



Palatants in pet pharma and supplements: elevating health through taste

With health products only effective when consumed, taste can be just as important as function. How can manufacturers ensure pets accept what's good for them?



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Pets often have unique health needs, which is where pet pharmaceuticals and supplements come in. These products can provide essential nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and veterinary actives that promote overall wellbeing or target issues such as joint function, digestion, immune health or parasite control.

However, administering these beneficial products successfully can be challenging. Many active ingredients like parasite control actives, glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, and various vitamins or minerals have a bitter or off-putting taste.

Dogs have around 15 bitter taste receptors, and cats about 12, making them highly sensitive to bitterness. If a pet has a negative experience with a supplement or medication, they may become increasingly reluctant to accept it again. Even the most advanced formulations are only effective if the pet willingly consumes them.

Secret ingredient

Palatants are a potential solution to this challenge. These aroma and taste enhancers are specifically developed to make pet products more appealing. Think of them as the secret ingredient. By adding meaty, savory, or fishy flavors, they help mask

unpleasant notes and make supplements more attractive. Because pets rely heavily on their sense of smell, a more appealing aroma can encourage interest and consumption. A product that smells and tastes good could even become a welcome part of a pet's routine.

Palatants are typically made from enzymatically hydrolyzed and thermally processed animal proteins such as chicken, pork, beef or fish. In response to market demands and dietary needs, manufacturers are also exploring non-animal protein-based palatants.

In pharmaceutical applications, initial bitterness is often addressed with taste-masking agents, though these are sometimes limited by cost and formulation constraints. Once the bitterness is softened, palatants are added to enhance overall palatability, helping transform even bitter medications into products pets are more likely to consume.

Expert support for manufacturers

AFB International recognizes that pet supplements are important for addressing nutritional gaps and supporting long-term health.

With expertise in the development of high-quality palatants, AFB supports manufacturers in creating supplements and pharmaceuticals that pets are more likely to accept. Improved palatability contributes to better compliance, more consistent intake, and improved health outcomes. ♦