners," he says.

Online vs bricks and mortar

With many pet owners having turned to online sources for their pet food during an unprecedented year, the question now is whether the convenience of this form of shopping for what can be a relatively heavy product, will continue beyond lockdown or whether consumers will return to traditional outlets to secure their pets' nutrition.

When it comes to online shopping, Philip Cotterill, head of insight at Butcher's, believes Covid-19 has simply "pressed 'fast-forward' on a pre-existing category trend". "During the pandemic, many shoppers will have discovered a frictionless online

experience for the first time and will stay with this way of shopping. The challenge now for retailers is how shoppers experiment with newness in this channel as this will be a key determinant of future success."

During lockdown, "a significant proportion of shoppers who shifted into other channels for their pet food purchases do not plan to come back to traditional bricks and mortar," says Chris Payne, senior brand manager for Harringtons at Inspired Pet Nutrition (IPN). "The sector channel dynamics have evolved extremely quickly in the last 12 months and operators have had to react quickly to keep up with the changing shopping patterns. Our own direct-to consumer (DTC) platform, coupled with a rise in sales through the digital channels, have demonstrated that this is likely to be the new normal.

"In many cases [with pet food] being a bulk purchase, we anticipate that shoppers will retain these purchase behaviours once restrictions ease as the convenience and choice available online wins over. However, we still strongly believe in the traditional routes-to-market and our strategy is to support this new omni-channel approach going forwards," he adds.

Others suppliers agree that pet food will continue to remain an omni-channel category. Edgard & Cooper's Degrande notes: "DTC sales have seen, on average, a sustained 30%+ uplift versus pre-pandemic as a result of shifting shopping behaviour during the pandemic," he says. "However, this trend may not accelerate at the same rate going forward. We view the recent adoption of online ordering to be an acceleration of an already existing

Analysis

trend. We expect many shoppers to stay with their new shopping behaviours and the numerous benefits online shopping offers. That said, our bricks-and-mortar business remains both significant and strategically important to our success.”

While online retail will always play a big part in sales, says Forthglade’s Kennedy, the company is excited about seeing traditional bricks-and-mortar stores flourish again. “Undoubtedly, as lockdown one started, we saw our sales through online retailers grow significantly. However, what is pleasing is that independent pet shops and pet specialists have also proved very resilient and adapted to the many restrictions placed on them. In terms of trends post-lockdown, we believe we will see a renaissance in people wanting to visit shops and interact with each other.”

Nutrition and treats

As consumers have increasingly focused on their own health and wellbeing during the periods of Covid-19 lockdown, they have also extended these concerns to their pets, in many cases seeking out variety, as well as premium and natural nutrition, often coloured by their own dietary choices.

“While shoppers can select alternatives and introduce variety into their own diet, doing so for their pets presents more challenges,” says HiLife’s Parkinson. “Natural ingredients have continued to be a defining shopper trend throughout the past year, with category value driven by natural premium brands in both cat and dog, achieving strong growth ahead of the market.

“While humanisation of pet food is still present in the market, unlike human food – which has seen strong innovation in plant-based diets and the growth of home-prepared meals – the majority of cat and dog owners believe the optimum nutrition for health and wellbeing is best provided by trusted prepared pet food brands,” he adds. “Consumers are not prepared to compromise on what they feed their pets. Changing brands is not done lightly; an upset tummy or a bowl of rejected food can prove more expensive, disruptive and upsetting than being loyal to the brands owners know and trust to keep their pets healthy and happy.”



Skinner’s Hansell observes that, with increased exercise levels, from outdoor runs and walks with their dogs, owners are having to make more considered choices about their dietary needs. “More than ever before, owners are considering the composition of their dogs’ food, the quality of ingredients and whether it meets the energy demands of their dog,” he says.

“A recent pet food report revealed that 60% of dog buyers prioritise health benefits in their product choices³, while taste preference is the top purchase priority of dog owners, echoing the need for manufacturers to focus on both health and ethical credentials during product development.”

An important pillar for growth has been the increased interest in and demand for natural pet food, says IPN’s Payne. “With people spending more time with their pets and strengthening their bond with them, they are taking more interest in their nutrition and seek out the same transparency and goodness that they expect in their own food.

