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Pet Data Report 2017

PFMA



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State of the Pet Nation

Since 2008 PFMA has been tracking the UK pet population working with TNS, a globally recognised leader in consumer research, to provide robust data. The quality and accuracy of this data is critical as it is not only used by PFMA members but also a wide range of bodies including government departments, pet care businesses, welfare charities and the media. The data provides interesting facts and figures about all pet types - but it is also used to shape strategies.

To ensure a robust set of results, TNS gather the data through an omnibus survey with a sufficiently large sample. The data is averaged across two years, which gives a sample size of approximately 8,000 households and these figures are considered by industry standards to be very strong with a Confidence Interval of 95% and 1% Margin of Error.

On an annual basis, we release top line pet population data but this year we are delighted to share our very first in-depth 'Pet Data Report'. We have brought together more facts and figures, including a contribution from Dogs Trust who we have worked with over the past few years to collect data on topics such as microchipping and neutering. We also incorporate data on wild birds as we have a wild bird food sector group in membership.

Pets play an invaluable role in society and there is a wealth of research highlighting the enormous benefits of living with a pet. People have even proposed pets should be available on prescription such is the strength of the evidence reporting on their benefits to health - both mental and physical. The recently published report by CABI entitled 'Companion Animal Economics'¹ looked at the economic impact of pet ownership and estimated that pet ownership may reduce use of the NHS to the value of £2.45 billion a year through fewer visits to the doctor.

We are delighted to report that 44% UK households are benefitting from the special relationship we have with our pets.

Nicole Paley
PFMA Communications Manager



**44% of households
have a pet**

Nicole's cat Hebe

¹ Companion Animal Economics, Daniel Mills, Sandra McCune: Dec 2016: www.cabi.org

Pet Population 2017

In 2017 the total number of pets in the UK is estimated to be 54 million. Fish (Indoor & Outdoor) account for around 33 million and non-aquatic pets around 21 million. 12 million households have a pet. This equates to 44% of all UK households.

Household Owning

Around 15–20 million fish kept in tanks	7%
Around 15–20 million fish kept in ponds	4%
Around 8.5 million dogs	23%
Around 8.0 million cats	18%
Around 900,000 rabbits	2%
Around 700,000 indoor birds	1%
Around 600,000 domestic fowl	1%
Around 500,000 guinea pigs	1%
Around 300,000 hamsters	1%
Around 300,000 horses and ponies as pets	0.3%
Around 300,000 tortoises and turtles	0.8%
Around 200,000 lizards	0.4%
Around 200,000 snakes	0.3%
Around 100,000 ferrets (only 1 year data)	0.1%
Around 100,000 frogs and toads	0.1%
Around 100,000 gerbils	0.3%
Around 100,000 rats	0.1%
Around 100,000 people keep insects	0.2%
Fewer than 100,000 newts/salamanders	0.1%
Fewer than 100,000 pigeons as pets	0.01%
Around 50,000 people keep mice	0.02%

Around 54 million pets in the UK	44%
Around 33 million aquatic pets in the UK	11%
Around 21 million non-aquatic pets in the UK	33%

Regional Pet Population 2015-2017

The table below gives the % of households in each region who own one of the major pet species (average of last three years).

2015 – 2017	North East	North West	York & Humb	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
Indoor Fish	9	8	7	8	9	7	5	9	7	11	7	10	8
Outdoor Fish	4	4	4	7	6	5	2	7	7	4	2	1	4
Cats	13	16	18	19	17	19	14	21	21	22	15	15	17
Dogs	31	27	23	28	26	20	9	23	25	31	21	38	25
Rabbits	3	2	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	1	0	2
Guinea Pigs	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
Indoor Birds	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
Hamsters	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	1
Sample	516	1419	1062	911	1114	1174	1516	1710	1095	606	1098	389	12610

