

Examining the Role of Telemedicine & Other Advancements in Modern Companion Animal Healthcare

In recent years, there has been a significant surge in pet ownership, which has catalysed transformative changes in the world of veterinary medicine and animal welfare. Approximately 66% of U.S. households, equivalent to 86.9 million homes, are pet owners, according to the American Pet Products Association. As a result, the care and well-being of companion animals have taken center stage, commanding more attention and resources than ever before.

Regulatory initiatives have played a pivotal role in fostering the growth of the companion animal healthcare market, which will surpass USD 203 billion by 2032, as per a report from Global Market Insights Inc. In recent years, various institutions have made significant strides in reforming the legal use of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals' feed or water. In January 2023, the FDA revised new animal drug regulations to enact the veterinary feed directive (VFD) drugs section of the Animal Drug Availability Act of 1996 (ADAA). This was intended to regulate the use of antibiotics in animal feed, curbing the rise of antibiotic-resistant pathogens that affect both animals and humans.

Emergence of Telemedicine as a Key Trend

Telemedicine is revolutionising companion animal healthcare, offering a lifeline to pet owners and veterinarians alike. In 2020, doctors' telehealth usage reached 85%, as reported by the American Medical Association. This innovative approach to veterinary care has transformed how pets are monitored, diagnosed, and treated. The impact of telemedicine is far-reaching, providing several key benefits in the realm of companion animal health.

For instance, the adoption of telemedicine for pets and regulatory changes surrounding it have made veterinary consultations more accessible and convenient. Pet owners can now consult with veterinarians from the comfort of their homes, eliminating the need for stressful and time-consuming trips to the clinic. This convenience is particularly beneficial for those residing in remote areas or individuals with limited mobility, ensuring that no pet's health is compromised due to geographical constraints.

To that end, In June 2023, Cargill, a commodity giant, introduced its foray into India's pet care industry with the digital venture, Zoonivet, a telehealth app designed to remotely connect pet owners with qualified veterinarians through video calls, offering convenient primary healthcare for pets across India.

3 Major Collaborative Initiatives Fueling Progress in Pet Healthcare

Collaborations and partnerships are playing a pivotal role in propelling growth within the companion animal healthcare market. They serve as catalysts for innovation, expansion, and the overall advancement of this industry. Enlisted below are 3 key collaborative efforts driving growth in the companion animal healthcare industry:

- **Research and Development Advancements**
Collaborations between pharmaceutical companies,

