

Thematic dog and cat care survey results announced

Hong Kong (HKSAR) - Almost 80% of pet owners interviewed in a thematic dog and cat care survey said they considered their pets as one of their family members.

Releasing the findings of the survey today (December 11), a spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said it was encouraging to see some positive attitudes towards pet keeping.

The survey was conducted last month and 1,000 dog or cat owners aged 15 and above were interviewed. The objective was to gather information about pet ownership and attitudes towards pet care with a view to plan measures and education and publicity programmes to enhance public awareness of responsible pet ownership.

Among the 1,000 respondents, about 70% of them are dog owners while 30% are cat owners. Almost 50% of the respondents spent one to three hours with their pets every day. Owners provided their pets with regular grooming (92.1%), exercise (76.5%) and health check with veterinarians (65.2%).

The survey also revealed that the majority of respondents considered that a responsible pet owner should possess the following conditions:

- * provide a shelter to the pet (98.4%)
- * provide daily necessities such as food and water to the pet (98%)
- * provide health care for the pet when necessary (95%)
- * spend a certain amount of time with the pet (93.6%)
- * keep the pet under control in public places (87.5%)

Only 1.9% of interviewees stated that they had given up their pets before. About 60% of them would adopt rather than buy a pet if they decided to keep a cat or dog.

"The survey shows that most respondents take proper care of their pets and do not abandon them easily," the spokesman said.

Over 86% of interviewees know that all dogs aged over five months must be vaccinated against rabies, licensed and microchipped while around 66% of them are aware that dog licence must be renewed and the dogs must receive a rabies booster vaccination every three years.

"To remind dog owners of the importance of dog licensing and rabies vaccination, a new set of television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (API) has been recently produced for this purpose," the spokesman added.

The new television API was premiered at "Love Your Pet - A Lifetime Commitment" carnival held at Lai Chi Kok Park today and will be broadcast on major television channels starting next week. Co-organised by the AFCD and Animal Welfare Advisory Group, the carnival aims to promote responsible pet ownership and remind people to treat animals with kindness and respect.

The AFCD has all along been promoting responsible pet ownership and will continue its efforts through education and publicity at various levels to promote care for animals as well as enhance the collaboration with animal welfare organisations in providing animal re-homing service.

"To maximise the effect of our work, we also need full and continuous support and co-operation of members of the public," the spokesman added..d.