

## **Pet Food chapter for industry publication *Pet Food Technology***

**Written for Sonoco market segment manager**

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### **Packaging trends for dry pet food**

When it comes to crunchies and kibble, the world's pet owners want what's best for their furry, feathered or finned friends. In fact, what's considered good for the owner is now deemed necessary for the pet. Store shelves are chock-full of new and exciting food products for pets. But, it wasn't always like this.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, domesticated animals served more practical purposes, such as herding sheep and cattle, retrieving fowl or keeping houses and barns free of pests and vermin. Over the course of time, pets have succeeded in making the transition from working members of households to full membership status in the family. (see Table 1.1.)

Table 1.1

#### **Pampered pets**

Source: Information gathered from a survey of 1,242 pet owners who take their vets to American Animal Hospital Association veterinarians.

<b>Pet owners who...</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Believe their pet has provided them with some personal health benefit	92%
Cite companionship as the main reason for acquiring a pet	84%
Include their pets in holiday celebrations such as Christmas, Thanksgiving and Halloween	86%
Hang stockings for their pets	64%
Include pets in family or holiday portraits	58%
Would spend more than \$1,000 to save their pet in a life-threatening situation	73%
Have taken up to two days off work to be with a sick pet	48%
Travel with their pets	66%
Plan all or most of their free time around their pet	46%

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Have signed a greeting card “from the dog”

73%

As pets continue to play an important role in the modern family lifestyle, the trend to provide them with the same care and concern that humans receive is increasingly apparent. This is evident in the explosion of pet care products and services now available—everything from dog and kitty day care and mobile grooming businesses to advanced medical treatment and specialized food, focused on nutrition, diet, developmental and dental needs.

The way owners feed their pets is changing, too. No longer is just putting kibble in a bowl satisfactory. The conscientious pet owner is becoming increasingly aware of important factors such as pet age and breed, special dietary needs and more. In fact, just about every consideration humans have about their own nutritional and dietary needs is being transferred to their pets. As the humanization of pets becomes more prevalent, and pet owners become more willing to spend increasing amounts of money on their beloved animal friends, it’s no surprise that the market for pet food—and therefore pet food packaging—has experienced tremendous growth (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2

<b>Petfood packaging growth by sector</b>	<b>Increase from 1994-2000</b>	<b>2001-2004 (forecast)</b>
Steel cans	+12%	+7%
Aluminum containers	+52%	+10%
Plastic laminate pouches	+225%	+54%
Paper-based formats	+30%	+23%

*(Source: Wood, G, 2001. Overview of Petfood Packaging. From proceedings of the Ahlstrom Petfood Packaging Conference, Barcelona, Spain. See also, “Pets win prizes,” by Sandrine Brandley, PrintIn World, May 10, 1999.)*

Pet food is considered a growth industry, with nearly an annual 6% increase in volume, compared to a 3% growth for human food. The total worldwide pet food packaging (flexible and rigid) market is estimated to be \$500 million. *(Source: Paper, Film & Foil Converter magazine, “Pet Food Packaging Is Big Business Worldwide,” by Stanley Sacharaow, 1 June 2002.)*

In 2001, the global market for pet food exceeded \$27 billion. Of that total, US sales accounted for \$11.8 billion, or nearly half of the entire market. *(Source: Pet Food Industry magazine, Dec. 2001).* Because pets are considered valued members of the family, packaging must provide numerous options for different food types (dry, semi-dry, treats, nutritional, etc.), alternative store formats (super stores, grocery stores, veterinary clinics and specialty outlets) and varying family lifestyle needs.

### **Influences on packaging:**

#### **Functionality**

The package provides a variety of basic functions. First and foremost, the package offers some general performance characteristics, such as containing the product and allowing it

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to be readily and easily dispensed. Consumers prefer easy-opening and dispensing features that provide resealability to maximize freshness.

The package must also deliver adequate shelf life for the type of food it contains. Generally speaking, for dry pet food, the maximum shelf life is approximately 12 to 18 months. The package should provide adequate resistance to grease, and allow air (oxygen) to escape, thereby maintaining freshness and palatability throughout the life of the pet food. The package must also withstand shipping, storage and distribution, while preventing infestation.

The package must not only fit the product and retail venue, it must also meet the needs of the brand. Other brand-related functions include:

### **Brand promotion**

In addition to the basic requirements, the package also serves as a medium for promoting the brand through display in store real estate, whether shelves, ends of aisles or floors. It must fit in the allotted space--hanging on J-hooks, perching in trays, stacking on shelves or pallets, etc.--depending on store needs.

