

Mollibrands: now pets get water treatment

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By Vicky McCrorie

A new bottled water has been launched in the US, one that is aimed at pets instead of their owners. The product capitalizes on two growing sectors: the booming US petcare and bottled water markets, demonstrating how the health trend is migrating from humans and onto their animal companions.

Molli's Choice, from Mollibrands, consists of a line of 'nutritionally enhanced' flavored waters, especially designed for cats and dogs. Available in various meaty flavors, the water is described as being purified and non-carbonated.

The launch of Molli's Choice highlights how the trend towards healthy food and drinks has now reached the petcare market. Marketing literature for the water stresses its health credentials - it has added taurine and calcium, and no fluoride or chlorine which it states are harmful to pets. With many Americans choosing to drink bottled instead of tap water, Mollibrands intends to persuade consumers to allow their pets the same privileges.

The US petcare market is currently going through a boom period, worth a substantial \$21 billion in 2005. It is forecast to rise by around 4% a year up to 2009, buoyed by the large number of US households that own a pet (around 63% according to Mollibrands) and the growing desire for owners to instill their own tastes and fashions onto them.

A number of other big name companies have exploited the growth in petcare, including media giant Disney, which is about to globally roll out a range of dog food under the Old Yeller name. It was only a matter of time before someone exploited this sector and combined it with that of the \$14.5 billion bottled water market.

Flavored bottled water has been particularly popular in recent years, with twice as many launched in 2005 than 2004. However, the flavors included in Molli's Choice differ from its human offerings, focusing on meat rather than the usual fruit flavors, and indicating one area where Molli's has focused on the tastes of pets rather than their owners.

Whether bottled water for pets will catch on depends on the changing fashions of pet owners. But with bottled water and petcare displaying strong signs of growth, the water product looks set to find a market in the current landscape.