Dog Population

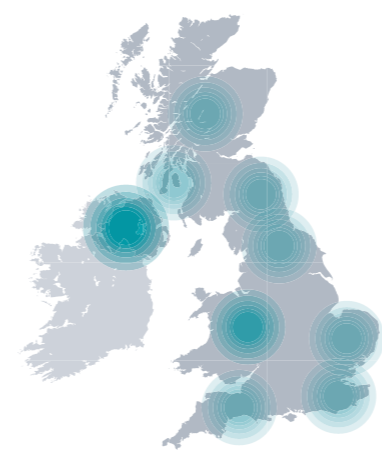
	% Population	Households (000s)	Per Household	Per Region
North East	31	422	1.2	510
North West	27	852	1.3	1100
York & Humb	23	590	1.3	760
East Midlands	28	694	1.5	1000
West Midlands	26	609	1.5	910
East of England	20	571	1.3	740
London	9	206	1.1	200
South East	23	1008	1.3	1250
South West	25	555	1.3	720
Wales	31	517	1.2	620
Scotland	21	471	1.2	550
Northern Ireland	38	235	1.4	300
United Kingdom	25	6729	1.3	8660

Cat Population

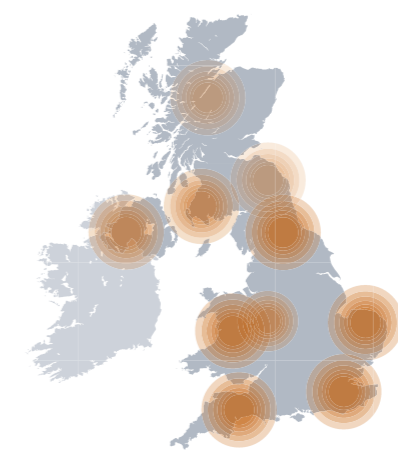
	% Population	Households (000s)	Per Household	Per Region
North East	13	179	1.8	320
North West	16	505	1.6	810
York & Humb	18	462	1.5	710
East Midlands	19	479	1.6	760
West Midlands	17	398	1.9	740
East of England	19	533	1.6	860
London	14	313	1.5	470
South East	21	905	1.6	1400
South West	21	466	1.5	700
Wales	22	357	1.7	600
Scotland	15	324	1.3	430
Northern Ireland	15	94	1.4	130
United Kingdom	17	5016	1.6	7930

Cats tend to be more popular in the South and East.

Dogs tend to be more popular in the North and West.



Density of Regional Dog Population



Density of Regional Cat Population

Cats and Dogs Per Household 2017

Our research highlights the number of cats and dogs per household. Single cat and single dog owning households predominate. However almost a third of cat owning homes have two cats and almost a quarter of dog owning households have two.



21% of dog owning households have two



29% of cat owning households have two



A rise of over 25% in the number of men owning cats (approx. 1m more men in 2017 than 2016)

Number of Cats owned as pets

	TOTAL	AGE								
		♂	♀	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
1 Cat	60%	58%	61%	68%	58%	54%	56%	59%	69%	66%
2 Cats	29%	31%	28%	24%	33%	32%	32%	24%	23%	30%
3 Cats	7%	8%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	10%	4%	2%
4 Cats	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	5%	1%	0%
5 or more Cats	2%	2%	3%	0%	1%	4%	1%	3%	3%	2%

Number of Dogs owned as pets

	TOTAL	AGE								
		♂	♀	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
1 Dog	75%	74%	76%	69%	83%	76%	71%	76%	68%	84%
2 Dogs	21%	22%	20%	25%	11%	22%	23%	19%	29%	15%
3 Dogs	3%	3%	4%	5%	5%	2%	5%	3%	1%	1%
4 Dogs	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%
5 or more Dogs	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%

First Pets



As with general ownership patterns cats were more likely to have been a first pet in the south-east and dogs in the north. Rabbits, hamsters and guinea pigs made up a total of 10% (5%, 4% and 1% respectively). This is, in relative terms, a lot higher than the proportions of those species in the general population survey, suggesting that small animals are more likely to be owned by households with children as 'first pets'.

