

CII Summit Sounds Clarion Call for Dedicated Petfood Regulations, Standards, and Evidence-Based Nutrition

Category: Business

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The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) convened the inaugural National Animal Wellbeing Summit 2025 at the India Habitat Centre, bringing together policymakers, veterinarians, startups, and industry leaders working in the space of animal health. The Summit underscored the urgency of clear, science-based regulations for the pet food sector, wider adoption of standards, and coordinated action across government, industry, veterinary professionals, and pet parents.



Speakers from the session – “From Awareness to Innovation: Driving Companion Animal Health”

The session titled “From Awareness to Innovation: Driving Companion Animal Health” focused on India’s rapidly expanding companion-animal ecosystem and the need to move from intent to implementation. Moderated by Mr. Salil Murthy, Managing Director, Mars Petcare India, the session featured Ms. Priyanka Mehra, Scientist E/Director, Food & Agricultural Department, Bureau of Indian Standards; Ms. Pallavi Anand, Business Head, South Asia Region, Nestle Purina Petcare; Mr. Dhanu Roy, Founder & Director, Right4Paws; and Mr. Aniruddha Rajurkar, Chief Executive Officer, SAVA Healthcare.

Speakers emphasized a single-window regulatory pathway and mandatory standards for pet food over time, with BIS voluntary standards as an immediate foundation. They highlighted the importance of evidence-based nutrition, label literacy, awareness and education campaigns, responsible back-of-pack claims, and veterinary engagement to drive real-world health outcomes for pets.

Referencing a recent industry position paper on India's pet food sector by Rödl & Partner, the discussion noted that India's pet population was estimated at ~42.2 million in 2024 and could exceed 100 million by 2035; the pet food market was valued at ~USD 720 million in 2024 with potential to reach ~USD 2 billion by 2035. The paper also observes that dog food accounts for 85%+ of the market, while cat food is the fastest-growing segment, that e-commerce is a key growth enabler, and that manufactured pet food penetration remains below 10% of households—underscoring the need for clear, science-aligned standards and regulatory clarity.

During the panel discussion, **Salil Murthy, Managing Director, Mars Petcare India**, highlighted, *"Pets that once lived outside our homes are now part of our bedrooms and daily routines, reflecting a profound shift in family dynamics. Our recent survey tells us that pets' presence actually helps improve the mental well-being of everybody in the family. The emotional bond is getting stronger day by day."*

Salil further stated, *"Pet food is a rapidly growing industry, but is one of the few that still does not have a comprehensive set of regulations that govern quality ingredients, nutrition, and labelling. The work being done by the BIS on voluntary standards is, therefore, so critical. It is an important attempt to ensure we find a common baseline for safety and quality, and these standards have the potential to go on and become a regulation and mandatory for all players."*

Priyanka Mehra, Scientist E/ Director, Food & Agricultural Department, Bureau of Indian Standards, said, *"As India's pet food market grows rapidly with rising pet ownership and demand for safer, high-quality nutrition, we remain committed to strengthening sector standards. Pets are now an important part of our families, and we believe regulated, high-quality*

products are essential. By encouraging transparent public consultation and drawing on expertise from labs, academia, and manufacturers, we aim to ensure that every standard is scientifically sound and practical to implement. Together, we can support the industry in delivering reliable, high-quality products that promote the well-being of pets across the country."

Pallavi Anand, Business Head, Nestle Purina Petcare, South Asia Region said, *"As pet parenting becomes increasingly intentional and outcome-driven, especially with 80% of today's pet parents being first-timers as per a recent survey, there is a heightened responsibility on the industry. With this rapid shift from home food to formulated nutrition, we must ensure that every product delivers exactly what it claims, both in terms of safety and nutritional value. Standards and claim validation are critical not just for building trust, but also for protecting the very companions we serve. Competition and growth are positive signs, but only if we collectively uphold quality, transparency, and scientific rigor so that every pet gets the right product, at the right price, and with assured quality."*

Key themes from the session included:

- Establishing a dedicated regulatory framework for petfood, grounded in BIS voluntary standards as a near-term baseline.
- Advancing evidence-based nutrition and claims substantiation; strengthening label transparency and consumer education.
- Scaling veterinary engagement and One Health alignment across nutrition, healthcare, and responsible digital access.

- Encouraging multi-stakeholder collaboration to convert standards into practice and improve pet wellbeing outcomes nationwide.

In closing, the session reaffirmed the collective commitment to building a cohesive and future-ready framework for the companion animal sector. Speakers noted that the industry stands at a pivotal juncture, where decisions made today will shape its long-term direction and the quality of care available to pets across the country. With aligned efforts among regulatory bodies, industry stakeholders, veterinary professionals, and pet parents, the sector is well-positioned to advance responsibly and contribute to a more informed, resilient, and compassionate ecosystem for animal well-being.

