

Food Lover's enters R9.6bn pet food market partnership with VetsMart

Food Lover's Market has made a strategic step into the R9.6bn pet food market through a partnership with VetsMart. VetsMart is a retail chain of pet shops in South Africa and Namibia, founded by veterinary doctor Sean Smith. With nine stores, including a newly opened store at Hilltop Village in Windhoek, Namibia, VetsMart caters to the growing demand for speciality pet products and services.



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VetsMart Hilltop Village in Namibia, which opened on 6 May 2024, is the first store to open as part of the new partnership, offering playful in-store design - including animatronics, an extensive range of products and a customer-centric approach to holistic pet care.

Like Food Lover's Market, VetsMart is a family-run business that's been around for over 20 years. The partnership is set to further strengthen the Food Lover's Market proposition as a one-stop shopping destination, and the VetsMart stores will be rolled out in a similar fashion to Market Liquors and Seattle Coffee Co., which are located adjacent to the Food Lover's Market stores.

Says Byron Stain, Food Lover's Market liaison to VetsMart, "The speciality pet sector is a growing retail segment, and pets are now considered part of the family and not banished to a life of scraps and outside living. This partnership will allow us to meet more of our customers' pet family needs with a range of speciality pet products and services."

The pet food market has consistently performed well, even during economic downturns. In South Africa, the market stands at R9.6 billion and is projected to grow by 12.74%. Similarly, in Namibia, the pet food market is valued at R397 million and is expected to grow annually by 7.95%. VetsMart offers a wide range of premium pet foods, treats, medicines, bedding, accessories, and toys from renowned brands.

Sean Smith, founder of VetsMart, emphasises the store's commitment to quality and diversity in its product offerings. Says Smith, "In this increasingly crowded pet product market, VetsMart will differentiate itself by delivering a customer experience tailored specifically towards genuine care for the health and wellbeing of that all-important pet family member."

In South Africa, a BrandMapp survey reveals that 45% of mid to top-income consumers are pet owners, with dogs being the most popular choice at 81%. Byron Stain highlights an interesting finding, "Interestingly, there is a direct correlation between the number of children and the number of pets, with 43% of dogs living in homes with 3 children or more. These insights further demonstrate pets' significant role in people's lives."

Food Lover's Market is focused on expanding its presence in sub-Saharan Africa and providing unique retail experiences. The partnership with VetsMart aligns with this goal, extending the company's offerings to every family member. Says Stain, "We are excited about this new partnership and expanding our footprint in this ever-growing sector. Food Lover's Market is a family brand, and it makes perfect sense to cater to every single member of the family."

Smith concludes, "I am thrilled that VetsMart, a family business serving pet-loving customers for over 20 years, has been provided with a unique opportunity through this dynamic partnership to bring the same enduring qualities to its pet customers that Food Lover's Market delivers to its human counterparts."

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