Of the 2,124* households asked, 28% said that they had or would consider owning a small mammal. 35% of households with children reported that they would consider a small mammal.

*Some people assume it is difficult to look after a small mammal and they don't know how to provide the right care. There is a wealth of educational resources out there to support would-be owners so they don't need to miss out. Information is available from welfare charities and organisations such as PDSA and RSPCA and as the experts in nutrition, PFMA provides feeding factsheets and guidance available at www.pfma.org.uk/pet-care.



53% would define dogs as the perfect pet



23% would define cats as the perfect pet

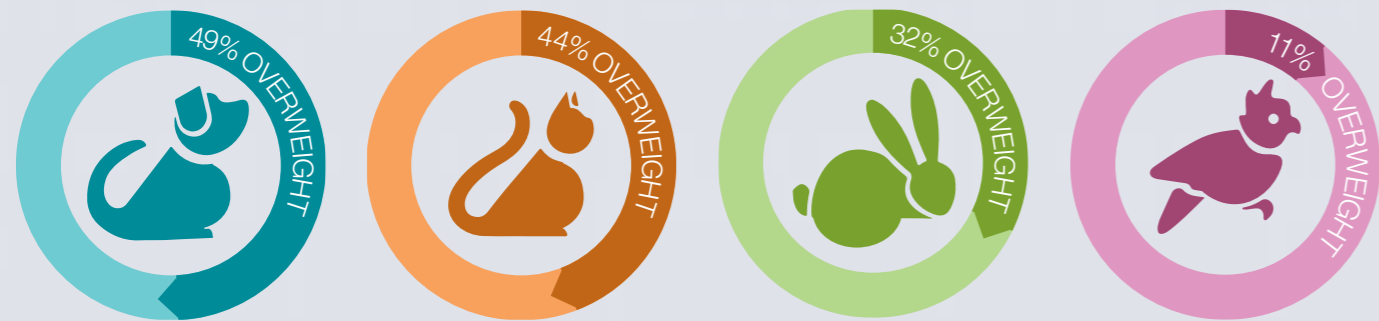
The perfect pets were given as Dogs (53%) & Cats (23%)

The two reasons given for nominating a perfect pet were companionship (39%) and the ease of looking after (28%). Variations in these two responses came with the age of the respondents with predictable results... an older person was more likely to report the reason as companionship, a younger person for ease of looking after (although the variations are not huge).

*Total sample size in 2017 was 4220. However, this question was only asked of 2124

Nutrition

PFMA focuses on educating pet owners and pet professionals on nutrition and attends numerous events such as London Vet Show (LVS) and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) Congress as well as visiting UK vet schools.



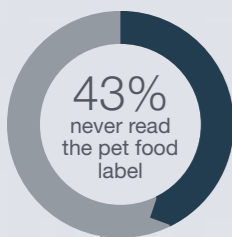
Vets believe that **49%** of dogs, **44%** cats, **32%** small mammals and **11%** birds are overweight/obese. LVS November 2016

As a result of these findings, we want to investigate the numerous reasons why pet owners are not always succeeding in providing their pets with optimum nutrition.

Reading The Facts

In terms of attitudes towards reading nutritional information on the pet food label, 43% of owners never read this and the main reason (40%) is that they never read information on packaging. A further 9% claim no interest in the calorie consumption by their pet(s). 35% claim to already have the relevant knowledge about the correct diet for their pet(s).

Feeding guidelines are a vital piece of information on the pet food label as they provide recommended portion sizes based on the size/weight of a pet. PFMA advises owners to follow the feeding guidelines, adapting to the individual needs of their pet. To help owners feed to ideal body condition, PFMA has developed Pet Size-O-Meters available at www.pfma.org.uk/pet-size-o-meter.