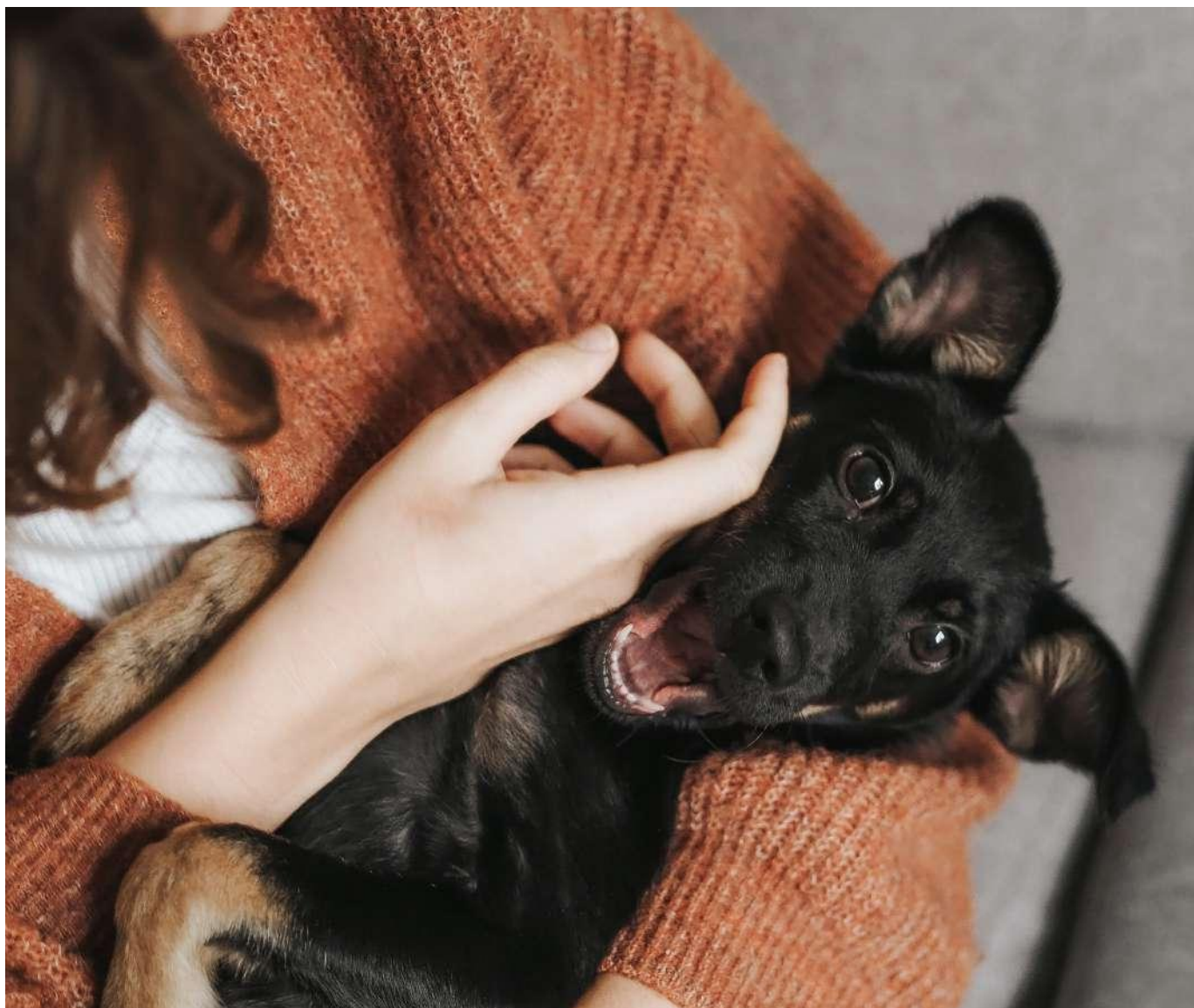
academic institutions, and veterinary research organisations are fostering breakthroughs in drugs, vaccines, and treatment protocols for companion animals. By pooling expertise and resources, these partnerships expedite the development of novel therapies and diagnostics. In February 2022, PetMedix and Zoetis joined forces to create innovative species-specific monoclonal antibody therapeutics for companion animals. As part of the collaboration, PetMedix would lead the discovery efforts on various essential targets using its transgenic platforms, while Zoetis would hold the exclusive option to develop and introduce these therapies to address unmet clinical needs in the pet healthcare sector.

- **Digital Health Initiatives**

Telemedicine platforms, often created through collaborations between technology companies and veterinary organisations, are expanding access to veterinary care. These digital solutions enable remote consultations, medical record sharing, and monitoring of pet health. As a result, more pet owners can seek timely advice and medical care, driving the growth of this burgeoning sector.

On July 30, 2022, several prominent professional and industry organisations unveiled the Coalition for





Connected Veterinary Care, with the goal of improving and broadening patient care in veterinary medicine through increased telehealth adoption. This coalition was meant to work in collaboration within the veterinary and animal health sectors to advance veterinary care using technology to ensure the well-being of both animals and their caregivers.

- **Wellness & Nutrition**

Partnerships between pet food companies and veterinary professionals are driving innovations in pet nutrition. Collaborative research and the development of specialised diets promote pet health and contribute to the prevention of common health issues.

In September 2021, the Ontario-based University of Guelph received a five-year grant from Champion Petfoods, with an objective to advance the research in pet food nutrition and educate the next generation of scientific leaders in the pet food industry. The funding was meant to facilitate collaborative studies with international research experts to broaden the fundamental understanding of pet nutrition, ultimately enhancing the well-being of pets.

In conclusion, the companion animal healthcare industry is experiencing a transformative era, driven by the power of collaboration and partnership. As research

and technology continue to advance, strategic alliances between pharmaceutical companies, veterinarians, tech innovators, and other stakeholders will continue to foster remarkable breakthroughs in healthcare, telemedicine, insurance, and nutrition. As the global pet population expands and owners demand higher standards of care, these collaborative efforts are not only enhancing the well-being of animal companions but also fostering a flourishing industry that is poised for great growth and innovation in the years to come.



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An avid reader since childhood, Saloni Walimbe is currently following her passion for content creation by penning down insightful articles relating to global industry trends, business news and market research. With an MBA-Marketing qualification under her belt, she has spent two years as a content writer in the advertising field, before making a switch to the market research domain. Aside from her professional work, she is an ardent animal lover and enjoys movies, music, and books in her spare time.