With more and more focus on providing larger sized packaging for superstores, such as PetSmart, PetCo, Sam's, PriceClub and Costco, packaging and its presentation are becoming interdependent. As consumers continue to shop at club stores for value purchases, there will be more and more pre-packed point-of-purchase (POP) displays. For example, Nestle Purina Pet Care offers a POP display for its Purina brand pet care. The retailer just unwraps the display and it's ready for placement on the floor. Other good uses of this approach are Hills Science Diet, with its Nature's Balance end-cap display and Kaytee's Satori™ Koi and goldfish foods featuring colorful plastic pouches in ocean-blue cardboard self-contained display. **(picture opportunity)**

### **Conveying the message**

In most cases, the package itself must convey the desired marketing message to the proper audience. Pertinent information is printed on every conceivable space to attract consumer attention whether the package is standing up or laying down on a shelf or pallet.

Rigid plastic containers use adhesive or shrink-wrap labels to communicate the message. To keep costs down, it is now common for a manufacturer to use the same package for all types of food within a brand line, using the color-coded labels to identify the product or create differentiation. For example, Nestle Purina Pet Care is phasing out the 20-lb. cat food and 40-lb. dog food packages from its stable of offerings for its Pro-Plan brand of dry cat and dog food. To replace those bags, Purina will use large, plastic tubs for the 8-10 lb. range of dry food. These tubs are squared off, with rounded corners. The slightly tapered tub features a hinged closure and a handle. In addition, Nestle Purina Pet Care is using round plastic blow molded containers with membrane seals and screw top overcaps for

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the 8, 10 and 16 lb. range of food. These blow molded packages have a distinct color identifiable with the ProPlan brand and category of food, and labels do the job of communicating the message to the targeted buyer.

The original introduction of ProPlan to the market did not include the 40 lb. bag of dog food but did include 20 lb. bag.

### **Types of messages**

There are numerous messages in the dry pet food market today. In stores, packaging is the primary method companies use to communicate with their targeted audiences. For each of the varying messages, the package must convey the message (see Table 1.3—not sure about this table)

Following are some of the most recent emerging trends:

#### **Functional**

Functional dry pet food packaging focuses on the vital health systems necessary to keep pets healthy over the course of their life. Brands such as the Iams, the Wal-Mart label Maxximum Nutrition® for dogs and cats, Nestle Purina Pet Care's Purina One Special Care and the Eukanuba® lines of premium food have very functional labels. Silhouettes of pets or other nutritional information appears on the packaging so the consumer knows that the food provides nutrition and dietary formulas for specific body functions, such as gastro-intestinal (hairball prevention), joint development or dentifrice.

Waltham, a Massachusetts-based scientific authority for the Mars Pet Care Companies worldwide, provides the science behind world-leading brands such as Pedigree® and Whiskas®, as well as Cesar®, Sheba®, Trill®, Aquarian®, Winergy® and Exelpet®. Their products focus on food with functional benefits, specifically food or food components that may have additional health benefits beyond normal dietary requirements.

#### **Nutritional**

Relatively new in the traditional retail market, many novel lines of nutritional foods are gaining ground as mainstays in the diets for most of the world's pets. A move toward all natural diets for pets—as for their owners—will continue in the market.

In some cases, as in Nestle Purina Pet Care's new line of healthy dog foods, Beneful™, the packaging clearly illustrates the wholesomeness of the product. A large breed dog surrounded by colorful grains and vegetables are featured graphics on the

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package. From any angle on the store shelf, the focus on health and nutrition is obvious.

More than 75 years ago, Nutro Products entered the marketplace from sunny California, introducing a healthy product for dogs. While ownership of the company has changed a few times over the decades, a single constant remains in place: Provide quality and nutritious products for pets, while educating the consumer about pet nutritional needs. Nutro now offers a full line food, biscuits and treats for dogs and cats.

### **Working animals**

For some pet owners, dogs have a secondary role as working animals, whether it's as hunting companions or herding on farms and ranches. Packaging graphics, such as Ol' Roy® dog food, tend to focus consumer attention to the working dog in action, subliminally suggesting that the food contained within the package is responsible for the apparent energy and healthy glow.

### **Family focus**

Because pets are an integral part of the family, many dry food packages reflect this loving relationship. Good examples of this include Nestle Purina Pet Care's Cat Chow in bags and boxes depicting pet owners in intimate portraits with cats, while its Dog and Puppy Chow brand packages show men and women interacting affectionately with their pets.

