

US, China and Japan investors back \$37m PetMedix Series B

Heavyweight Chinese, Japanese and US backing has allowed Cambridge animal healthtech company PetMedix™ to complete an oversubscribed \$37 million Series B round to advance its innovative pipeline through clinical development. And the Babraham-based company is looking for more.

The investment brings two new investors into PetMedix – global technology company Tencent and Japanese corporation Kyoritsu Holdings alongside strong continued support from US-based investor Digitalis Ventures and British funds Parkwalk Advisors and Cambridge Innovation Capital.

The money enables PetMedix to take its next step towards becoming a truly global animal health company and the first to bring fully species-specific therapeutic antibodies to veterinary medicine.

The £27m raised represents a first close of the series B and PetMedix is open to engaging with suitable investors interested in extending the round.

CEO and co-founder Tom Weaver said: “PetMedix has a global vision: elevating expectations in pet care the world over. This financing round not only provides the capital required to take us to the next level, but also the international perspective to help us meet our goals.”

This financing round will propel PetMedix from an R & D-stage, UK-focused biotech company, into a clinical-stage international organisation.

PetMedix’s internal discovery programmes will continue to advance through development on their way to regulatory approval. While the initial focus will be the United States, the company has built an international organisation and

financing syndicate to support efforts in European and Asian markets as well.

PetMedix was spun out the lab of Professor Allan Bradley in 2018, based on the PhD work of his student and PetMedix co-founder, Jolyon Martin. At the time, there was a nascent version of the Ky9™ transgenic platform and no team, premises, or pipeline to speak of.

In the two and a half years that followed, PetMedix has established itself as a leader in the emerging companion animal antibody field and is currently the only group capable of making mature, fully species-specific antibodies.

Along the way, PetMedix has expanded operations in state-of-the-art facilities, grown the team to more than 40 world-leading scientists and secured a partnership deal with Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health.

But it's the scientific achievements that have set PetMedix apart. The recent completion of the Ky9 platform marks the single largest transfer of DNA from one species to another, not involving human DNA, as to date PetMedix scientists have engineered 5.5 Mbp of dog and cat genomic sequence into the Ky9 and Felyne™ platforms respectively.

The Ky9 platform alone has so far generated more than 50,000 fully canine, antigen-specific antibodies. This depth and diversity of target-specific antibodies allows PetMedix scientists to be meticulous in every step of the discovery pipeline, ensuring only the highest-quality therapeutic candidates advance into the clinic.

"It is comparatively easy these days to make an antibody; it remains very difficult to make a therapeutic quality antibody that can make it all the way to being an approved drug," explains Dr Dave Lowery, PetMedix's chief product development officer.

This sentiment is imbued in every step of PetMedix's drug discovery pathway. From the way the platform is designed to the criteria used for candidate screening and selection, everything is optimised to maximise the chances of yielding affordable, effective, and safe therapeutics that make it all the way to the hands of a vet as a licensed medicine.

This diligence and care are yielding their first signs of success, as candidate antibodies from an internal PetMedix program recently completed a canine study and outperformed all relevant benchmarks.

"It's an exciting time for PetMedix," Dr Weaver says. "We've delivered on all of our Series A goals by building this incredible team, putting together this unrivalled drug discovery engine, and getting multiple internal programs underway.

"We are now focusing on clinical development on the path to regulatory approval, and ultimately to bringing much-needed innovative therapies to companion animals."

Alastair Kilgour, CIO at Parkwalk Advisors, who co-lead the funding round with Digitalis, said: "The past 18 months have amply highlighted the importance and impact of investing in the companies behind the development of innovative breakthroughs in human medicine, but much less well understood is the need to do the same for veterinary medicine to improve health outcomes for pets and other animals.

"PetMedix has made incredible progress in this field over the past few years – developing a platform to create canine- and feline-specific antibodies to treat various diseases and illnesses.

"Parkwalk is proud to have backed the team from the start, and to be doubling down on that backing in this latest round, and we look forward to watching them continue to innovate and grow through this exciting next phase for the business."