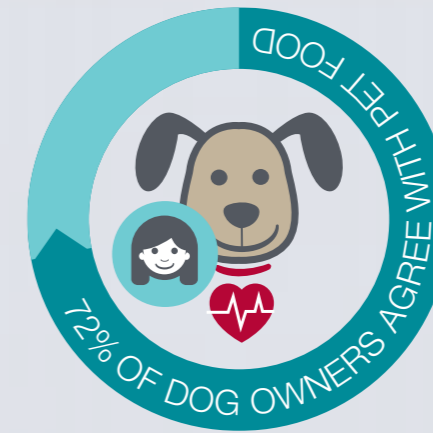


Feeding Habits

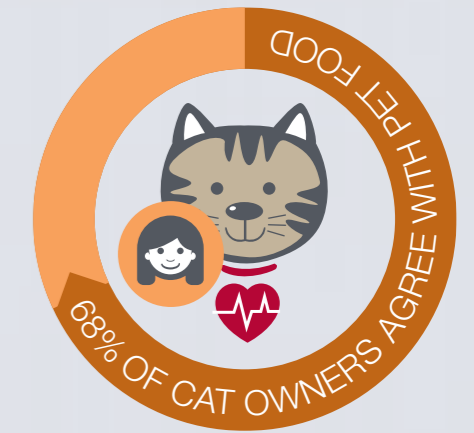
Our research shows that 88% of owners choose a commercially prepared pet food but we know that owners supplement with snacks. Our Obesity Report (2014) confirmed that over a third of owners use 'human' food to treat.



90% of vets agree that prepared pet food provides optimum nutrition when fed correctly



72% of dog owners agree that prepared pet food provides optimum nutrition when fed correctly



68% of cat owners agree that prepared pet food provides optimum nutrition when fed correctly

Did you know that 1 piece of cheese or ham for an average sized woman is the equivalent to 9 pieces for an average sized cat? To find out how calorific common human food treats are for pets, download the PFMA 'Did you Know' Poster, available at www.pfma.org.uk/weight-management-tools

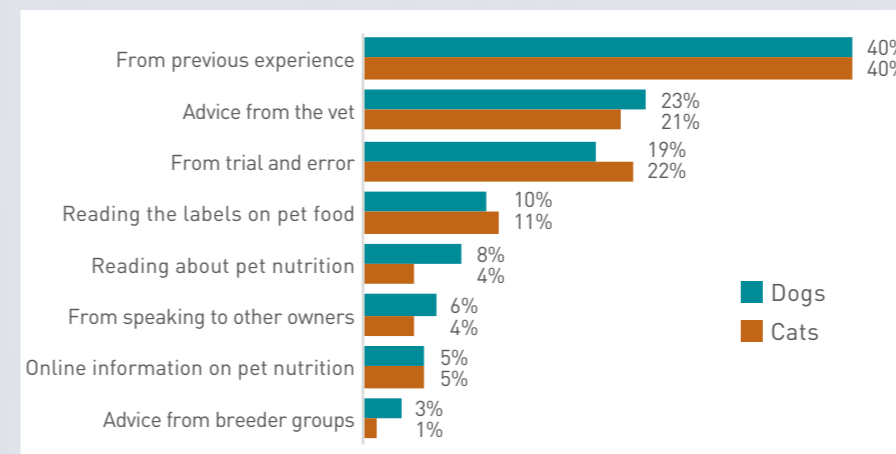
53% of dog owners who feed table scraps do so daily

49% of cat owners who feed table scraps do so daily



Making Choices 2017 PFMA/TNS

% Households Acquiring Feeding Knowledge



Data from LVS 2016/TNS 2017

Market Data Summary

The UK pet food market experienced slight growth again in 2016 (in Value terms) and is now worth a record £2.6bn (excluding wild bird). Volume growth was flat, broadly in line with the Pet Population, which is to be expected in a mature market such as the UK.