### **Fun and healthy**

Packaging for the fun and healthy foods tend to feature cartoon animals or illustrations. The animals on the packaging are, for the most part, cartoons or illustrations of animals. These packages tend to attract children, reinforcing the concept that the entire family benefits from having a happy, healthy pet. The labeling also implies that while the foods are fun, they still meet nutritional guidelines for pets.

### **Distribution**

Shipping product from one location to another is a major concern for pet food manufacturers. While the majority of the world's pet food is produced in North America, Europe and Asia account for 44% of global sales. In many cases, the dry food is exported from manufacturing locations in the US to other countries. The food must remain fresh and flavorful, and the packaging must be able to withstand the abuse encountered during intermodal transportation and storage.

### **Local recycling considerations**

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When selecting packages, manufacturers and co-packers take a close look at local and regional recycling laws. In the US, some states require that certain types of packaging are not only recyclable, but also use a minimum of recycled content while still meeting FDA food contact standards. The wide availability of paper and plastic recycling resources in the US make these materials excellent sources for pet food packaging. While there is a preference for foil in Europe, there is also a good deal of aluminum packaging due to its recyclability.

### **Influences on packaging:**

#### **The role of packaging in product differentiation**

“In a category where product differentiation is slight but demand is high, packaging carries a larger burden of marketing.” (Source: *Food and Drug Packaging*, January 2002, “Pet Food Packaging” by William Makely, p. 32.)

Makers of pet food rely on packaging to cut through the clutter of product on the shelves. The pressure is on packaging to differentiate and add value, while instilling brand loyalty. Some of the factors that influence package differentiation include:

#### **Size**

Packaging for dry pet food and treats varies in size. On today’s shelves, it’s not uncommon to find these products in packages ranging from several ounces to 40 lbs.

Feline eating habits differ from canine habits. As true carnivores cats are used to eating several small meals a day, so package sizes tend to be smaller. (Source: *September 2002 Pet Food Industry—need page, article info*) For dry cat food, the more common sizes are 18 oz. boxes as well as 4, 8 and 20 lb. bags.

For dry dog food, the most common sizes are 4, 8, 20 and 40 lbs., primarily in bags. As more and more premium brands are introduced, the package size slightly diminishes while remaining at the same price point or higher as its larger-sized competitor. For example, in certain product types, the Eukanuba™ brand offers 6, 15 and 30 lb. bags for dogs and 2.5, 6.5 and 12.5 lb bags for cats. Hill’s Science Diet® also altered package sizes with its introduction of Nature’s Best™ all natural line of premium pet food, offered in 4.5, 17.5, 20 and 30.5 lb. bags.

#### **Material**

It’s only been within the last decade that dry pet food has moved from the rectangular cardboard box or pillow-shaped paper bag into other forms of packaging. Rigid PET (polyethylene) and HDPE (high density polyethylene) containers and plastic pouches are replacing these traditionally paper-based packages. Larger and larger sizes (up to 20 lbs. for cats and 40 lbs for dogs) are also being introduced in these new formats to satisfy customer requests for perceived value while shopping at club stores.

### **Shape**

Shaped containers are an ideal and proven way to establish product differentiation on the cluttered shelves of drug, grocery, specialty and retail stores. This was clearly evident several years ago when the plastic pouch exploded in the marketplace. It's unique tapered shape gave it the flexibility to stand on its own or hang from a J-hook, quickly making it the package of choice for many dry pet foods, seeds and treats. Rotogravure and flexographic printing techniques guarantee crisp, clear graphics for increased visibility on store shelves that don't diminish through processing and distribution.

The round paperboard canister also offers unique shapes and high-impact graphic capabilities. In addition, canisters are stackable and provide first-rate billboarding opportunities.

A strong advantage paper and plastic have over flat or pillow bags is that they can be formed into more unique shapes, such as the HDPE container now being offered by Nestle Purina Pet Care for its 2.1 oz. Whisker Linkin's® brand of treats. With a high-gloss, shrink-wrapped label boasting brilliant colors, this package truly stands out on store shelves. Another interesting package is the paperboard milk carton-shaped package for Catty Shack® treats.

Another shaped package is making waves on the shelves. Heinz selected an oval, straight-wall paperboard package its Meaty Bonz Savory Bites™. For a more premium look, Iams selected a rounded, rectangular package offered for its Eukanuba Healthy Extras.

