So Many Foods, So Little Time, Money, and Space—Help!

Sean Delaney, DVM, MS, DACVN
DVM Consulting Inc.
Davis, CA

With the ever-expanding selection of commercially prepared foods to meet practice, client, and patient needs, how does one determine what to offer as a solution and carry? This lecture will provide strategies to optimize and prioritize recommendations and inventory.

Outline

A. Average Revenue From Food Sales and The Potential
   a. Economic Rationale for Nutrition In Clinical Practice
      i. 4% of total veterinary practice revenue
      ii. Large compliance gap indicates significant additional potential
      iii. Above is important given “opportunity cost” of spending resources/time on nutrition

B. Strategies to Increase Product Sales
   a. Recommending an Effective Therapeutic Nutritional Plan
      i. Matching plan to client and patient needs
         Please see lecture entitled “Increasing Compliance With Nutritional Recommendations” for more on this topic.
   b. Establishing Expectations
      i. Client education outlining nutritional goals
         1. Contrast therapeutic solutions/recommendations with perceived alternatives/OTC products
   c. Monitoring Patient Response
      i. Measure to see if goals are met and adjust as needed
         1. Proactively schedule recheck calls and appointments
   d. Providing a Variety of Viable Options
      i. Maximize with inventory management

C. Inventory Management
   a. Selecting What to Carry
      i. Practice type based
         1. Client demographics
      ii. Veterinary exclusivity
         1. Understanding FDA guidelines on therapeutic food sales
      iii. Product performance/support for use
      iv. Company technical resources/delivery practices
      v. Margins and carrying cost of inventory
   b. Determining How Much to Stock
      i. Sizing
      ii. Number
      iii. Adjusting orders based on historical data
   c. Handling Returns
      i. Manufacturer policies
      ii. Tracking reasons
         1. Improving offerings
   d. Storage
      i. “First in, first out” stacking or shelving
      ii. Visibility/proximity to waiting area/discharge
      iii. Security
   e. Point of Sale Procedures
      i. Cross checking product matches recommendation
      ii. Expiration date check
      iii. Overall product condition check
      iv. Service
         1. Carrying out
         2. Schedule reorder reminders
   f. Handling Perishables and Product Recalls
      i. Temperature, moisture, and pest controls
      ii. Recall notification procedures
         1. Liability insurance coverage
   D. Recommending Nutraceuticals and Dietary Supplements
      a. Method for Assessing Safety and Efficacy
         i. Confirming that form or carriers are appropriate
1. Probiotic
   a. Viability
   b. Species specificity
2. Nutritive carriers
   ii. Matching recommended dose to reported efficacious dose
   iii. Understanding if safe upper limits exist
E. Creating or Increasing Revenue From Nutritional Recommendations
   a. Nutritional Recommendations for Healthy Patients
      i. Importance
         1. For maintenance
         2. During growth
            a. Large breeds
            b. Form (variety in kittens)
            c. Energetics and individual energy needs
   b. Nutritional Recommendations for Unhealthy Patients
      i. Importance
         1. End of life decisions

Recommended additional reading