	Volume (000 tonnes)	Value £m
Dog	835	1,348
Cat	406	1,108
Fish	3	69
Small animals	69	68
Pet Bird	12	12
Total Pet	1,325	2,605
Wild Bird	140	200
Pigeon	5	6
Overall Total	1,470	2,811

A more detailed breakdown of this data is available at www.pfma.org.uk/statistics

Wild Birds and Feeding Habits

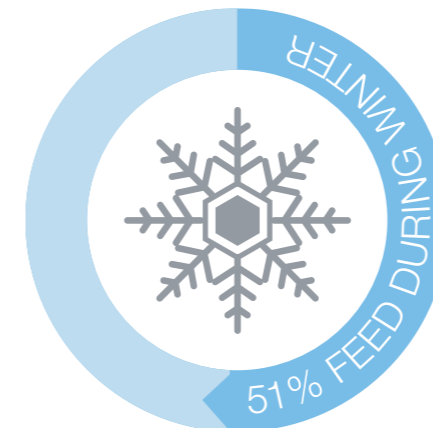
Amongst the 93% of households with some form of outdoor space, 43% of households feed wild birds. Older householders are more likely to feed wild birds as are those who also have pet birds. Younger households (with children) are less likely to feed wild birds.



Of the 93% of households with outdoor space, 43% will feed wild birds



Early retirees (65-74) make up two thirds of bird feeders



PFMA has developed a series of educational resources to encourage school children and families to feed the birds. Visit www.pfma.org.uk/bird-education

% of those with homes with outdoor space feeding wild birds

	All	AGE						
		16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Feed wild birds	43%	20%	27%	34%	50%	53%	64%	62%
Don't feed wild birds	57%	80%	73%	66%	50%	47%	36%	38%

	All	Children	No Children	Own Cats	Own Indoor Birds	Conurbation			Rural
						Urban	Rural	Rural	
Feed wild birds	43%	34%	47%	45%	64%	34%	44%	53%	
Don't feed wild birds	57%	66%	53%	55%	36%	66%	56%	47%	

The time of year most associated with the feeding of wild birds is winter, when 51% say they feed over this season. This proportion grows in rural areas (to 57%) and this is an on going theme as rural dwellers are more likely to feed the birds than their urban counterparts.

% feeding at each time/occasion

	All	Conurbation	Urban	Rural
Winter	51%	39%	54%	57%
Spring	36%	27%	37%	41%
Summer	35%	32%	34%	41%
Autumn	35%	27%	35%	44%

Source: TNS/Soulor Consulting Ltd, February 2017, Total N=2,124

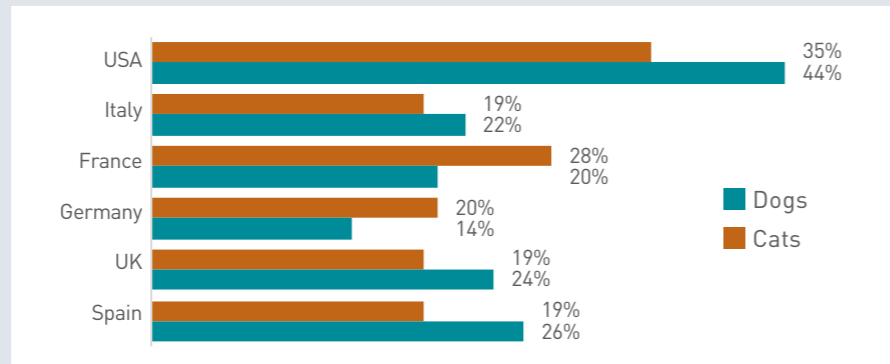
The overwhelming majority (73%) said they did it because they enjoyed seeing the birds in their garden, a further 31% said that they like to supplement the food available in winter.

Worldwide Pet Populations

The following chart shows the proportions of households owning either a cat or dog for each of the major EU economies and the USA (the countries are ranked in descending order of total pet populations).

The UK is on a par with her European counterparts in terms of the percentage of households owning a dog, but behind the USA, whereas for cats the UK has a similar level of ownership to Germany, Italy and Spain but much lower than France and the USA.