Flexible packaging continues to have great potential in the shaped packaging category.

### **Combinations of shape and material**

Now that the pouch is more commonplace, newer, more interesting packages are beginning to emerge. Rigid plastic packaging is again making strides, as it migrates from its traditional opaque coloring, to more eye-catching shades designed to attract attention. Rigid paper packaging is also gaining market share, with new linear draw technologies that allow for a variety of shapes and sizes, while offering the needed barrier resistance.

It's not uncommon to find combinations of injection molded plastic or wound paper tube bodies with injection molded snap open/close features. Garden Song™ offers bird food in round paper canisters with metal ends. The opening feature is an easy-open metal pull ring, and a plastic overcap retains freshness once the package is opened. Other combinations include plastic pouches in paperboard trays. Some pet snack and health foods also appear in blister packs. (*Source:*

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*Wood, G, 2001. Overview of Petfood Packaging. From proceedings of the Ahlstrom Petfood Packaging Conference, Barcelona, Spain.)*

### **Appearance**

Rather than just the dull, monotonous graphics of yesteryear, today's packages are being designed for improved imaging, thus making product differentiation on the shelf an even greater advantage. The advent of new materials (see section below: advances in materials science) is creating a trend toward higher-quality, vivid printing used to identify brand positioning and value. Even multiwall bags are seeing new growth as improved printing techniques enable a foil-like gloss to attract consumer attention.

To a great extent, package appearance will continue to reflect the focus of the pet owner. Iams brands of dog and cat food, introduced in paper bags, are now packaged in stand-up film sacks. The bright labels are color-coded for easy identification and shelf visibility. This package is more functional than fun, especially when compared to Deli Cat® food. With the dry food in a clear, round, plastic container with an overcap, the cartoonish appearance of the cats strongly suggests that this package and its contents are for fun, rather than focused on nutrition or health.

For other small animals, particularly fish and birds, packaging tends to reflect the beautiful, and often exotic, colors of the animals. (Kaytee?)

### **Dry pet food packaging trends**

Certain types of packaging will continue to dominate the marketplace. This is due to the costs associated with changing filling or co-packer processes. Because filling is a critical component in the success of a new package, any time one is introduced in the market, its current filling and processing capabilities must be taken into account. Cost of the package itself is another key consideration. Most premium brand dog and cat foods can sustain a higher-end package because owners are willing to spend the money to make sure their pets maintain healthy diets that can increase longevity and quality of life.

#### **Multi-wall sack**

The most common package on the market today for the largest sizes of dry food (20 lb for cats, 40 lb for dogs) is the multi-wall sack or bag. Multi-wall sacks have evolved to use more sophisticated film barriers to prevent grease damage and infestation, as well as maintain freshness and palatability. For the pet food manufacturers, the addition of side and bottom gussets increased the printable area on the bags, providing them with more visibility while stacked on store shelves or on pallets in warehouses.

More and more premium brands that use multi-wall bags are migrating toward a foil look. This high-end printing allows the packages to stand out on the store shelves, as the high-gloss is reflected in the available light. Examples include the Maxximum Nutrition® and Purina One Special Care lines of pet foods.

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The biggest drawback of the multi-wall bag remains its lack of opening and pour features. While most bags have moved from the difficult-to-open sewn end to a sealed end, which can be peeled open, the bag is not recloseable without being rolled down. The fact that the package lays on its side remains a challenge when competing with other types of packaging that confronts the consumer face on.

### **Flexible plastic sacks and pouches**

Once the flexible plastic sack hit the market, it gained a rapid introduction as a package for premium brands ranging from 4 to 20 lbs. In smaller sizes, the pouch stands on the shelf, hangs from J-hooks or is situated in a paperboard tray. The material elements in plastic sacks have proven effective at keeping bugs out of the food. For dry foods except treats, there aren't currently any zipper reclose features, but it is clearly a consumer preference. Laser notching for easy opening has been a positive first step. UV and water-based varnish finishes for printing on this packaging make it all the more appealing on the shelf.

Newly introduced on the market is a cat-shaped plastic pouch with a foil laminate. The Friskies® cat treats package has a bottom gusset to stand on the shelf, with an optional cardboard tray for stacking. It incorporates a laser-notched, resealable opening feature to retain freshness. **(Picture opportunity)**

### **Injection molded rigid plastic pail**

Because it is perceived as an expensive package, the injection molded rigid plastic pail is seen more often as a container for premium brands. (Nestle Purina Pet Cares' Pro Plan, Heinz Kibbles 'n Bits, Three Dog Bakery All Natural). The pails have become square-shaped and tapered, rather than round, for better label coverage and shelf display. The lids have transitioned from large snap-on lid to a hinged version with tear-off tabs to improve opening. The evolution of material science and manufacturing processes allow for a range of color and clarity rather than just the introductory industrial bright white.

