# Pets put to sleep due to veterinary treatment costs

24th February 2010

Owning a pet can be expensive and sadly, new research from Sainsbury's Finance reveals that 56 per cent of vets claim that over the past five years, they have had to put down cats and/or dogs because their owners could not afford the cost of treating their conditions. Furthermore, a staggering 88 per cent of vets claim that they have experienced situations where owners have rejected a recommended course of treatment or operation because they could not afford to pay for it.

Sainsbury's Finance, who offers good quality, competitively priced Pet Insurance is urging pet owners not to do without cover. Joanne Mallon, Sainsbury's Pet Insurance Manager said: "It should be an essential item on a prospective owner's list when weighing up whether to purchase an animal or not. Doing without insurance is simply false economy and worse still could result in some heart breaking family decisions being made later down the line.

"Advances in veterinary science mean that our pets can get the best treatment possible these days, but these improvements including everything from more sophisticated scans to cancer treatments come at higher costs and the financial burden is being felt by pet owners. Despite this, the vast majority of our pets are not insured so their owners have no protection against large veterinary bills.

"Vet fees are increasing by around 12% a year, and as a result of this we may see more animals needlessly being put down because their owners cannot afford it."

The research from Sainsbury's Finance revealed that 63 per cent of vets believe that the cost of treating a skin tumour on a cat or dog has increased over the past year alone. Vets were found to report increases in the cost of treatment for a number of other conditions also. These include dental trauma, for which 53 per cent of vets report an increase in the cost of treatment, gastroenteritis (65%), lameness (61%) and diabetes (57%).

As well as taking out pet insurance to ensure there is help to pay for any surprise veterinary bills, the findings reveal that some owners could also be doing more to improve the overall health of their pets. The vets surveyed said that nearly one in ten (9 per cent) of the cats they see are obese and an additional 29 per cent are slightly overweight. The corresponding figures for dogs are 12 per cent and 33 per cent.

Sainsbury's shoppers are rewarded with double Nectar points on their shopping in store, online and in petrol filling stations for two years when taking out Sainsbury's Pet Insurance, which is one of only 3% of products on the market which offer cover for veterinary fees of £7,500 per condition or more. Customers who spend £50 a week with Sainsbury's and have Sainsbury's Pet Insurance as well as a Nectar card would receive £52 worth of Nectar points a year.

Good quality pet insurance does not need to be expensive, good cover at a competitive price can be found by shopping around. Sainsbury's Pet Insurance is designed to offer some of the widest range of benefits available at a competitive price. For further information, visit sainsburys.co.uk.