“We’re also going to see a rise in

demand for appropriate lifestage and animal size products,” he adds. “The rise in the dog population has been driven, in particular, by smaller breeds, which have different nutritional needs – and, increasingly, brands will have to cater for this to capture the spend of this important dog-owning demographic.”

Premiumisation, a move to natural ingredients and high meat content brands continue to be the driving force behind the [dog food] category, says Forthglade’s Kennedy. “Dog owners are looking for clean and transparent labelling and, at Forthglade, we use high-quality raw ingredients, and we say on the front of the pack exactly what it contains.”

Grain-free is an area that is continuing to grow, he adds, and local provenance also plays a key role. As a Devon-based company, it has introduced a special recipe for its 50th anniversary – a sardines and haddock meal with fish landed locally in Devon.

Meanwhile, Catit’s Trott notes that the events of 2020 have only served to accelerate the sustainability and

Keeping marketing up to scratch

With two of the dog food brands featured in this supplement celebrating 50th anniversaries this year, much of their marketing focus will be based around this milestone.

Forthglade Foods is chalking up its 50th year of making natural dog food in Devon and will be launching a birthday recipe, as well as supporting 50 charities with 50,000 meals. As well as using POS kits in-store and tailored activity across the trade, the company will invest heavily in digital marketing, it says, “as we have found that

dog lovers are heavy users of the internet and social media for information, advice and sharing the love of their animals”.

Also recording its 50th birthday, Skinner’s is taking “an ambitious commercial reshape for 2021” with new-look packaging on its Field & Trial range, a new logo, a total brand refresh and sustainable packaging.

Beyond the birthday celebrations, Rachel Collinson, director – food for dogs at Butcher’s, maintains the company’s brand marketing approach has “driven more

category growth in 2020 than any other brand and delivered ROIs that are >60% better than the pet category average, as measured by IRI¹. “We have a unique approach to marketing and that is part of our recipe for success. In 2021, we are taking that recipe to the treats category,” she says.

Meanwhile, IPN brand Harringtons is involving social media increasingly as part of its overall marketing efforts. “We’re repurposing authentic customer recommendations to increase positive brand perception,

as well as promoting in-store deals across our retailers,” it says. “We’re working with multiple influencers on campaigns to reach new audiences and putting more time and effort into creating bespoke content for social media.”

Catit UK marketing manager Paul Trott agrees: “Now, more than ever, social media is the space consumers expect quality brands to live. It’s vital for pet brands such as Catit to interact and involve consumers in our conversations. Engage, react, communicate.”

premiumisation trend of recent years, “with over half of pet owners agreeing that sustainable ingredients in pet food are appealing⁴. At Catit we are developing products to meet this demand, with sustainable, eco-friendly cat litter ranges, natural grain-free wet foods and an exciting insect protein cat food launching soon.”

With responsible owners lovingly viewing their pets as part of the family, the instinct to reward and treat them is natural. In a recent customer insights survey, reveals Skinner’s Hansell, the research discovered that 93% of customers feed their dogs treats, with 40% of those being more than a few times a day⁵.

“Treating in both dog and cat sectors, has been the success story of 2020, says IPN’s Payne. “With families spending more time at home and the rise in pet ownership, treats have become an increasingly important pillar in the pet food offering. The impulse nature of this purchasing, particularly in non-functional treats, means that in-store activations and meaningful

shopper journey disruptions have increased basket spend.” He notes that the company’s Waggs brand has seen 25% growth⁶, with its broad appeal reflecting human eating trends, with products like Steaklets and Bangers.

Environmental pawprint

In tandem with health and wellbeing, concerns over the environment – and the recyclability and sustainability of pet food packaging – have come to the fore. Yet there is evidence to suggest that traditional pouches are still the preferred delivery format of choice for many consumers.

“The rise of the ethical and health-conscious consumer – and the wider spotlight on the sustainability agenda – has forced the somewhat traditional pet industry to rethink every aspect of its offering, from packaging to manufacturing to ingredients sourcing,” says Skinner’s Hansell.

“The pandemic has made people more aware of sustainability and their impact on the environment⁷, which is why, after 50 years of selling dog food

for working dogs, Skinner’s has not only updated its look and feel on its Field & Trial range, but also decided to make its packaging 100% recyclable.”

