

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **LEADING GLOBAL ANIMAL HEALTH INVESTMENT FORUM SHOWCASES LATEST INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS**

*Emerging companies vie for funding; products aim to revolutionize global animal health*

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – July 25, 2017 – The Kansas City Animal Health Corridor will host emerging animal health companies from around the world at the ninth annual KC Animal Health Investment Forum, a one-of-a-kind event that joins animal health start-ups with more than 400 ambitious executives and investors. The forum is set for **7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday, August 29, at the Kansas City Convention Center Grand Ballroom, 301 W. 13<sup>th</sup> St., in Kansas City, Mo.**

The Investment Forum is one of the world's only opportunities for early-and mid-stage animal health entrepreneurs to present their business plans to potential investors, giving venture capital funds, investment firms and potential partners an inside look at the newest technology and innovations.

"This event gives companies and entrepreneurs, with innovations that seek to revolutionize global animal health, the resources they need to get off the ground," said Kostas Kontopanos, KC Animal Health Corridor Vice-Chairman and President of Hill's Pet Nutrition North America. "We're showcasing presenters with technologies that can solve the industry's toughest issues facing pet owners, veterinarians and the world's livestock producers. This event is an up-close look into the future growth of the multi-billion dollar animal health industry."

This year, 18 animal health companies from around the world were selected to showcase their ideas from a highly competitive group of applicants. Three of the companies presenting are headquartered in the KC Animal Health Corridor.

Innovations focus on global issues facing the animal health industry, including improving the fertility of cattle to help solve world hunger; developing a molecular diagnostic platform to monitor livestock health without the need for invasive sampling; developing breakthrough treatments for cancer in animals; environmentally-conscious technology that converts waste heat and moisture to energy; and advances for companion animals, including products that fight obesity and a computer for dogs.

Entrepreneurs will have 15 minutes to present their ideas in a Shark Tank format with millions of dollars on the table. Presenting companies are seeking \$500,000 to \$20 million in funding and have revenue projections of \$20 million within five to seven years. A national committee of agricultural and animal health experts selected the finalists.

Since inception, 325 companies have applied to vie for investor dollars and industry partnerships. These companies hailed from 14 countries and nearly every U.S. state. Companies presenting at the first eight KC Animal Health Investment Forums have raised more than \$270 million. Several have also received licensing agreements or distribution contracts. Recent success stories include Mazen Animal Health;

FitBark, Inc.; AGL; Prommune, Inc.; Medgene Labs; Elias Animal Health; Prairie AquaTech; VetDC, Inc.; Jaguar Animal Health and Nexvet Biopharma.

The 2015 Investment Forum was Mazen Animal Health CEO Jenny Filbey's first experience in Kansas City and the company's springboard into the Corridor. Mazen Animal Health is reinventing disease prevention through the development of oral vaccines. Her experience at the forum led Filbey to relocate the company's headquarters to St. Joseph, present at the 2016 forum, and win. Filbey called the experience a catalyst for growth.

"Since then we've not only have raised awareness but have been able to get money in the door and now are on our way to developing the first vaccine," Filbey said. "These vaccines help eliminate antibiotic use, which is a huge concern in our food supply today, so we are effectively creating a safer food supply and helping feed the world."

Filbey said the KC Animal Health Corridor provided a great group of coaches who helped her prepare, hone her Investment Forum pitch and clarify her message. She called the insights and current market knowledge they provided tremendously helpful for entrepreneurs and said the opportunity positioned Mazen for future success.

"This first oral vaccine, aimed at swine, is just one of a full suite of product offerings from Mazen that will eventually target companion animals," Filbey said. "Imagine having the vet give your dog a chew instead of giving them a shot. That's very possible."

Karthik Ramachandran, VP and Co-Founder of Likarda, a market leader in cell-based therapy for pets, presented at the 2012 Investment Forum. He said Likarda used the opportunity to meet investors, network, and make a ton of connections that the company still uses today as mentors, advisors and potential partners.

"It's a great event to bring industry leaders, investors, and animal health companies together to learn about new technologies," Ramachandran said. "In many cases, small companies are where new innovation comes from and this is really a place where you see them showcased, specifically targeted in the animal health industry."

The Investment Forum is the culmination of Global Animal Health week in Kansas City. Events held to recognize this week include the CVC Veterinary Conference and the annual KC Animal Health Corridor Homecoming dinner. The homecoming event draws thousands of people from across the world to Kansas City and is one of the most exclusive gatherings of CEOs and industry leaders worldwide.

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#### **About the KC Animal Health Corridor**

Companies with a business location in the KC Animal Health Corridor account for more than half of the sales generated by the global animal health industry. The Corridor, anchored by Manhattan, Kansas, and Columbia, Missouri, is home to more than 300 animal health companies, representing the largest concentration in the world. For more information, visit [www.kcanimalhealth.com](http://www.kcanimalhealth.com).