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New National Pet Owners Survey Details Two Decades of Evolving American Pet Ownership

**- APPMA Releases 2007-2008 National Pet Owners Survey, the Most Comprehensive
Data Examining Demographics and Consumer Habits, of U.S. Dog, Cat, Fish, Bird,
Horse, Reptile, and Small Animal Owners -**

(GREENWICH, Conn.), June 18, 2007 – If you're worried that you may be obsessed with your dog just because he has his own cell phone, frequent flyer miles and page on MySpace, you're not alone. According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association's (APPMA) new 2007-2008 National Pet Owners Survey, pet ownership and spending on pets are at an all time high. The Survey also reports the emotional connection between owners and their pets is stronger than ever, dogs still rule as the largest group of households owning a pet, and an increase in pet services, better availability and types of care products, and improved veterinary care and medicines have universally affected all pet ownership.

Since the first National Pet Owners Survey was published in 1988, the market has undergone many changes; first and foremost, monumental growth in the number of pets owned.

Pet ownership is currently at its highest level with 71.1 million households in the U.S. owning at least one pet (63% of the 113.7 million total U.S. households). The steady increase is up from 69 million households in 2004, 64 million households in 2002 and 51 million households in 1988 when APPMA's research began. According to The Survey, there are 74.8 million dogs, 88.3 million cats, 142 million freshwater fish, 9.6 million saltwater fish, 16 million birds, 24.3 million small animals, 13.4 million reptiles and 13.8 million horses.

"There is nothing that more clearly demonstrates than The Survey that over the past two decades we have come to realize people consider pets a part of the family and treat them accordingly," said Bob Vetere, president of APPMA. "That has led to the evolution of everything from new and improved services and travel accommodations to food and medicines, all of which make spending time with our pets more enjoyable and help fuel the continued rise in pet ownership."

According to The Survey, changes that have universally affected pet ownership include: an explosive rise in the availability of pet accessories, increased uses of pet care services such as grooming, pet-sitting, hotels and training, a meteoric rise in the use and efficacy of oral and topical flea and tick products, a greater variety of food and treat choices including organic, kosher and gourmet, better dental care including brushing, flossing and breath odor control, improved veterinary care and medicines helping pets live longer, increased use of homeopathic medicines, streamlined information sources, and a widespread expansion of pet care items and odor controlling products.

Below are just a few interesting factoids from the 550 page survey that tracks hundreds of pet ownership trends.

Nutrition and Food

As pet owners nationwide become increasingly conscious of the food and treats they feed their pets, The Survey shows an increase in the number of pet owners who consider specially formulated pet food worth the extra time and money. Pet owners who choose specially formulated or organic pet food say their pets enjoyed the subsequent benefits including prevention of obesity and other medical conditions, hairball management and maintenance of a healthy coat.

Health Insurance

The percentage of dog owners who obtained health insurance coverage for their dogs remained steady in 2006 at 3%, showing that Americans are concerned with the health of their pets. More dogs are given medication (77%) than any other pet type. Nearly as many horses (72%) have also been given medication in the past year.

Homeopathic Remedies

The use of homeopathic remedies has been steadily on the rise among dog owners since 2002. According to the latest statistics, 6% of total dog owners and 4% of cat owners chose homeopathic remedies when caring for and treating their pet's health.

Dental Products

According to the 2007-2008 Survey, three-out-of-ten dog owners have dental products for their dog including a toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, tartar/breath control/whitening products or floss. Around 10% of dogs and cats were taken to the veterinarian for dental care last year, however dogs are the more likely pet to have dental procedures conducted at home by the pet owner.

Internet

When in need of information about one's pet, owners rely on several sources including their veterinarian, pet-store personnel and their own past experience. However, the Internet has shown tremendous growth since 1998 as an information provider, particularly as it relates to research pertaining to reptile and small animal ownership. Though the Internet is a popular information tool, it is not a commonly used source in creating awareness of new pet products. Television ads remain the most common means of creating awareness of new pet products.

Pets and Travel

Pet owners prefer family or friends care for their animals while they are on vacation. However, other arrangements made when pet owners travel include professional pet sitting services, boarding at a kennel, taking pets along on vacation or leaving pets home alone. According to the latest Survey, dog owners are the most inclined pet owner to bring their pet along with them on vacation.

The Family Bed

Man's best friend is receiving the royal treatment these days. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of dog owners who have a bed for their pet, from 18% in 2004 to 26% in 2006. Most of the growth is attributed to households in which there is only one dog, male dog owners who are the primary purchasers of pet products, large dogs and dog owners in the West.

Disaster Relief Preparedness

The Survey recorded a majority of all pet owners said they would take some type of action to ensure their pet was cared for during a disaster situation. In the event of an emergency evacuation, almost seven-out-of-ten total dog, cat, bird and small animal owners said they would take their pets with them, and less than 10% say they would bring their pet to an animal shelter.

Loss of Pet

Losing a pet is always difficult and according to The Survey, nearly three-out-of-ten pet owners decide to memorialize their pets in some way. The most common item pet owners would buy is a memorial/garden stone for the home/yard. Another product rising in popularity is an urn for lost pet's

ashes as 15% of dog owners and 11% of cat owners purchased an urn in 2006.

Pet Gifts

Gift giving to pets continues to rise in popularity. The Survey shows more than one-half of all pet owners report having purchased a gift for their pets in the past 12 months, with Christmas remaining as the most popular gift giving holiday. Pet owners also shell out the big bucks on Easter, Halloween, Valentine's Day and Hanukkah. According to The Survey, dog owners are likely to buy up to seven gifts per year, as owners of other pets purchase about four gifts per year. Regardless of species, on average more than \$10 is spent on each gift.

Treats and Toys

Perhaps one of the greatest joys for a pet owner is rewarding their pet with a treat or toy. According to The Survey, seven-out-of-ten dogs, cats, and other small animals are privy to the growing market of tasty snacks and boredom-busting playthings. On average, dog owners spend \$66 per year on treats and \$41 per year on toys. Salt-water fish owners also spend a significant chunk of change on decorations, totaling \$71 a year.

Hoofed Pets

According to the latest statistics, the total number of households that own a horse increased by 2.4% to 4.3 million households from 4.2 million households. The cost of owning a horse is significantly higher than that of owning a dog, cat, or small animal. Concurrently, horse owners presented a higher household income compared with other pet owners and the rest of the population. The average amount spent to purchase a horse in 2006 was \$6,900. Additionally, 72% of horses receive medication and 49% receive other supplements in the span of 12 months. Despite the higher costs, close to three-quarters of horse owners feel the pleasure of riding is an invaluable benefit, relieving stress and affording companionship and affection.

Person Most Responsible for Purchasing

The average age of the person most responsible for purchasing pet products is 46 years old and that person is typically female.

The complete 2007-2008 National Pet Owners Survey includes more than 550 pages of information and retails for \$1,195. It is available for purchase at www.appma.org.

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The American Pet Products Manufacturer's Association (APPMA) is the leading not-for-profit trade association serving the interests of the pet products industry since 1958. APPMA membership includes more than 950 pet product manufacturers, their representatives, importers and livestock suppliers representing both large corporations and growing business enterprises. APPMA's mission is to promote, develop and advance pet ownership and the pet product industry and to provide the services necessary to help its members prosper. Visit www.appma.org for more information.

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