“Sustainability was a huge driving force before the pandemic and this has not changed,” says Butcher’s director – food for dogs Rachel Collinson. “If anything, with more pet parents working from home, there is now heightened awareness of what types of pet food packaging go into landfill versus those that are fully recyclable. 70% of pet owners are actively looking to reduce their environmental paw print⁸. In the last year, we’ve seen the value growth rate of dog pouches reduce by more than half⁹, which may signal that more shoppers are starting to think twice about plastic packaging.”

IPN’s Payne believes sustainability “has never been more important to the pet food category” and the company has focused on putting this at the core of its activities. “At the end of 2020, we were delighted to announce that we had become the first major pet food manufacturer to be carbon-negative¹⁰,”

Analysis



£2.9bn+

Value of the UK's
pet care industry²

Statistic provided by Skinner's

93%

Of customers feed their
dogs treats daily⁵

Statistic provided by Skinner's

60%

Of dog owners prioritise
health benefits in their
product choices³

Mintel, Pet Food Report 2020

he says. "Sustainability isn't new to us, it's part of our DNA."

The company is also moving to 100% recyclable dog food packaging this year, and other key initiatives include providing one million meals for pets in shelters and planting a tree for every employee, he says. "Shoppers are making more conscious buying decisions and, after the experience of 2020, may well look for brands to deliver on these cues."

"Sustainability in pet food will be the biggest trend we will see, as consumers look at their environmental impact across the board, including pet care," adds Skinner's Hansell. "Recent data has shown that 66% of dog food buyers would choose a brand that uses eco-friendly packaging over one that does not – and yet only 14% of UK pet food launches in 2019 featured sustainability credentials or claims¹¹."

However, with 80% of retailers finding customers' demands for sustainable packaging across their products has grown¹², says Skinner's "switching to sustainable packaging is no longer a choice but a vital strand of operations that needs to be addressed".

Skinner's has worked with Tetra Pak

for its updated packaging, made from over 70% paperboard. In addition, its new treat range is hand-baked, made with all natural ingredients and comes in a 100% eco-friendly Earthpouch, plastic-free paper packaging with an aqueous coating.

Yet while shoppers express an interest in sustainability, pouch continues to be the packaging of choice in both dog and cat food, offering convenience for the owner and variety and freshness for the pet, says Hilife's Parkinson. "The environmental conversation is not as simple as it first appears, with many traditional assumptions set to be challenged as understanding of overall carbon footprint develops," he says. "Thinking needs to be extended beyond kerbside recyclability to consider the full carbon footprint of different packaging types. When it comes to the impact on our environment, the weight, size and volume of packaging types are decisive criteria encompassing energy consumption during manufacture, distribution and storage efficiencies and a path to circular-driven solutions in the future."

Looking ahead

With the UK now heading once more into recession, do suppliers still feel their category is solid enough to withstand the difficulties ahead?

Degrande at Edgard & Cooper notes: "Having seen our UK business more than double in the last year, we're confident consumers are still willing to spend on brands that put quality of ingredients and good ethics at the heart of their business practice."

Butcher's Cotterill sums it up: "While the economic fallout of Covid-19 may put real strain on the household incomes of many dog owners, from previous recessions, we know they will not sacrifice the welfare of their dogs, regardless of personal circumstance. Our strategic category role of providing naturally nourishing food that is everyday affordable is now more important than ever."

Sources

¹ Euromonitor 2020, figure provided by Skinner's

^{2,5} Statistics provided by Skinner's

^{3,4} Mintel Pet Food Report, 2020

⁵ See 3

⁶ Statistics provided by IPN

⁷ Science Direct 2020

⁸ Butcher's Quant Research, UK dog owners, May 2020

⁹ Kantar, Total Market, 52 w/e 24 January 2021 vs prior

¹⁰ As accredited by Carbon Footprint Ltd

^{11,12} Mintel Pet Food Report, 2020

Marketing boxout

¹ IRI, SIG Dog Food to 52 w/e 20.06.20 – Major Multiples

Butcher's

Natural, healthy solutions

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Butcher's Tripe
Butcher's Puppy Perfect
Butcher's Simply Gentle
Butcher's Lean & Tasty
Butcher's Joints & Coat
Butcher's Nourishing Treats for Dogs

2020 has been another fantastic year for the Butcher's brand having grown more than 10 times faster than both the total dog and total pet category during a year in which we have seen unprecedented change, says Rachel Collinson, director – food for dogs. “The Butcher's brand has seen rapid growth throughout 2020 driven by the core belief in affordable natural food, a first-to-market move away from plastic packaging and a focus on providing natural health solutions to all dog owners,” she says.

