

Health, Love and Happiness Most Important to Dog Owners Reveals AKC 21st Century Dog Owners Study

-- Forget the Antioxidants; Trust Fido for a Long Life --

The American Kennel Club is pleased to announce the release of the first-ever AKC 21st Century Dog Owners Study, focusing on the behaviors, attitudes and purchasing habits of dog owners. Of the 750 AKC respondents* — a majority of whom were female — 42% of women said they own a dog to enhance their personal health and reduce stress. Not surprisingly, 99% of owners surveyed stated the reason they own a dog is for companionship. And 88% of dog owners surveyed regard their dog as a beloved family member.

"The study reveals that dog ownership heavily influences both lifestyle and purchasing habits. We found that owners consider their best friends 47% of the time when buying a car," said AKC spokesperson Lisa Peterson. "And when it comes to toys, two out of three owners purchased an average of 9.3 balls for their dogs to play within the past 12 months."

With its unrivaled database and expertise serving the most engaged segment of dog owners in the country, the American Kennel Club is the industry's best source for market intelligence. This study offers key data on the dynamics of purebred dog ownership in the 21st Century with detailed statistical information, graphical charts, and summary analyses which will serve both manufacturers and retailers of pet products as well as the media for information on developing trends in pet ownership. For more information, or to order copies of this comprehensive research study online go to: www.akc.org/survey21. Highlights from the study include:

Lifestyle:

- When asked about the benefits of dog ownership, 72% of owners credited their four-legged best friends with enhancing their own personal health.
- Over half (51%) of dog owners surveyed stated that their dogs affect how they spend their leisure time.
- The top activity enjoyed by dog owners is a good old fashioned walk. Almost half (48%) declared that they enjoy leisurely strolls with their four legged best friends.
- Owning a dog provides natural entertainment for the family, and watching a dog show on TV is very popular—87% of dog owners said they enjoy watching dog shows.
- Good fences make good neighbors—and safe pets. Nearly two thirds of owners fence their yards to contain their pets in various ways, affirming their commitment to responsible dog ownership.
- Most owners enjoy their canine companions as household pets, and almost half (48%) have owned a dog for 20 years or more.
- Four out of 10 dog owners have made arrangements for their dogs in the event that they pass away before their dog does. Over half (67%) of respondents felt that the most common drawback against owning a dog is the potential for feeling sad when the dog dies.

Travel:

- Almost half of dog owners surveyed stated they specifically look for dog friendly hotels and other accommodations when booking travel plans.
- When buying a car, 47% of owners consider their dogs comfort in the decision making process. For longtime dog owners (10+ years), the likelihood of purchasing a car based upon travel needs of their dogs increased to 52%.

Purchasing Habits:

- Where's the beef? When asked what chew treats they purchased, 50% of dog owners said they buy rawhide bones-- particularly basted or smoke flavored. Other popular taste treats include rawhide chew sticks (34%), pig parts (26%) and—to keep those pearly whites healthy—dental hygiene chews.
- The majority of AKC dog owners purchase dry dog food in 21-40lb. or 40lb. plus size bags.
- In general, about 72% of owners stated that they look for the best and highest quality brands when it comes to products for their canine companions.
- Fetch! Two out of three owners purchased an average of 9.3 balls for their dogs to play within the past 12 months.

Events

- Bragging rights rule. More than half (54%) of all dog owners say they are very proud of their dog's accomplishments, and the number rises significantly for those who compete in AKC-sanctioned events. Around 89% of owners who compete in AKC events such as agility or field trials with their dogs say they are most proud of their canine accomplishments.
- Approximately one in five dog owners participated in an AKC event in the past 12 months. To learn more about AKC events visit: <http://www.akc.org/events/index.cfm>

**The American Kennel Club 21st Century Study was conducted by the Dieringer Research Group in September, 2006. The study was based on the return of 750 completed questionnaires from owners of AKC registered dogs. Margin of error is approximately +/-3.0 percent.*