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Pet Products in Taiwan

PROSPECTS

Demand Continues to Increase for Health related Products, Especially those that can Provide Early Detection of Potentially Health-threatening Problems and Conditions

Growing awareness and concern about pet health continues to boost Taiwanese consumers' determination to take more interest in using pet healthcare and particularly pet dietary supplements as well as in other preventative steps to ensure the health and wellbeing of their pets, particularly their dogs and cats. In line with this trend, a Taiwanese start-up company recently launched a smart litter box, which combines artificial intelligence (AI) and big data technology to help cat owners to detect potential problems with their pets' health. The Lulupet AI Wisdom Litter Box was designed by a team of cat lovers comprising members from Qualcomm, Cisco, Facebook, and the Taiwan Institute of Technology, all of whom have experienced the painful experience of losing cats and who brainstormed to create a smart litter box that combines AI and data technology to help cat owners monitor their cats' health and detect potential problems based on the cat's habits in the litterbox. The litter box is the world's first to have built-in AI excreta image recognition to collect health data and provide real-time alarms if abnormalities are detected. There also has been

a rising number of wearable devices designed to detect pets' health conditions. For example, Wagii care is a smart collar that enables pet owners to monitor their pets' heart rate and blood pressure. Even Taiwan's biggest telecom company, Chunghwa Telecom, has launched a similar product.

Because veterinarians' recommendations about the latest innovations in treating certain problems play an important role in the greater awareness of the specific products being launched, flea/tick treatments also continued to gain value share within pet healthcare in 2020. Moreover, some players have developed new formats to offer hairball control for cats, such as a powder format that is easier for cat owners to administer because it can simply be sprinkled on food. Taiwanese consumers are expected to increase their demand for pet products, and especially for health-related pet products, over the 2020-2025 forecast period.

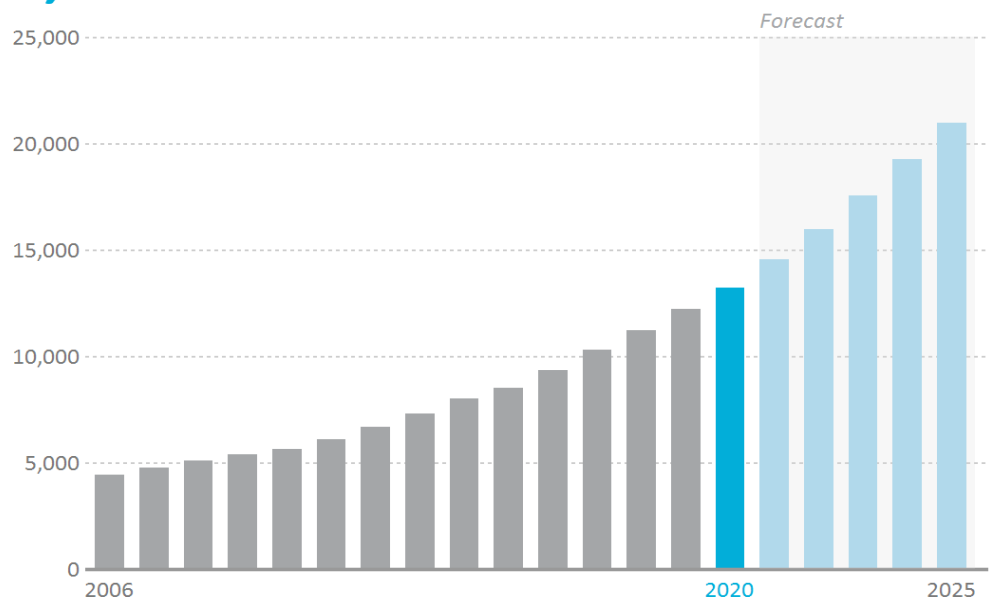
Pet Humanization and Social Media Drive Demands for Interactive Pet Products

For many pet owners, pets are like their children and they like to interact with them all the time. Moreover, pet owners often love to share their moments with pets on social media like Facebook and Instagram. To attract younger and/or tech-savvy consumers, pet product manufacturers have become increasingly innovative, and in lieu of focusing only traditional toys, they have been

Sales of Pet Products in Taiwan

Retail Value RSP - TWD million - Current - 2006-2025

13,174



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launching some interesting smart toys in Taiwan. Two of the latest products that are generating interest are Pawbby, a smart snack feeder, and Wicked Ball, an interactive smart ball toy that can automatically play with pets. Pawbby combines a pet food dispenser with an IP camera that enables pet owners to monitor and engage with their pets even when the owners are away from home, using a special app and a smart phone to – among other things – dispense snacks on command. Wicked Ball is a 100% automatic ball made of strong, waterproof, scratch-resistant material. The ball comes with three interaction modes with different activity levels (with no app required). Billed as an “automatic intelligent companion” the ball balances activity and rest by rolling around for 10 minutes of play with 30-minute rest cycles. It features a built-in sensor for avoiding obstacles and a built-in snack hole to add excitement and be operated in swimming pools as well as in the home. It is fully USB rechargeable within an hour with a battery life of up to eight hours when charged in the “gentle” activity mode. Both of these toys are featured online at zeczec.com, Taiwan’s first and fast-growing, crowdfunding website.