Looking to the future, 2021 is set to be another huge year for Butcher's as the brand takes its recipe for success into the treats category with the launch of its new range of natural dog treats. “We are humbled by the support from our retail partners for our latest natural, sustainable innovation in the dog treats category in 2021,” says Collinson. This will be supported by a heavyweight national TV campaign, as well as big print and digital campaigns, which will run through the year.

Meeting modern owners' demands

Events last year have seen much change across most categories and dog food has been no exception. “The dog category is changing at a much faster rate than other ambient grocery categories and retailers need to ‘growth proof’ their fixture for the modern-mindset dog owner, who demand more natural and sustainably packaged food ranges,” says Philip Cotterill, head of insight at Butcher's. “Those who don't will see sales further migrate to pet and online specialists who are already doing this.”

In the last year, there has been an explosion of interest in dog ownership from new owners and, with this, comes a raft of new thinking and beliefs. The new wave of pet parents are much more engaged with the quality and nutritional content of the food they feed their dogs. Butcher's existing range of natural health solutions are already delivering double-digit growth¹ and, in order to further meet the needs of modern-mindset owners, this year Butcher's has expanded its range



“In the last year, there has been an explosion of interest in dog ownership from new owners and, with this, comes a raft of new thinking and beliefs”

of natural health solutions with the launch of Butcher's Joints & Coat across its portfolio of cans, foils and dog treats. “The addition of Joints & Coat to our range is an important step to ensure we provide a comprehensive range of natural health solutions to modern-mindset owners, who are much more engaged with health and nutrition both for themselves and their pets,” adds Cotterill.

Naturally nourished

Following phenomenal success in recent years, Butcher's now nourishes more dogs than any other brand of wet food², notes Natasha Bryant, senior brand manager. “We stand out because we are a family-run business with a passion for doing the right thing,” she says. “We believe every dog has the right to be able to eat naturally nourishing food, every day.”

The brand mission also extends to those less fortunate dogs that find themselves in the many rescue centres across the UK. Through its #NourishEveryDog brand campaign the company has donated over 1.4 million free meals to dogs in need across the UK, supporting more than 200 charities and thousands of dogs in their time of need.

Source

¹ IRI, SIG Pet Food Category, Value Sales, 52 w/e 30.01.21 – Total Market
² Kantar, Total Market, 52 w/e 24.01.21 (Based on having a higher penetration than any other wet food brand)

Butcher's™



NOURISHING FOOD FOR DOGS



DELIVERING CATEGORY GROWTH

SUPPORTED WITH A MULTI-MILLION £

10x

Butcher's has grown 10x faster than the market equating to 42% of total net growth for the pet category*

*IRI, SIG Pet Food Category, Value Sales, to 52 w/e 30th January 2021 – Total Market

Butcher's™



NOURISHING TREATS FOR DOGS



DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

NATIONAL TV, PRINT & DIGITAL CAMPAIGN



Made with natural ingredients and packaging that's recyclable. An everyday nourishing treat for dogs, meeting modern day consumer needs.

Armitage Pet Care

Great growth for Good Boy

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KEY BRANDS

Good Boy
Meowee!
Wild Bird

 Natural simplicity remains one of the most important drivers in the UK petcare market.

As pet parents have been spending more time at home with their dogs and the number of dogs has increased, the bond between pet parents and their dogs has become more important over the last 12 months. As a result, shoppers' demand for dog treats made with 100% natural ingredients, to reward their dogs with lovable and tasty treats, has become even stronger.

Good Boy continues to drive the total dog treat market growth with an increase of £13m in the last 52 weeks¹. In fact, the brand contributed around 75% of the total market growth², says brand owner Armitage Pet Care.

