



## Big Idea Ventures and Mars Petcare Launch 2026 Global Pet Food Innovation Program in Collaboration with AAK, Bühler, Givaudan, and Ingredion

05/12/26

- An Innovation Powerhouse: The initiative unites world-class experts in FoodTech, pet care, and ingredients to accelerate the transition toward a more sustainable pet food supply chain.
- Seeking New and Scaling Ventures: The program is in pursuit of bold companies with groundbreaking solutions in alternative proteins, fats, oils and novel ingredients.
- Strategic Expansion in Asia: The 2026 program will place a stronger emphasis on Asia, reflecting the region's growing importance in more sustainable food innovation and pet nutrition.

**New York (USA), May 12, 2026, 8:00am EST** — Big Idea Ventures and Mars Petcare announce the launch of the Next Generation Pet Food Program, in collaboration with industry leaders AAK, Bühler, Givaudan, and Ingredion. Now in its third year, the program has become a leading global platform for advancing sustainable solutions in pet nutrition, focused on identifying and scaling the next generation of breakthrough technologies.

The program is seeking startups with groundbreaking low carbon materials that can be applied to pet food, with a strong focus on alternative proteins, fats, oils and novel ingredients. The Mars Petcare Raws4Paws Accelerator is investing in innovation and searching for the next generation of suppliers to help source the best ingredients to support healthy pets and help address concerns about ingredient accessibility, security, sustainability and changing consumer behavior in the pet industry.

**Elisabetta Pierangelo, VP R&D Mars Pet Nutrition, said:**

"We are committed to exploring new technologies and scaling innovation that could reduce the environmental impact of pet food. Through previous cohorts, we've uncovered promising new solutions and seen transformative technological developments. I'm eager to build on that momentum and witness the breakthroughs this year's program will unlock."

The initiative connects innovators from the human food space to the pet food industry and provides expertise from global leaders to help accelerate their path to market. Over the past two years, the program has generated valuable insights into emerging technologies with several of the startups now testing concepts that could play a key role in shaping the future of sustainable pet food.

**Andrew D. Ive, Founder and Managing General Partner of Big Idea Ventures, stated:**

"Our work with Mars Petcare and our partners has evolved into a focused engine for identifying and scaling the next generation of pet food ingredients. We are connecting high-quality startups with the corporations that can actually support these innovations to market, particularly across alternative proteins, fats, and novel ingredients. The priority now is not just discovery, but accelerating adoption and creating a more efficient path to commercial reality. With Asia playing an increasingly important role, this is about building a global system that consistently delivers better, more sustainable ingredients at scale."

Selected companies will benefit from expert guidance, potential commercial partnerships, \$15,000 and the opportunity to showcase their solutions at the Asia-Pacific Agri-Food Innovation Summit in Singapore.

The 2026 program is open to global applicants, with a strong preference for scalable solutions based in or focused on the Asia-Pacific region. Innovators from all geographies are encouraged to apply on the program's website: <https://bigideaventures.com/pet-food-program/>.

Media Contacts:

AAK:  
Carl Ahlgren  
Head of Investor Relations and Corporate Communication  
+46 70 681 07 34  
[carl.ahlgren@aak.com](mailto:carl.ahlgren@aak.com)

Big Idea Ventures:  
Shruti Salkar  
Email: [news@bigideaventures.com](mailto:news@bigideaventures.com)

Bühler Group:  
Dalen Jacomino Panto  
Media Relations Manager  
Bühler AG, 9240 Uzwil, Switzerland  
Phone: +41 71 955 37 57  
Mobile: +41 79 900 53 88

E-mail: [dalen.jacomino\\_panto@buhlergroup.com](mailto:dalen.jacomino_panto@buhlergroup.com)

Katja Hartmann  
Media Relations Manager  
Bühler AG, 9240 Uzwil, Schweiz  
Mobile: +41 79 483 68 07  
Email: [katja.hartmann@buhlergroup.com](mailto:katja.hartmann@buhlergroup.com)

Givaudan:  
Naheel Abdelall  
Regional Communications Head Taste & Wellbeing - South Asia, Middle East & Africa  
Email: [naheel.abdelall@givaudan.com](mailto:naheel.abdelall@givaudan.com)

Ingredion:  
Rick Wion  
Head of External Communications  
Email: [rick.wion@ingredion.com](mailto:rick.wion@ingredion.com)

Mars:  
Alex Lloyd  
Global R&D Communications Senior Manager  
Email: [alex.lloyd@effem.com](mailto:alex.lloyd@effem.com)

## About the Partners

### Big Idea Ventures

Big Idea Ventures is building the bioeconomy by investing in breakthrough technologies across food, agriculture, and materials. Its mission is to support the world's best entrepreneurs, scientists, and engineers to solve the world's greatest challenges. With teams in New York, Paris, and Asia, and more than 160 investments across 30 countries, the firm gives partners access to world-leading innovation through fund management, tech scouting, venture building, acceleration, direct investment, and global innovation challenges. Supported by Vevolution, its digital platform that connects thousands of startups with investors and corporates, it delivers continuous deal flow, analysis, and ecosystem mapping, creating low-risk, high-insight opportunities to pilot technologies, form strategic partnerships, and demonstrate leadership in sustainable innovation.

