

America's Pet Owners - US - March 2013

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"Pet owners are feeling the pressure to be 'good' parents for their animals, and their spending behaviors reflect owners' need to be emotionally connected. Advanced technology may seem to be a potential threat, but current innovations have shown that it is instead being used as an instrument to enhance human connectedness with their pets."

— Ika Erwina, Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How are broad social issues in overweight/obesity and humane treatment impacting pet owners and their needs?
- How will the aging population of both owners and pets change pet owners' needs and spending behaviors?
- How will companies overcome perpetuating myths in "premium/non-premium" pet products?

The pet industry in the U.S. continues to steadily grow despite lingering effects of the recent recession. More than seven in 10 households own a pet of some type, and the familial relationship between most people and their pets ensures that spending on pets remains a priority for owners.

The strong relationship between pets and owners can be a double-edged sword. Just as Americans are facing an obesity epidemic, their pets are also having issues with weight. Only 20% of pet owners characterize their pet as of an unhealthy weight; however, in reality and according to veterinarians, the percentage of unhealthy weight cats and dogs is significantly higher. Pet owners may not have the information they need to know whether or not their pet is living a healthy life as, just as the case for people, senior pets are more susceptible to weight issues than in their youth.

Pet-owning habits, and the ways in which people look after and buy for their pets, differ between generations. For one, Millennials, and to a certain extent Gen Xers, are technologically adept and this is apparent in the way they shop for pet-related items such that they tend to look for deals online and with their mobile devices. Baby Boomers and the Swing/World War II generation tend to be less technologically inclined and are less easily reached or swayed by mobile promotions. While use of and access to technology could differentiate generational shopping behaviors, Mintel finds that technology is not likely to replace owners' affections toward their pets, but instead has the potential to strengthen human-pet emotional connections.

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DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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What we think

Issues in the Market

- How are broad social issues in overweight/obesity and humane treatment impacting pet owners and their needs?
- How will the aging population of both owners and pets change pet owners' needs and spending behaviors?
- How will companies overcome perpetuating myths in "premium/non-premium" pet products?

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Appendix – Trade Associations

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