With this strong ethos and a heartfelt message, the brand ensures it stands out in the dog treat market, says Good Boy's sales director Rupert Phillips. "More than anything else, we want to make dogs happy and there's no denying that tasty treats do just that," he says.

"We continue to work extremely hard to create a diverse range of dog treats for all occasions with a variety of flavours and sizes. There's a Good Boy dog treat perfect for each and every dog out there. As we continue to do that, we will keep growing the dog treat category."

Quality is key

Nielsen has identified that 90% of dog owners treat their dogs regularly³, reveals Phillips. Pet parents spend a whopping £0.5bn a year on dog treats.



“More than anything else, we want to make dogs happy and there's no denying that tasty treats do just that”

Authenticity is becoming more important for dog treat buying customers, in the same way it is when it comes to feeding other loved ones in the family, he notes, so pet parents are naturally spending more on dog treats, leading to 9% market growth in the past two years⁴.

Dog owners are looking for trusted brands with treats that contain no artificial nasties, are made with 100% natural ingredients, and provide a single source of protein.

Innovation as a growth driver

Phillips adds: "In addition, dog owners are always looking for new ways to treat their dogs and this will continue to be an important accelerator of category growth."

As the trends in this market continue to follow those for humans, Good Boy will continue to innovate to ensure that it offers treats that meet the expectations of pet parents, he says. "Our aim is to continue to lead the growth of the category by providing tasty, natural and innovative ways for pet parents to show their dogs just how much they love them. We've launched some fantastic new products already this year, including Good Boy Chompers – our range of 100% natural daily dental chews, and Good Boy Oh So Natural, delicious fruit & vegetable treats wrapped in succulent chicken breast."

Source

^{1,2} Nielsen, Total Market EPOS, 52 w/e 26.12.20
^{3,4} Nielsen Panel, 52 w/e 26.12.19

GOOD BOY

“The UK’s most successful petcare brand”

The Grocer, Biggest Brands, March 2020

+£13 million sales in the last 52 weeks*

Enjoyed by more than 2.3m UK households**

Responsible for over 75% of total category growth in 2020*



Lip smackingly tasty dog treats made with 100% natural meat***



Find our range at www.goodboy.co.uk

*Nielsen Total Market EPOS 52wk end 26.12.20 | **Kantar 52wk end 14.06.20 | ***See pack compositions for details
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Edgard & Cooper

Leading the fresh revolution

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KEY BRANDS

Edgard & Cooper

Edgard & Cooper is on a mission to help people, their pets and our planet to feel good, it says. Founders Louis, Koen and Jurgen set up the company after becoming frustrated at the lack of tasty healthy options available for their dogs – named Edgard and Cooper. Their aim was to create a product packed with high-quality and familiar ingredients, while treading as lightly on the planet as possible.

Edgard & Cooper produced the world's first dog kibble with 100% fresh meat (no meat meal) and natural ingredients to offer pets optimal health and wellbeing, while not sacrificing taste. It then became the first brand to offer a full range of products packaged in 100% biodegradable materials (or endlessly recyclable metal). And a commitment to 100% closed-loop packaging forms part of its Zero Pawprint Plan.

The business has also donated over €160,000 to charity projects around the world, helping cats and dogs.



“The aim was to create a high-quality product while treading lightly on the planet”

Due to popular demand, the brand now offers a range of cat food, dog treats and, more recently, low-calorie plant-based dog dental sticks.

Since its UK launch in 2016, the brand has seen significant growth, doubling its revenue in the past year. Products are stocked on its website and in national retailers, including Sainsbury's, Pets at Home, Waitrose Pet and Ocado.

edgard Cooper

profit you can
FEEL GOOD ABOUT



First pet food brand with their full product range packaged in **100%** biodegradable materials or endlessly recyclable metal

World's first **100%** fresh meat dog kibble

1% of sales donated to charity

110% UK growth*

Secured **€22M** in venture capital investment



@EDGARDCOOPER

www.edgardcooper.com

Forthglade Foods

50th birthday starts with a bang

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KEY PRODUCTS

- Sardines & haddock with potato & broccoli, grain-free complete meal
- Beef with sweet potato & vegetables, grain-free complete meal
- Forthglade natural soft bites treats
- National Trust natural soft bites treats: chicken with duck or salmon with herring
- Forthglade cold pressed natural dry dog food: chicken with vegetables or duck with vegetables

“It’s a special year for Forthglade as we mark our 50th birthday,” says James Kennedy, sales director. “As the pioneers of natural wet dog food, our focus remains as strong today as in 1971 – making natural nutritious recipes with high-quality raw ingredients, no nasties and gentle cooking methods.