### **Blow Molded Pitcher or Jug**

Growth in the specialty beverage industry has increased capacity for blow molded products, opening up a wide range of opportunities for pet food manufacturers. These pitchers and jugs will continue to appear in the market, primarily with membrane closures and screw top caps for resealing. (Examples of this include Meow Mix and Alley Cat brands.) This package is evolving into premium package with the introduction of new resins, which allow for color. There is a move from the current low-end translucent or white package to cream, silver and teal with a metallic finish. This could be to introduce a barrier, but in the case of Pro Plan, the color is used to convey a premium image

### **Rigid Paper Canisters**

Rigid paper canisters have been available for quite some time, and are frequently used for smaller amounts of food, specifically cat and dog treats. In addition, the

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rigid paper canister can be formed into unique and product-differentiating shapes, increasing its appeal. The traditional round shape has quickly evolved into a variety of shapes, including rectangular, oval and triangular. Look out for the larger sizes, which are becoming more attractive to a segmented pet food market because the canisters provide excellent billboarding and without additional POP displays.

The canisters are heavy-duty, offer barrier resistance and can withstand the rigors of shipping and distribution without incurring scuffing or damage. In addition, great graphic capability, handles and over caps make this package one of the hottest possibilities.

### **Other considerations**

Consolidation within the pet food industry is causing a ripple effect throughout marketplace. This ripple is allowing more new products to enter the market at a relatively fast pace. During 2001, the largest growth for dry pet food (dogs and cats) was in the treat category. (See Table 1.4)

Table 1.4

#### **US Dog and Cat Food Categories**

	<b>Size</b>	<b>Growth*</b>
<b>Overall dog food</b>	<b>\$7.30 billion</b>	
Dry	\$4.74 billion	+3.5%
Wet	\$1.34 billion	+1.4%
Treats	\$1.37 billion	+6.75%
<b>Overall cat food</b>	<b>\$3.80 billion</b>	
Dry	\$2.23 billion	+7.2%
Wet	\$1.62 billion	-4.0%
Treats	\$145 million	+14.7%

(Source: From Terry's Sonoco report—need specific source here)

\*based on 2001 statistics

In addition to the steady growth of premium brands, veterinary-prescribed specialty diets and wide variety of treats, there are other areas ways sales in the dry pet food market will increase.

### **Cross-development and cross-promotional selling**

As the independent companies merge or are acquired by larger corporations, the latter are transferring their know-how from other parts of their business into their pet food products. Examples of such acquisitions include Nestle's purchase of Ralston Purina; Proctor and Gamble's purchase of Iams and Colgate Palmolive's purchase of Hill's Science Diet. The research science and proven technology of the large consumer businesses is being introduced to traditional lines of pet food to create specialized products that range from dental and diet improvements to skin care and snacks/treats.

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For pet food packages to become more sophisticated in their performance, the package structure has adapted to withstand the abrasiveness of the dental products and the invasiveness of the functional elements of the food formulations. The structures are now more complex, ranging from paperboard with a grease barrier or an extruded barrier to paper, poly and foil laminations as well as foil, poly and EVOH poly combinations.

Another added bonus of being part of larger entities with multiple global brands is cross-promotion. Many of the consumer products companies are introducing new products free with the purchase of pet food. For example, consumers purchasing Iams 20 lbs. plastic pail of dry food receives a free Swiffer Mitt® and scoop. Nestle Purina Pet Care's dry food in sack offers a can of Friskies wet food inside.

### **Multiple language labeling**

To satisfy increasingly diverse populations in all sectors of the world, packages and labeling will appear more frequently in multiple languages. Currently, is not uncommon to see English and Japanese, English and French (Canadian) or English and Spanish on some labels.

### **Advances in material science**

Bolstered by technology improvements, pet food packaging manufacturers and co-packers are battling for the latest and greatest material science advances to gain an edge in the marketplace. Below are some of the most recent introductions to the pet food packaging arena.

