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Press Release

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AKC SURVEY FINDS MAJORITY OF OWNERS WOULD DEFY EMERGENCY EVACUATION ORDERS AND STAY WITH PETS

***-- Despite Ominous Predictions for 2006 Hurricane Season, Poll Shows Even
Responsible Pet Owners Not Prepared For an Emergency --***

New York, NY – A survey conducted by the American Kennel Club® shows that pet owners overwhelmingly consider their four-legged companions as members of the family. If forced to evacuate their homes to a location where they could not bring their pets, 62% of those polled would defy the authorities and stay with their animals.

The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service is expecting "an above-average Atlantic hurricane season." The season officially starts June 1. This week, May 21-27, is NOAA's National Hurricane Preparedness Week.

Majority are Responsible Pet Owners

A significant majority of those surveyed are responsible, caring pet owners.

- 97% would take their pets with them in case of an evacuation
- 97% keep up with vaccinations
- 79% permanently identify their pets through microchipping or tattoo
- 62% have a family evacuation plan in case a natural disaster hits
- 61% have a pet evacuation plan
- 23% were prompted to design an emergency plan for their pet after Hurricanes Katrina/Rita
- 91% of owners say they have a copy of their pet's vaccination records, 79% have their AKC registration papers, 93% have an extra leash and 89% have extra dog food—some of the basics for a pet disaster kit

Despite Love for Pets, Owners Not Ready for an Emergency

While survey respondents overwhelmingly consider their animals to be members of the family, there are some troubling indicators that many are not prepared to safely evacuate their pets if the need arises.

- Of those who do not have an evacuation plan for their pet, 22% say it is because

they live in a geographic location that isn't a likely target for terrorism or is not susceptible to natural disasters or other disasters, while over half (52%) said they would like to have one but didn't know how

- While a majority of owners have vaccination records and extra food and water on hand for their pets, three quarters (76%) do not have the items assembled in a portable pet disaster kit in the case of an immediate evacuation
- 55% of respondents do not have a list of hotels that accept pets outside their area's evacuation zone

"The threat of a disaster, both natural and otherwise, is always present," said AKC spokesperson Lisa Peterson. "While those owners surveyed obviously love and care greatly for their pets, it's alarming that many of them are not prepared to safely evacuate their animals at a moment's notice. With hurricane season at our doorstep and the continued threat of terrorism, we advise that all pet owners prepare well in advance for all kinds of emergency situations and always heed the advice of authorities."

"We are expecting an above-average hurricane season," said Dennis Feltgen, Meteorologist and Public Affairs Officer for the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service. "Prepare, prepare, prepare. We know that people who have a hurricane plan, and execute that plan, fare much better than those that do not. Many people consider their pets as members of the family, and we saw evidence of this in the Gulf region during Katrina. Some shelters may take pets, but many will not. Make sure your pet is part of your storm plan."

Pet Owners Level of Preparedness Varies by Region

Southeast (including Gulf States)

- The impact of hurricanes Katrina and Rita were apparent in the survey findings, as Southeast residents are the most prepared to safely evacuate their pets in case of an emergency, with nearly three quarters of those polled (74%) reporting that they have an evacuation plan for their pet and 29% reporting they have a pet disaster kit assembled
- Over a quarter (28%) of Southeast residents designed a pet evacuation plan because of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Over half (58%) have always had a pet emergency plan

Northeast

- Not surprisingly, the Northeast lead the nation in the number of respondents who created an evacuation plan for their pet after September 11 (16% of Northeast respondents vs. 8% nationally)
- However, the Northeast was the lowest in the nation to have an evacuation plan for their pet (51%)

Midwest

- In the Midwest, 82% of pet owners claim they do not have a pet disaster kit assembled in case of an evacuation, the highest percentage in the nation

- A higher percentage of those polled nationwide have an evacuation plan for their pets (61%) than the number of pet owners in the Midwest who have evacuation plans for themselves and their families (58%)

Southwest

- 14% of Southwest residents do not have their pets vaccination records in their home, the lowest percentage compared with other regions

Northwest

- 30% of Northwest residents who say they did not have an evacuation plan claim that it is because they live in a geographical location that isn't a likely target for terrorism and is not susceptible to natural disasters. This is 8% higher than the national average
- 74% of those Northwest residents surveyed microchip their pets, which is significantly higher than the national average (65%)
- 99% of those surveyed in the Northwest are up to date with their pets' vaccinations, the highest in the U.S.

For more information about National Hurricane Preparedness Week visit National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration website at www.noaa.gov. For disaster tips please visit http://www.akc.org/pdfs/public_education/prepared.pdf. Pet owners can download a free pet evacuation planning brochure from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at www.ready.gov or request a copy by calling 1-800-BE-READY.

Explanatory Notes:

The survey was conducted by the American Kennel Club during a two-week period in May 2006. A total of 1,006 surveyors responded voluntarily to 17 questions. Self-selecting methods were used in recruitment for this study. AKC does not guarantee that these statistics are scalable to the overall population. This data is for anecdotal purposes only.

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The American Kennel Club, founded in 1884, is a not-for-profit organization which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States. The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its nearly 5,000 licensed and member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 18,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earthdog trials. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Companion Animal Recovery and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit www.akc.org.

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