PRESS RELEASE

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# Versele-Laga announces acquisition of Florida-based Higgins Premium Pet Foods, a leading premium pet bird and small animal food manufacturer

## Combined family-owned companies to expand brand offerings across markets

Miami, FL – Versele-Laga nv (“Versele-Laga”), a Belgium-based premium pet food and pet care company announced it has acquired The Higgins Group Corp., aka Higgins Premium Pet Foods (“Higgins”), companion bird and small animal food manufacturer located in Miami, Florida. The acquisition continues Versele-Laga’s strategy as a worldwide manufacturer of branded quality pet foods and animal care products. Higgins provides a key cornerstone for Versele-Laga in the United States, the largest pet food market in the world as well as the gateway to the Caribbean and South American markets. The synergies between Versele-Laga and Higgins are expected to enhance each company’s capabilities, efficiencies and market reach. Higgins will give Versele-Laga valuable insights and a better understanding of the needs of pet parents in the United States.

“Versele-Laga strives to be the preferred brand in pet nutrition by sharing common values with trusted pet parents,” says Gwijde Versele, Chief Financial Officer of Versele-Laga. “We are excited to welcome Higgins’ management team and employees and have them join our family-owned company with a combined 132 years of experience in animal nutrition between us. We look forward to developing new, innovative products and to creating the right support tools and services by being the premium brands pet parents trust for their pets.”

“Higgins will continue to operate as an independent subsidiary of Versele-Laga, focusing on its strengths as specialist in high-quality companion bird and small animal food while having access to Versele-Laga’s infrastructure. It will support Versele-Laga understanding the local needs of the different American end consumer market segments and the required brand identities. Higgins senior management will remain with Dean Reyes continuing as Director of Sales & Marketing, and Andy Perea as General Manager while working together with David Mortier, our Versele-Laga U.S. business developer” says Frederic Boone, CEO of Versele-Laga.

**About Versele-Laga**

Versele-Laga is a fourth-generation family business started in 1932 by Prudent Versele. Located in Deinze, Belgium, it is one of the largest pet food manufacturers in Europe, with market presence in over 75 countries and 10 food production facilities worldwide. Versele-Laga produces over 2,100 branded food and care products for a vast array of animals including pet bird and small animals, wild birds, dogs, cats, horses, farmyard animals, pigeons and many more.

Versele-Laga’s passion lies in its pursuit of quality and end consumer satisfaction. With over 85 years of experience in animal nutrition, it develops pet foods that pet parents can trust. Its vision is built upon four pillars of values that are common to everyone in the organization: respect, responsibility, expertise and passion. This vision impacts everything it does for its consumers, the way it supports its dealers and associates and how it gives back to its communities. Versele-Laga provides support to non-profit organizations like the Loro Parque Foundation that funds animal conservation projects all over the world. It also supports the conservation efforts of Weltvogelpark in Germany, which houses over 4,000 birds of over 675 different species. Most recently, it launched its World Animal Day campaign by creating an interactive online game that allows players to donate food to underprivileged pet parents to feed their pets.

In 2013, Versele-Laga entered the North American market with its Cavalor brand premium horse horse feed production facility in Dalton, GA. Versele–Laga later acquired Goldenfeast, a premium bird food manufacturer and its distribution center in Phoenixville, PA. This was followed with the establishment of a distribution center in Montreal, Canada to offer a wide variety of Versele-Laga branded products.

**About Higgins**

Higgins is a leading manufacturer of branded and private label premium companion bird and small animal foods in the United States. Founded in 1972, Higgins is a second-generation, family-owned company committed to developing natural pet foods with innovative ingredients that do not contain artificial colors, preservatives and flavorings. It is also committed to nurturing relationships with pet parents built on trust, by making the complete health and well-being of their pets its primary goal.

As part of its commitment to promoting responsible pet parenting, Higgins supports various organizations, bird hobbyist clubs and animal rescues. Some of these include the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation, the American Federation of Aviculture, the National Bird Show, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council and the Bird Education and Awareness Koalition.

Higgins brands are sold through independent retailers, national pet specialty chains and qualified e-commerce pet channels. Higgins produces premium pet bird and small animal foods under the brands HIGGINS®, BREAK-A-BALE®, INTUNE®, MAYAN HARVEST®, MINERAL GRIT®, PROTEIN EGG FOOD®, SAFFLOWER GOLD®, SUNBURST®, VITA GARDEN®, VITA SEED®, and WORLDLY CUISINES®.

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