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Expect a More Diverse, Transparent and Technologically Driven Animal Health Industry
During the KC Animal Health Corridor Digital Animal Health Summit, industry leaders outlined the need for a more consumer-centric future

Kansas City, Missouri, Sept. 1, 2020 – The first KC Animal Health Corridor [Digital Animal Health Summit](#) brought leaders together from across the globe to discuss the future of the animal health industry. The overarching takeaway: To meet consumer demand for environmentally friendly protein and pet owners’ need for accessible veterinary care, the industry must embrace technology and hire a more diverse workforce.

[Keynote speaker David Hughes](#), renowned food marketing professor at Imperial College London, kicked off the three-day Summit with a look at the transformational changes facing the protein market. “When consumers select products, particularly meat, they’re increasingly implementing a citizen checklist. Is the product climate-friendly, sustainable, animal-welfare friendly and so on,” Hughes said in his presentation. “Consumers are changing their purchasing behaviors on the basis of how they see your product perform against their citizen checklist.”

During a Summit [leaders circle panel](#), KC Animal Health Corridor board members discussed how to educate this conscientious consumer. “We need to focus more on the perception of animal production from a welfare, environmental and nutritional impact,” said Simon Walley, President of Biomin North America and Vice Chair of the Corridor. “For example, meatless meats are perceived to be healthier, but compared to lean beef they have 7 percent more calories, 17 percent more fat, 60 percent more saturated fat and 30 percent less protein.”

Technology as a connector

As consumers demand more information about where and how their protein is raised, they’re also demanding technology-driven veterinary care. “The digital area is wide open,” said Dino Dedic, Managing Director in Healthcare Investment Banking at Barclays, during a second Summit leaders circle panel focused on innovation. “From enhancing and integrating the pet parent experience, to precision farming, and even leveraging artificial intelligence for drug discovery, all these areas are open for someone to develop a scaled solution.”

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Panel members agreed technological solutions require partnership between large pharmaceutical companies and start-ups. To foster these connections, the Summit hosted 12 [emerging companies](#) to present early-stage products, such as a smart litter box by Hachi Tama Inc. that measures cat weight and urine output to aid in the early detection of chronic kidney disease and other conditions. A digital platform from Roo Veterinary Inc. will provide the first marketplace platform that enables real-time matching of relief and freelance veterinarians and veterinary technicians with practices seeking help.

Other emerging companies leveraged technology to develop new biologics, such as the first ever oral vaccine for honey bees. Produced by Dalan Animal Health, the vaccine prevents American Foulbrood (AFB), a bacterial disease present in 50 percent of all hives. Currently, the only real treatment for AFB is burning the hive as antibiotics treat the causative bacteria but don't address the bacterial spores. For a complete list of emerging companies and their products, see the end of this document.

Diversifying the face of animal health

Fostering innovation and a consumer-centric industry requires a workforce that reflects the diverse customer base. That's why the Summit organized the first industry-wide discussion on diversity, equity and inclusion. During the interactive session hosted by Merck Animal Health, Scott Bormann, the company's Senior Vice President, North America, described his reaction to the topic as "uncomfortable." "I felt uncomfortable that as a business leader our teams did not look like the demographics of society, uncomfortable that we owned an unconscious bias and blind spots, and uncomfortable that we weren't doing more about creating an environment where all were welcomed, respected and appreciated," he said.

Bormann asked attendees to get uncomfortable during breakout conversations about why the industry isn't more diverse and how that can change. He ended with a reminder that many small steps can blaze trails: "I challenge us all to reflect on how we, as individuals, are going to prioritize diversity and inclusion in our organizations. Each of us has power to make an impact."

Focus on social responsibility

The 2020 Digital Animal Health Summit embarks on its final day tomorrow, during which the organizations Retrieving Freedom and Symbiotic Behavioral Treatment Center will be honored with the Spirit of Service Award. Registration proceeds from the Summit's [Programming with Impact](#) session will be donated to these organizations that serve the most vulnerable by fostering a connection with animals.

Momentum from the Summit will carry through the year to the KC Animal Health Corridor's announcement of the Iron Paw Award. The recipient – an individual who has provided significant global leadership to the animal health industry, will be announced this fall.

Presenting emerging companies

- **Aeronics, Inc.**, Pennsylvania: high efficiency, low pressure oxygen storage to revolutionize oxygen delivery to pets at home, in transport, and in animal hospitals.
- **AimaLojic Animal Health/Immutrix Therapeutics Inc.**, South Dakota: a novel hemoperfusion platform to remove poisons, overdosed drugs, and other harmful molecules from pets' blood.
- **Anubis Bio, LLC**, Missouri: orally delivered zoonotic, high affinity antibodies to provide passive immunity in animals in a formulation designed to protect the antibodies.
- **Creative Protein Solutions**, Alberta, Canada: portable platform for diagnosing metabolic and infectious diseases in animals, beginning with milk fever and mastitis in dairy cattle.
- **Dalan Animal Health, Inc.**, California: oral vaccine for the prevention of American Foulbrood (AFB) in honey bees, a bacterial disease caused by spores.
- **Hachi Tama Inc.**, Kanagawa, Japan: a smart litter box with facial recognition that provides for measuring cat weight and urine output to aid in the early detection of certain diseases.
- **Okava Pharmaceuticals**, California: developing drugs known to be safe and effective for humans into differentiated, clinically meaningful, dose-appropriate products for animals delivered via controlled release technology.
- **Pacific GeneTech**, Hong Kong, China: animal vaccines targeting zoonotic and food safety pathogens, such as *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, with an adjuvant that enables oral dosing.
- **QSM Diagnostics Inc.**, Massachusetts: diagnostic platform that detects and identifies bacteria in minutes with no sample preparation. Quantitative results can be obtained at point of care.
- **Roo Veterinary Inc.**, Texas: marketplace platform that enables real-time matching of relief and freelance veterinarians and veterinary technicians with practices seeking such professionals.
- **SafePath Laboratories LLC**, California: lateral flow diagnostic platform with up to 50 analytes on a single cartridge that provides complete results on an analyte- and patient-specific basis.
- **Xoran Technologies**, Michigan: mobile computerized tomography (CT) imaging device to allow 3D imaging of any body part anywhere in the clinic, as well as 2D imaging and fluoroscopy.

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.

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