“It has been great to start 2021, with Your Dog magazine naming Forthglade the UK’s number one wet dog food in the coveted Product Awards,” he reveals. “Voted for by the magazine’s readers, it demonstrates the difference our natural meals make on a dog’s health and wellbeing. The range will also see two new recipes added: a delicious new beef meal, following the success of a limited-edition beef & pumpkin recipe last autumn; and, next month, a special sardines & haddock meal for dogs, with fish landed in our native Devon.

“As with all our complete wet meals, each recipe contains a minimum of 75% meat – beef or sardines and haddock



“Our focus remains on making natural nutritious recipes with gentle cooking methods”

in this instance – combined with tasty vegetables, vitamins and minerals and available in 395g trays (RRP £1.45).”

This year, Forthglade will also focus on its partnership with the National Trust, supporting its ‘Dogs Welcome’ project and improving access for canine companions. “Activities will also promote our co-branded, grain-free range, including four special gourmet wet meals and tasty hand-baked treats.”

natural
outperforms the
dog food category¹

Forthglade, the best performing natural wet brand in the top 5 growing at +18%²



natural
success
story

celebrating **50** years

– making tail-waggingly tasty, natural meals –

Launching our new birthday recipe with sardines & haddock landed in Devon.

Forthglade.com / trade@forthglade.com

¹ IRI Major Multiples 52w/c 2nd Jan 2021. ² IRI Major Multiples Value growth 52w/c 5th December 2020



HiLife

Beating the market... naturally

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KEY BRANDS

HiLife
HiLife it's only natural
HiLife Feed Me

Source
¹ Company Sales Out 2020

➔ Spending more time with our pets during these uncertain times has given a greater appreciation of how they enrich our lives. In response, more owners are turning to premium and luxury natural brands in both cat and dog food, resulting in strong growth ahead of the market, most notably outperforming mainstream brands.

Natural talent for growth continues

Tony Parkinson, MD for HiLife, says: "HiLife continues to go from strength to strength, with almost 30% growth from our HiLife premium and luxury natural ranges over the past 12 months¹, and isn't showing any sign of slowing. Clearly, the nation's cats and dogs are enjoying our natural recipes bowl after bowl."

HiLife it's only natural is perfectly positioned to address the needs of today's modern pet owner, he says. "Many homes have welcomed puppies and kittens during the Covid-19 restrictions and we are delighted that



“HiLife premium and luxury natural ranges have seen almost 30% growth and aren't showing any signs of slowing”

owners have sought to provide the best premium natural start for their new family members, with our HiLife it's only natural kitten food achieving 45%¹ growth over the second half of 2020.”

Cat treats... naturally successful

Also, with growth of over 40%¹, HiLife it's only natural cat treats demonstrate the trust pet owners put in the brand, he adds. "Natural ingredients are at the heart of our range and this won't change as we continue to build on its success."

HiLife
 it's only natural



Trusted by owners, loved by pets, naturally

100% Natural ingredients



- 🐾 Continued strong performance +30% YOY¹
- 🐾 Kittens thrive with healthy growth +45% YOY²
- 🐾 Luxury cat treats, natural winners 40% growth³

Source (company sales out): ¹ HiLife premium & luxury natural brands full year 2020 vs 2019.
² First half vs second half 2020. ³ Full year 2020 vs 2019

Rolf C Hagen UK

Catit moves into wet food sector

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KEY BRANDS

Catit
Fluval
Exo Terra
Zeus

Following nationwide success with its Creamy and Nibbly treat ranges, Catit has now launched its own premium wet cat foods, which will be the focal point of its extensive 2021 PR and promotional plans, says the company.

