

Pet Food - US - 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer behavior and the pet food market
- The rapidly evolving pet food retail landscape
- Opportunities for growth in treats and toppers
- Growing interest in sustainably sourced pet food

The idea that pets are members of the family and deserve the best when it comes to food and treats is increasingly universal and continues to drive premiumization and growth in the pet food market. In addition, while differences remain the food-and-treat priorities of dog owners and cat owners, the differences are smaller than they once were. Both want to cater to their pets' taste preferences, and both prioritize quality and healthfulness, creating new opportunities on both sides of the pet food aisle.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have given pet food a short-term sales boost in 2020 by accelerating stock-up purchases and pet acquisition, but it didn't change key dynamics in the market. Premiumization and the continued growth of treats and toppers were driving steady growth in category sales before the pandemic and will continue to do so after.

Ethical issues and sustainability have a growing impact on the human food market as more consumers expect retailers and manufacturers to take action to minimize food waste and environmental impact. That sentiment is also beginning to manifest itself in the pet food market. Younger pet owners are especially likely to express concern about the environmental impact of pet food, underscoring the importance for pet food manufacturers of adopting and highlighting ethical and sustainable practices in all aspects of their business.

Treats and toppers have been key drivers for the category and have ample room for further growth. Marketers and retailers have an opportunity to reinforce treating routine through merchandising and promotion to help to



"After receiving a short-term boost from stock-up buying and a spike in pet acquisition motivated by the pandemic, the pet food market is settling back into a pattern of modest but steady growth."

- John Owen, Associate Director – Food & Retail

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establish the idea that these products are complementary and can work together as a more complete care and feeding regimen.

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