

# The Grocer

Focus On: Petcare by Natalie Brown (Natalie\_Brown@live.co.uk)

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**Submissions deadline:** 5 October

## The Story

**The petcare sector is in the doghouse but despite the decline in sales, some are managing to grow by offering premium products more akin to human food (soups, casseroles, etc). Some retailers are even moving chillers into their petcare aisles. So could the humanisation of pet food help the sector return to growth? What else will save it?**

### Trends:

**Indulgence:** Our research shows that some of the fastest growing petcare brands at present are those that offer animals more indulgent treats and meals. Who are these brands? How do their prices compare to more standard offerings? How are they managing to attract pet owners? And how are they reconciling their indulgent credentials with the health question?

**Range rationalization:** This feature will include analysis on how ranges have been rationalized over the past year in order to make the fixture easier to navigate. Which brands have benefited from this trend? Who's been hit the hardest? And what are players doing to justify their space on shelf in this challenging environment?

**Inflation and Brexit:** Our analysis suggests that Britain's cats and dogs are suffering as a result of the commodity cost inflation driven by uncertainty over Brexit. To what extent have input costs increased in the past year and is this being passed on to shoppers? How are higher prices impacting shopper behavior?

**Merchandising:** This feature will look closely at how petcare is being merchandised, with particular attention being paid to trials of chilled pet food in some supermarkets. Does the concept have legs? How are chilled brands performing?

**Health:** As it is in human food, health considerations are of growing importance for pet owners when it comes to choosing petcare. Which health considerations are of most importance to pet owners? Which brands and types of food (and treat) are capitalizing on health concerns? How? Are any brands capitalizing on demand for more 'natural' pet foods?

**Retailers and own label:** This feature will pay close attention to how different retailers are approaching the category, in terms of their own label and branded ranges, merchandising, price, promotions and so on. Own label is struggling at present. Why is this? How have retailers' ranges changed in the past year?

**Advertising and marketing:** This feature will also investigate how the marketing and advertising strategies of the category's biggest players have evolved over the past year and how they will develop in the coming year to sustain growth or return brands to growth.

**Innovation:** Key to this feature will be a discussion of the latest NPD from the category's brands and own label players, large and small. The feature will explore the market trends that have inspired these innovations and weigh up which new launches are most likely to encourage new trends in the market. We will profile eight of the most interesting new launches in a separate innovation panel.

**Key questions the feature is likely to address:**

- What consumer trends have impacted the category over the past year?
- How have promotional strategies (both in terms of price and marketing) evolved?
- How have individual retailers' strategies impacted the market?
- How has merchandising changed in the market?
- What's next for the category?