The last 12 months have seen significant growth in cat ownership, particularly among millennials, 54% of whom state they'd rather cut back on their personal spending in order to pamper their pets¹. Following the human trend for more natural, healthy foods, cat owners are also actively seeking healthier, more natural food for their pets, it notes.

"Catit's 'Divine Shreds' and 'Dinner' wet foods are totally grain-free and carefully formulated with all-natural fresh ingredients – so wholesome they could have been home-cooked," it says. "Each one is packed with nutritious protein and full of vitamins and minerals to help create the ideal, hydrating complement to a cat's daily



“The last 12 months have seen significant growth in cat ownership”

dry food diet. Dinners and Shreds are crammed with innovative superfoods to support health and wellbeing, including pumpkin and wakame to aid digestion and kale, a great source of Vitamin A, important for eye and bone health.

"With 20 flavour combinations to please even the fussiest of felines, join Catit on its journey into the wet food market and watch your sales soar."

Source

¹ Mintel, 2020

catit[®]

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KEY BRANDS

Harringtons
Wagg

 Overtaking Bakers to become the No.1¹ dry dog food has been a fantastic start to 2021 for the Harringtons brand, says owner Inspired Pet Nutrition. Only 12 years after launching in the UK the brand took the top spot and contributed £2.7m to category growth² in 2020.

Marketing director Chris Wragg comments: “We are justifiably proud of Harringtons’ achievement as a challenger brand. It has deposed legacy brands by bringing the benefits of natural and wholesome nutrition to the mainstream.”

Transparency and goodness

With more pet owners focused on the transparency and goodness that they expect to find in human food, the rise of natural has met these needs, he says. “With solutions across diets, such as Grain Free and limited ingredient Just 6 – a winner at the 2020 Product of the Year Awards – as well as pet size and lifestage, Harringtons is helping owners keep their pets happy and healthy in a natural way,” explains Wragg.

With the increase in pet ownership, Harringtons aims to be there at every stage of their life, and the recently launched Harringtons Puppy Club helps to guide new owners through a healthy and happy puppyhood, supported by TV’s The Yorkshire Vet Peter Wright. The brand will also continue to accelerate activity across social media channels to connect with new audiences, along with a new TV ad for 2021.

Fastest-growing wet dog food brand

“We’re also seeing the huge potential for the growth in natural outside the dry dog food sector,” says Wragg. “In the tray market, which is the fastest-growing wet dog food segment³, we’ve cemented our position as the No. 2 brand and, more importantly, we have the fastest-growing wet dog food brand in the UK⁴.”

Using innovative FreshCook™ technology, Harringtons Wet Dog Food offers superior taste by using human-grade ingredients that are gently



“We’re also seeing the huge potential for the growth in natural outside the dry dog food sector”

cooked to provide tasty, locked-in nutrition, he explains.

Often triumphing in taste tests and with new flavour and multipack variants launching in 2021, the brand is seeking further growth, supported by a £6m media spend on Harringtons in 2021.

Lockdown treats

Dogs have also enjoyed a rewarding lockdown with treats from the Wagg range, says Wragg.

“Driving category momentum and being the fastest-growing brand (LFL) in the rewards sector of treating⁵, Wagg’s 25% growth through exciting innovation has been valuable to retailers by bringing new shoppers into the category and encouraging shoppers to buy more,” he says.

Elsewhere in the brand, Wagg Dry Dog has cemented its position as the leading dry dog food by volume⁶ with a relaunch of its ‘Meatier & Mightier’ recipe, which states meat as the first ingredient. Subtle packaging improvements have also been made for greater shelf standout for this recession-friendly brand.

Delivering sustainably

In 2020, Inspired Pet Nutrition became the first major UK pet food manufacturer to achieve carbon-negative status⁷. The company aims to become the most sustainable pet food manufacturer in the country.

Meanwhile, through Harringtons’ Strava ‘Miles and Meals’ campaign, one million meals will be donated to pet charities across the UK.