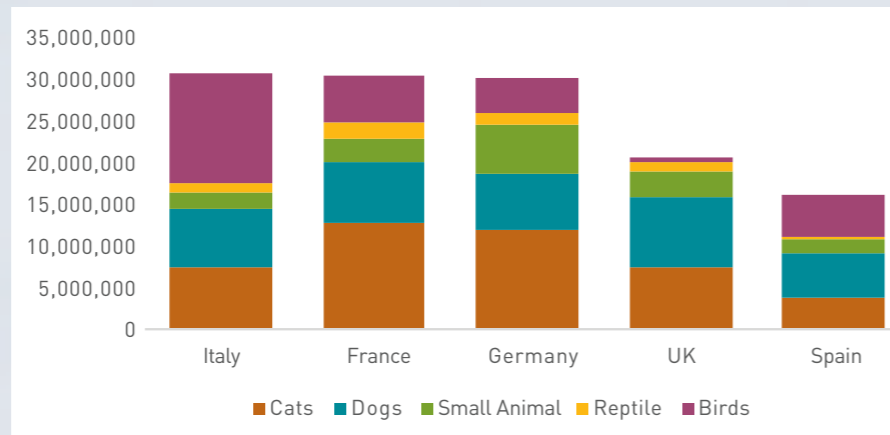
% Household Owning (at least one) Cat/Dog



Source: EU FEDIAF 2014; USA APPA 2015-16

Comparing data for 2014: In absolute terms the UK had around 20 million pets compared to around 30 million in Italy, France and Germany. According to 2015/2016 data, the USA has a total of 200 million pets (excluding fish).

Europe Absolute Pet Populations (2014)



Source: EU FEDIAF 2014

Some of this disparity in the proportion of households owning a pet in the UK (vs. other similarly developed countries) could be due to differing attitudes towards home ownership and renting. In Germany for example renting a home rather than buying is the norm, however with much longer tenancy periods and more rights for the tenant than is often experienced in the UK rented sector.

Reasons for not owning a pet

In 2016, the PFMA and Dogs Trust asked the panel of households if they didn't own a pet, what was the reason for this. The second most common answer (13% of the 1,300 people asked) was that they had moved into rented accommodation (with inference being that the landlord wouldn't allow pets). The only other significant answer was 'lifestyle', which is to suggest that the householder didn't feel that having a pet was appropriate given their frequency and lengthy absences from the home.



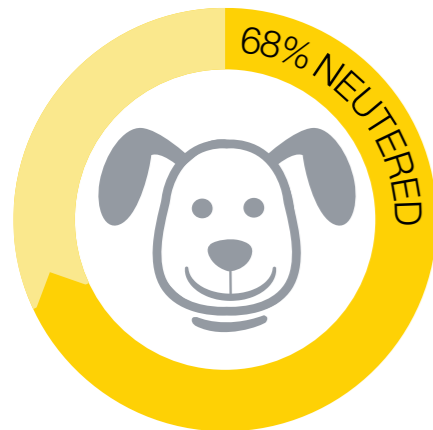


Did you know?

77% of cat owners and 81% of dog owners believe that Government should do more to protect animal welfare.



93% of dogs are microchipped



68% of dogs are neutered



24% intend to take their dogs to training classes

Dogs Trust Study



For several years, Dogs Trust have been involved with this study, looking at microchipping, neutering & training. Questions have also asked where owners acquire their dogs as well as investigating the reasons for giving up a dog.

Microchipping

In April 2016 compulsory micro chipping came in to effect, so how has this translated in to reality? In 2017, 93% of dog owners responded that their dog had been microchipped. This is an increase of 9% on 2016 figures.

There are regional variations. Most areas report over 90% of dogs are micro chipped, but Yorkshire & The Humber and West Midlands report just under 90% (88% and 89% respectively).

88% of households report that they were aware of the legal requirement to microchip (by April 2016).

Whilst only 7% have moved house, we asked those who moved about the methods of updating the microchipping database. The most common method of doing this was via their vet (48%) and doing it themselves via the microchip suppliers' website (39%).

One of the biggest increases in the take up of microchips over the period 2016 to 2017 has been in C2DE households, reflecting the subsidies offered by vets or charities.