Alternative Channels Drive Pet Owners’ Attention Away from Pet Stores

Young pet owners in Taiwan are more willing to try new products and new brands. Instead of automatically gravitating towards traditional pet shops or pet supermarkets, they also go to crowdfunding platforms and design e-commerce platforms to look for new pet products such as the Wicked Ball and smart treat dispenser from ZecZec described in the previous paragraph. Zeczec.com is one of the most popular crowdfunding platforms in Taiwan. Many brands or start-up companies will launch their new products there before marketing to the public as a way of conducting a new product trial and gauging consumers’ response. Pinkoi is a popular Taipei-based e-commerce (buying and selling) platform that features original designs from independent Asian designers, and many brands also launch their pet products there. The variety of products available at Pinkoi include semi-automatic pet doors, semi-closed attractively designed cat litter boxes, portable pet water cups, custom pet photo pillows, and a solid wood “pet dining table”. The trend of looking for pet products at websites such as these is expected to extend into the forecast period.

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Taiwanese Company Tai Kong Maintains its Lead in Pet Products but, Many Local Players Struggle to Compete with Imported Products that have Stronger Brand Appeal

The competitive pet product landscape in Taiwan is highly fragmented, with a high number of smaller players and imported brands. Taiwanese player Tai Kong Corp is the leading player, based on the strength of its Azoo brand in the larger but still niche area of fish products. However, many local brands struggle to compete with foreign products that appeal to consumers with strong branding, especially those of Japanese origin, such as Unicharm,

the leading brand in cat litter, but also Hartz (from the US) and Beaphar (the Netherlands), the leading brands in pet healthcare and pet dietary supplements, respectively.

Taiwanese producers of pet products do not tend to embrace product design and strong marketing, although a small number of local companies are achieving success through this. The most significant is Tai Kong’s Azoo brand, but other companies have also developed strong branding, although these typically boast a narrow product portfolio, focused on dogs and cats. Ibbi’s Ibiyaya is one brand, known for its pet strollers, carriers, beds and furniture, that has very strong design appeal. Other local players that focus on brand positioning include Small As Big’s Bonbonpet pet wipes for pet cleaning and skin care and Boxcat cat litter from International Cats House Corporation.

Local Brands Target Younger and More Affluent Consumers with Innovative and Customized Pet Furniture Designs, Mostly Made of Solid Wood

While most Taiwanese pet owners still seek practical solutions when choosing pet products, many of them are increasingly interested in both practicality and style. In response to this trend, there has been a growing number of online pet boutique stores that emphasize both quality and good product design. Mao Select is one online pet boutique e-commerce site that aims to introduce only high-quality pet products. Moreover, as more pet owners are treating their pets like family members, many of them, especially those with higher means, have ample other opportunities to consider their pets’ needs when decorating their home, including access to IKEA’s IKEA LURVIG line of pet products, which capitalize on the popularity of simple Scandinavian contemporary designs amongst local consumers. However, two local brands also have responded to particular demands for customized pet furniture, emphasizing good product quality and targeting younger consumers with higher economic status. The two domestic companies – TrueWood Studio and Myzoo – stand out for providing beautifully designed pet furniture, litter boxes and accessories as well as an opportunity to customize their designs to suit the consumers’ needs. TrueWood Studio offers a line of Mau furniture that includes cat hammocks and beds, single- and double-bowl meal racks, litter cabinets, and other pet furniture made of solid wood. Myzoo also offers a line of wood or wood-based floor furniture, but it specializes in wall shelves in various shapes and combinations that can provide cats with endless entertainment. The furniture can be ordered online from both companies.

Eastern Media Acquires and Rebrands More Than 70 Pet Stores in Taiwan To Create EtiPet, the No. 1 Pet Store Chain

Eastern Media is one of the biggest media channels in Taiwan. In 2019, it acquired several local pet store chains and renamed them all as EtiPet, which turned EtiPet into the number one pet store chain in Taiwan with more than 70 stores nationwide. EtiPet is expected to turn its retailing stores into multifunctional Pet Superstores which will include pet food and product retailing, pet services like grooming and even pet healthcare services. ■

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