Source

¹ IRI, All Outlets, Value, 8 w/e 30.01.21

² IRI, All Outlets, Value, 52 w/e 02.01.21

³ IRI, All Outlets, Value 12 w/e 02.01.21

⁷ As accredited by Carbon Footprint Ltd



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*IRI - All Outlets - Value - 8wk 30.01.21

1. IRI - All Outlets - Wet Dog Brands - 12wk Value % Change - 12wk 02.01.21

Skinner's

Leading the way in a new era

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KEY BRANDS

Skinner's Field & Trial Wet Food
Puppy & Junior
– Chicken & Garden Veg
Adult
– Chicken & Root Veg
– Salmon & Steamed Veg
– Lamb & Root Veg
Treats
– Dental & Digestive Dog Treats, Peppermint & Charcoal
– Joint & Conditioning Dog Treats, with salmon oil
– Dog Training Treats, rich in chicken protein

 Suffolk-based pet food manufacturer Skinner's, is proudly celebrating 50 years of fuelling working dogs (1971-2021). Throughout the last five decades, the business has established incredible loyalty with customers, retailers and breeders, built on its deep-rooted family values, heritage, trust and passion for quality nutrition, it says.

To celebrate this milestone and taking inspiration from the great outdoors, Skinner's has refreshed the brand with a contemporary new look, the introduction of new products, and spearheading a shift towards sustainably conscious dog food with 100% recyclable packaging across its ever-popular Field & Trial range.

The new products consist of four wet food diets and three different types of treats. The new VAT-free wet food range is sure to be a hit with working dogs that like a mix of both wet and dry food, says Skinner's. Made with 100% natural ingredients and grain-free, for gentle digestion, it can be used as a topper or can be given as a complete diet.

The new range comes in fully sustainable 390g Tetra Pak® cartons, manufactured in the UK and made from over 70% paperboard. Products in the Treats range are hand-baked by 'real bakers', who share Skinner's ethos and values of good nutrition, using the finest natural ingredients. The innovative packaging is produced using Earthpouch, which is 100% recyclable, plastic-free and compostable.

Tim Hansell, Skinner's CEO, says: "This is a really exciting time for everyone associated with Skinner's. We are delighted with the new look and feel of the Skinner's brand, which we feel is both modern and classic and really builds on our heritage, family values and deep connection with the great outdoors."

Expanded range

At the same time as relaunching the Skinner's brand, the company is also excited to announce that it is expanding its core Field & Trial working dog food range, with the launch of innovative new lines in both wet foods and



“With 9.9 million dogs in Britain, a shift towards increased sustainability within the dog food sector could have a hugely positive effect on the global environmental crisis”

treats, in environmentally friendly sustainable packaging, reveals Hansell. “It has been a real joy working with Perry [Haydn Taylor] and his team at brand design consultancy big fish in repositioning the Skinner's brand for future generations,” he says.

“We are also incredibly proud to be partnering with Angela Harding, one of the UK's leading countryside artists, whose fabulous illustrations feature on our new Field & Trial packaging designs. We hope Angela's fabulous designs will uplift and inspire our customers on a daily basis.”

Growing sustainability

It is vital that the dog food sector moves forwards in line with changing consumer habits, and with 9.9 million dogs in Britain, a shift towards increased sustainability within the sector could have a hugely positive effect on the global environmental crisis, notes Hansell.

“Skinner's aims to reduce its carbon footprint and lead the way for brands in the sector to follow suit, proving that a shift towards recyclability is viable for the dog food industry,” he says. “The brand's rich history is testament to the trust built into Skinner's by both dogs and owners.”



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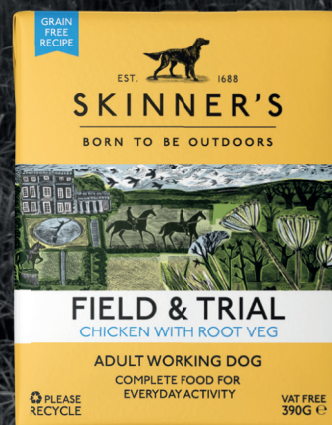
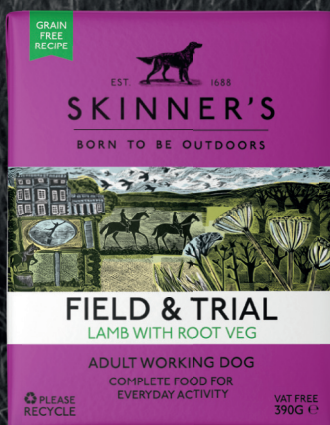


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