#### **Barrier coated papers**

In June 2002, Ahlstrom, a huge-Finnish-based high-performance fiber company, introduced Gervalux 501, a barrier coated paper for VFFS (vertical form/fill/seal) pet food packaging. As explained by Severine Schott in Ahlstrom's product development group, "a cellulose fiber mat provides the strength properties of the paper, and the finished bag." The front side of the substrate is coated to ensure a high-level of printability. A layer of heat-sealable resin is then deposited on the reverse side to provide heat sealability. The paper is chemically treated to achieve grease resistance. The paper is then printed and varnished if desired. (*Stanley Sacharow, Paper, Film & Foil Converter, Jun 1, 2002*)

Fres-co's new advanced pet food packaging systems technology, fres-pet™ barrier packaging, allows the pet food industry to deliver fresher, more natural, healthier diets. fres-pet barrier packaging protects against damage incurred during shipping, handling and distribution, offering 30% greater resistance to tearing than conventional paper bag structures. Highly resistant to grease, the package prevents odors from escaping, minimizing infestation. (*fres-co System USA, Inc. Web site, Dec. 24, 2002*)

Sonowrap™ single-wrap pack is Sonoco's hermetic package suitable for treats and single servings of dry dog and cat food. Also available in a taper pack, the

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reclosable package accommodates foods for any pet, from birdseed and rabbit pellets to feline and canine kibble. (*Sonoco, 3 Nov 2002, PackExpo press release*)

Tetra Recart™ system provides an alternative to metal, cans or glass. Recently introduced by Nestle® for its Friskies brand dog food, Tetra Pak's first retortable carton packaging system on the market. It uses a six-layer laminate structure that includes plastic polymers to help withstand the rigors of low-acid food retort processes. It also employs aluminum foil as an oxygen barrier and moisture resistant fiberboard. This package won DuPont's Diamond award, the highest in its annual competition. (*Food Packaging, July-August 2002*)

Smurfit-Stone Container Corporation just launched MasterShield™ coated recycled boxboard. This new product's stain resistant coatings protect folding cartons from grease and oil stains that can ruin packaging. Made from 100%-recycled paperboard, Mastershield coated boxboard meets requirements for direct food contact. (*Source: Petfood Industry, electronic newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 16, Dec. 3, 2002*)

### **Plastics**

Cryovac® created the K-9000™ plastic packaging system to meet the demands of premium pet food formulations. By locking out oxygen and moisture, this cross-linked, oriented polyolefin package preserves freshness, reduces infestation and enhances palatability. Strong and durable, K-9000™ plastic packaging system is 1/3 the thickness of multi-wall bags, yet stronger. It also allows pet food manufacturers to add much desired consumer benefits like easy-open, reclosable tops and optional handles. The high-gloss finish creates high-impact graphics on all sides, top and bottom. Side or bottom gussets allow the bag to stand or lie flat. This package won a 1999 Top Packaging Award from the Flexible Packaging Association. (*Sealed Air Corporation Web site, December 2002*)

### **Wrapping it up**

In 2001, pet food companies introduced numerous items to the marketplace that exceeded over \$1 million in sales. (See table 1.5)

Table 1.5

<b>Company</b>	<b>Number exceeding \$1 million in sales</b>
Ralston Purina	40
Nestle	35
KalKan	33
Iams	25
Heinz	21

(*Source: Pet Food Industry magazine, Dec. 2001*)

Top categories for new product introduction in 2001 included:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of products</b>
Dry dog food	38

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Dog biscuits/treats 30

Dry cat food 28

*(Source: Pet Food Industry magazine, Dec. 2001)*

Research clearly demonstrates that when it comes to pets people are willing to pay for packaging that meets their lifestyle and emotional needs. Over the next several years, the dry pet food market will see increased segmentation—within existing categories such as size, age, nutrition, diet and dental needs—to meet consumer demands. Each of these segments may see further division by specific breed.

In general, dry pet food manufacturers will focus on:

- New product development that follows human trends
- Premium foods, snacks and treats as areas of growth
- Special pet needs (coat, joint, nutrition, etc.)
- Small dog product lines
- Product palatability and freshness
- Convenience for the pet owner

More choices on the shelves means more competition for treat and food producers. As the market continues to segment, the need for more advanced, more consumer-friendly pet food packaging will increase. The need for packaging to differentiate, add value and increase brand loyalty will become even more paramount.

### **Picture recommendations:**

Paper-based packaging choices

Plastic packaging choices

Functional packaging

Fun packaging

Family/animal-focused packaging

Fish, bird food colorful packaging