

## Innovative pet product will be worth \$40,000

Linda Goldston

Ever think you could design better products for your pets than the ones you see in the stores?

A better litter box, pet door or perfect . . . whatever?

PetSafe will pay \$40,000 to the winner of a contest designed to find the next "petrepreneur." Based in Knoxville, Tenn., the company specializes in developing new pet products that are safe and reliable.

You don't even have to build the product; you just have to come up with the best idea, post it online at [www.ideafetch.com](http://www.ideafetch.com), and if you win, PetSafe will bring the idea to life and place it in Petco stores across the country. The idea is to develop products that would enhance your pet's life.

The contest ends Nov. 30, so start thinking. With a \$40,000 top prize, it's worth a shot. Second and third place prizes of \$5,000 and \$2,500 also will be paid, but there's no guarantee your idea will be developed and marketed.

If you visit the Web site, you'll find some pet trivia games, celebrity pet ideas and your pet's zodiac signs. If you come up with some good ideas, send them to me after the contest ends -- so it won't interfere with your entry -- and I'll share them here.

I had to laugh when I got the press release about the contest because the same day I received an e-mail about gift ideas for hamsters: "What do you buy the hamster who has everything?"

The ideas were from Rolf C. Hagen Corp. and include the Habitrail Playground, which "offers a lot of extra space for hamsters to stretch their legs, play and explore their surroundings."

Any animal kept in captivity deserves more than being forced to sit in a barren cage day after day. And with those special shopping holidays coming up, now is a good time to think of things that might improve the quality of life of your pets.

A pet "heating pad" for your older cat or dog? They cost about \$29; you just stick them in the microwave and they stay warm for up to 12 hours. My cat, Jeremy, loves them. Make sure you put a towel or something over them as they're pretty hot when you take them out of the microwave.

This might be a good time to come up with some ideas about what every cat or dog needs. They need quality time with us more than anything, but it'll be fun to collect your ideas and share them here.

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