[www.bigideaventures.com](http://www.bigideaventures.com)

### Mars, Incorporated

Mars, Incorporated is driven by the belief that the world we want tomorrow starts with how we do business today. As a \$65bn+ family-owned business, our diverse and expanding portfolio of leading pet care products and veterinary services support pets all around the world and our quality snacking and food products delight millions of people every day. We produce some of the world's best-loved brands including ROYAL CANIN®, PEDIGREE®, WHISKAS®, CESAR®, M&M'S®, SNICKERS®, Pringles®, Cheez-It®, and BEN'S ORIGINAL™. Our international networks of pet hospitals, including BANFIELD™, BLUEPEARL™, VCA™ and ANICURA™ span preventive, general, specialty, and emergency veterinary care, and our global veterinary diagnostics business ANTECH® offers breakthrough capabilities in pet diagnostics. The Mars Five Principles — Quality, Responsibility, Mutuality, Efficiency and Freedom — inspire our more than 170,000 Associates to act every day to help create a better world for people, pets and the planet.

[www.mars.com](http://www.mars.com)

### AAK

Everything AAK does is about Making Better Happen™. We specialize in plant-based oils and fats, the value-adding ingredients in many products people love to consume. We make these products better tasting, healthier, and more sustainable. At the heart of AAK's offer is Customer Co-Development, combining our desire to understand what Making Better Happen™ means for each customer, with the unique flexibility of our production assets, and deep knowledge of products and industries, including Chocolate & Confectionery, Bakery, Dairy, Plant-based Foods, Special Nutrition, Foodservice, and Personal Care. Our 4,000 employees support our close collaboration with customers through 25 regional sales offices, 16 dedicated Customer Innovation Centers, and with the support of more than 19 production facilities. Listed on Nasdaq Stockholm and headquartered in Malmö, Sweden, AAK has been Making Better Happen™ for more than 150 years.

[www.aak.com](http://www.aak.com)

### Bühler

Bühler is driven by its purpose of creating innovations for a better world, balancing the needs of economy, humanity, and nature in all its decision-making processes. Billions of people come into contact with Bühler technologies as they cover their basic needs for food and mobility every day. Two billion people each day enjoy foods produced on Bühler equipment; and one billion people travel in vehicles manufactured using parts produced with Bühler solutions. Countless people wear eyeglasses, use smart phones, and read newspapers and magazines – all of which depend on Bühler process technologies and solutions. As a technology partner with this global relevance, Bühler is in a unique position to help unlock new pathways to profitable sustainability and, through its solutions and services, turn global challenges into opportunities.

For this reason, in 2019, Bühler committed to having the solutions ready to multiply that reduce energy, waste, and water by 50% in the value chains of its customers. In 2025, it established that in 11 of the key 15 value chains, reductions of at least 50% are feasible in one or more key environmental dimensions. Across all value chains, savings of more than 35% are achievable in at least one category. The company is now focused on driving adoption and scaling these solutions further to multiply impact. In its own operations, Bühler has developed a pathway to achieve a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (Greenhouse Gas Protocol Scopes 1 & 2, against a 2019 baseline).

Bühler spends up to 5% of its turnover on research and development annually to improve both the commercial and sustainability performance of its solutions, products, and services. In 2025, the company employed 12,090 people who generated a turnover of CHF 2.8 billion. As a Swiss family-owned company with a history spanning 166 years, Bühler is active in over 140 countries around the world and operates a global network of

105 service stations, 27 manufacturing sites, and research and training centers in 26 locations.

[www.buhlergroup.com](http://www.buhlergroup.com)

### **Givaudan**

Givaudan is a global leader in Fragrance & Beauty and Taste & Wellbeing. We celebrate the beauty of human experience by creating happier, healthier lives with love for nature. Together with our customers we deliver food experiences, craft-inspired fragrances and develop beauty and wellbeing solutions that make people look and feel good. In 2024, Givaudan employed over 16,900 people worldwide and achieved CHF 7.4 billion in sales with a free cash flow of 15.6%. With a heritage that stretches back over 250 years, we are committed to driving long-term, purpose-led growth by improving people's health and happiness and increasing our positive impact on nature. This is Givaudan. Human by nature.

[www.givaudan.com](http://www.givaudan.com)

### **Ingredion**

Ingredion Incorporated (NYSE: INGR), headquartered in the suburbs of Chicago, is a leading global ingredient solutions provider serving customers in more than 120 countries. With 2025 annual net sales of approximately \$7.2 billion, the Company turns grains, fruits, vegetables, and other plant-based materials into value-added ingredient solutions for the food, beverage, animal nutrition, brewing and industrial markets.

Ingredion partners with pet food companies to advance sustainable nutrition solutions, supporting responsible sourcing, resource efficiency and environmentally conscious product innovation. With 30 Ingredion Idea Labs<sup>®</sup> innovation centers located around the world and more than 11,000 employees, the Company co-creates with customers and fulfills its purpose of bringing the potential of people, nature, and technology together to make life better.

[www.ingredion.com](http://www.ingredion.com)