Neutering

There has been a modest increase in the number of households reporting that their dog(s) have been neutered (68% in 2017 vs. 67% in 2016). By region this figure ranges from 60% to 75%.

One of the greatest disparities between those who neuter and those who do not is in Social Class (i.e. household income), with 24% of ABC1 households not neutering compared to 39% of C2DE households. However, the proportion of C2DE households not neutering their dogs increased between 2016 and 2017 from 36% to 39%. Whereas ABC1 households have gone down from 28% in 2016 not neutered to 24% in 2017.

Training

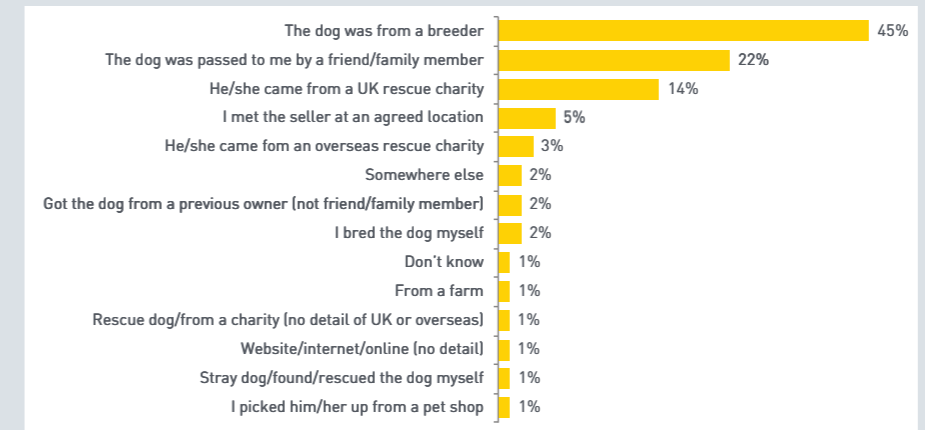
Dogs Trust has enquired about the training habits of dog owners. In 2017, the number of households who take their dog(s) or intend to take them to training classes has increased from 22% to 24%.

64% of owners simply do not see the need for training classes and this figure has increased from 62% in 2016. 22% claim that they have previously had other dogs trained and know what to do. This figure was 24% in 2016.

There is evidence from the microchipping questions that the vet is a trusted source of information for dog owners, so this could be a conduit to communicate other key messages such as training.

Acquisition

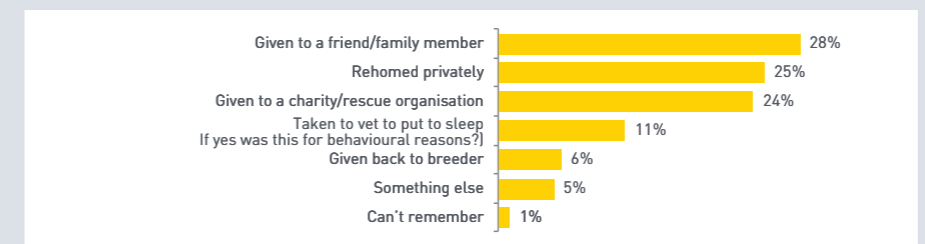
When asked where their dog(s) came from, 38% said collected from a breeder, 22% from a friend or family member and a further 14% from a UK rescue charity. The remaining sources were spread across a range of options:



