PFMA confirms dramatic rise in pet acquisition among Millennials

Thursday 1 October, 2020

Today, the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association releases its brand NEW Covid-19 Pet Survey[i] confirming a staggering rise in pet acquisition.

- Over one third (35%) of young adults (age 24-35) have already embarked on lives as new pet owners – or are planning to add a pet to their families.
- 2.1m (19%) collected a new pet in lockdown and
- 1.8m (16%) are planning to add a pet to their household[ii].

Although this research highlights a spike among younger owners, 11% of all households have already welcomed a new pet and 10% plan to do so. Looking at all new pet owners, 15% work and 20% have children. Londoners are the most likely to have added a pet to their family with almost one in five (18%) having picked up a pet and 13% planning to make the change.

Nicole Paley, PFMA Deputy Chief Executive, comments:

"With millions working from home or furloughed from their jobs, many have clearly considered the numerous benefits of pet ownership. Now, more than ever, we know that the companionship and joy pets can bring to people's lives shouldn't be under-estimated.

However, we're keen to highlight the long-term responsibilities of bringing a pet into your life. This is an unprecedented period with unusual working conditions. New owners need to seriously think about future possible obstacles that could make life with a pet slightly more challenging. Owners need to consider their pet when thinking about return to work plans, any possible future hit on finances, less time available and the possibility of separation anxiety for their pet."

"Also, when looking for a new addition, families need to do lots of research. Sadly, there are unscrupulous breeders out there who are willing to take advantage of the rising demand. And, as highlighted by Lucy's Law, it is so important to buy from a recognised breeder and please don't forget the importance of rehoming too."

Kiera recently became a pet parent. She explains:

"Although I'm only 23, I've always wanted a pet. During the pandemic I was furloughed and realised that I'd have more time and would love a new companion. I did loads of research and found Rosie, a cockapoo, who is hypo-allergenic and was suitable with my mild allergies. I obviously had time to help settle Rosie into life at home, but the responsibility was testing! I didn't quite realise how much time puppies do take up, with training and toilet training, teething etc, but she is making a fab companion and she has helped my mental health massively...she brings me so much joy. I'm lucky that my mum is great too and helps out now that I'm back at work for longer hours."

PFMA research also examined the types of pets adopted with dogs the most popular (57%) and cats a close second (38%) and small furries third (8%). Dogs are the first choice for young adults with 70% choosing a dog. This reflects feedback from rehoming charities and breeders and online marketplaces that have witnessed an unrivalled demand for dogs and cats.

Linda Cantle, Director of Pet & Owner Support Services at Wood Green, The Animals Charity confirms:

"Demand for pets over the past few months has soared. Enquiries increased by more than 253% during lockdown and over 20,000 people contacted Wood Green about getting a new pet between April and June – more than half of which were for dogs. This sudden surge in demand has been felt across the sector, with charities and breeders inundated with hopeful, prospective pet owners."

Beyond analysing the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on pet population figures, the PFMA works closely with those in the pet industry to ensure that new pet owners can access good information to help them become and remain responsible pet owners. For top tips, owners should visit https://www.pfma.org.uk/pet-care and for more pet data please visit https://www.pfma.org.uk/statistics. To read more about Lucy's Law visit: gov.uk

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For more information on statistics, health advice or case-studies, please contact Nicole@pfma.org.uk or Michael@pfma.org.uk

[i] PFMA Household Surveyamong 2555 households, July / August 2020

[ii] The UK population is 67.8m. 16.7% fall into the 25-34 year old range, which equates to 11.3m people. 19% of this segment is 2.1m and 16% is 1.8m (worldometers.info and statista.com)

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