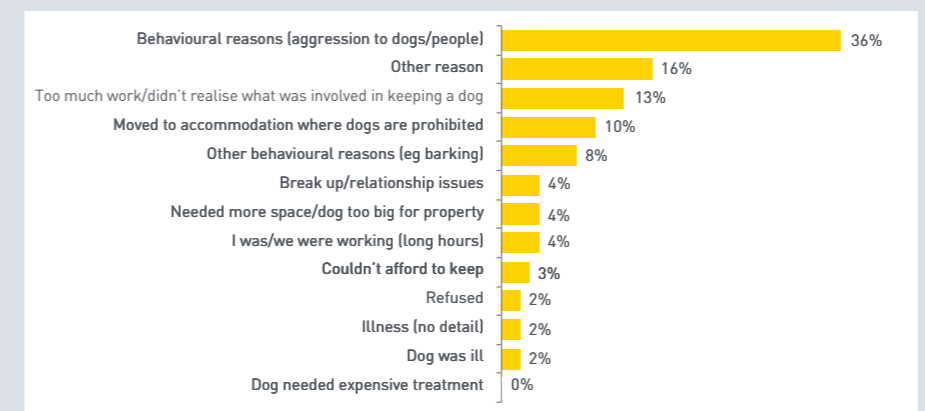
All dog owners asked, N=938

Giving Up

Although the sample size of those who have had to give up a dog is very small – just 8% – there is some useful data from this question. The majority of these dogs were rehomed.



Source: TNS/Soulor Consulting Ltd, February 2017: All dog owners asked, N=938



Source: TNS/Soulor Consulting Ltd, February 2017: Only those who have given up a dog asked, N=80

This data highlights that 10% of dogs are relinquished due to owners moving to accommodation where dogs are prohibited. Given the current climate of renting property there is concern that this may become a greater problem.

The majority of dogs were under one year old when acquired (75%), with 9% of those dogs having a Pet Passport.

The typical age for relinquishment is between seven months and three years old (56%).

Age	Percentage
7-11 month old	9%
1 year old	11%
2 years old	26%
3 years old	10%

The key reasons for giving up a dog are behavioural problems and a lack of understanding of the work involved in caring for the pet.

Summary and Methodology Overview

We are pleased to report that both the proportion of households owning pets and pet food market value have increased. There are now 12 million households owning pets and the pet food market is worth 2.6bn (excluding wild bird). Ensuring that all the pets in our society are well looked after and receive a healthy diet, is key to the activity of PFMA.



PFMA is actively involved in organisations such as National Pet Month, the Canine Feline Sector Group (CFSG) and the All Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW), these bodies work hard to raise standards and awareness of animal welfare issues.

PFMA has a very specific role in the area of pet nutrition and this is where we educate to make sure those at the front line of pet care have all the information they need to support owners in providing the best possible diets for their pets. The educational work of PFMA and the other organisations is ongoing and what is particularly unique about the pet care sector is how well those organisations come together to bring about change. PFMA looks forward to this continued collaboration and achieving real results for our amazing companion animals in 2017 and beyond.

Nicole Paley, PFMA Communications Manager

More Detail on Survey Methodology

The annual PFMA Pet Population study has a data set, which covers the period from 2008 to 2017. The survey methodology is kept consistent to ensure that no bias is introduced into the process, which will adversely affect the data quality.

The survey is carried out by TNS, a globally recognised leader in consumer research, and is managed for the PFMA by external consultants. To keep costs under control the survey is part of an 'omnibus' study which TNS carry out every week, which clients can buy space in. The questionnaire for the PFMA study can change every year to include specific enquiries, which are not needed on an annual basis. However, the elements pertaining to the annual population survey are kept constant.

The sample size changed several years ago to ensure that the small animal populations were being adequately covered. To this end approximately four thousand households across the UK are sampled. This sample is based on naturally occurring demographics however there are quotas imposed for the different Government regions to ensure good geographic coverage.

The study is carried out at the same time of year (late January and early February), the only recent change to the study was an increase in the number of households asked whether or not they had indoor or outdoor fish. This increase in sample of 50% was designed as a one-off exercise to determine the effectiveness of the original (4,000 per year) sample. The results were conclusive, that is to say that the boosted sample gave the same results as the more usual sample size.

From the TNS omnibus results, the proportion of households owning a pet (of whatever species) is applied to a calculated number of households in the UK (with the sources of data being the 2011 census and other Government published documents predicting the change in household numbers). These estimates are then multiplied (per species) by the average number of animals per household from the survey.

Other sets of questions are sometimes asked in respect of Wild Bird feeding habits, general questions about pet ownership which can be asked in conjunction with pet charities.

