Introduction to Companion Animals

Animals as Pets
Objectives

1. Describe responsible pet ownership.
2. Describe the benefits of pet ownership.
3. Describe the process taken before obtaining a pet.
4. List the options for obtaining a pet.
5. List items needed for your pet.
PET

- A pet is an *animal* kept for *companionship* and enjoyment or a household animal, as opposed to *livestock*, *laboratory animals*, *working animals* or *sport animals*, which are kept for economic reasons.
Pet popularity

• [1] Around 63 percent of all U.S. households (71.1 million) are pet owners, and more than half of these households have more than one animal.

• [2] The two most popular pets in most Western countries have been cats and dogs.

• [3] Combined reptiles are the next popular followed by birds then horses.
Dogs

• There are approximately 78.2 million owned dogs in the United States
• Thirty-nine percent of U.S. households own at least one dog
• Most owners (60 percent) own one dog
• Twenty-eight percent of owners own two dogs

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• The proportion of male to female dogs is even
• Twenty-one percent of owned dogs were adopted from an animal shelter
• On average, dog owners spent $248 on veterinary visits (vaccine, well visits) annually
• Seventy-eight percent of owned dogs are spayed or neutered
Cats

• There are approximately 86.4 million owned cats in the United States
• Thirty-three percent of U.S. households own at least one cat
• Fifty-two percent of owners own more than one cat
• On average, owners have two cats (2.2)
• More female cats are owned than male cats (80 percent vs. 65 percent respectively)

• Twenty-one percent of owned cats were adopted from an animal shelter

• Cat owners spent an average of $219 on routine veterinary visits

• Eighty-eight percent of owned cats are spayed or neutered

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The most popular pets are noted for their loyal or playful characteristics, for their attractive appearance, or for their song.
# 2007-2008 Pet Owners Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Number of U.S. households that own a pet (millions)</th>
<th>Total number of pets owned in the U.S. (millions)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equine</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshwater fish</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>171.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saltwater fish</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptile</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small animal</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Yours or Theirs
Companions for Life

- Pets serve us as companions, friends and protectors.
- Studies have shown that pets are good for us in numerous ways.
- While we value our pets for what they provide for us, many of us forget that pet ownership carries with it responsibilities.
- Our pets are dependent upon us to meet their needs.
• People throughout the world relate to animals on the basis of such factors as their society, culture, and personal values.

• Economics is a strong influence on a society's value of animals.
“Only in the countries that 'have' do we see a strong interest in animal welfare and rights.”

bonds

• The bond between humans and their companion animals is one of strength, passionate dedication, and love.
• Companion animals enjoy preferential status in many households, and in fact participate in family life.
• This bond is life-long, and is a commitment.
Studies revealed that most pet owners view their pets as both enhancing the quality of family life by minimizing tension between family members and enhancing their owner's compassion for living things (Barker, 1993; *Pet Theories*, 1984; Voith, 1985).
Studies

• found that dog owners were as emotionally close to their dogs as to their closest family member.

• They reported that more than one-third of the dog owners in their study were actually closer to their dogs than to any human family member.
Benefits of Pet Ownership

Children

Elderly

You
Good for body

- Pet owners have lower blood pressure
- Pet owners have lower blood cholesterol levels
- Pet owners have a higher survival rate after serious illness
- Pet owners have fewer doctors' visits
Good for mind

• Pet ownership reduces loneliness
• Pet ownership fights depression
• Pet ownership helps us cope with stress
• Pet ownership aids childhood development
• Pet owners enhance family life
pet parents

• We want our companion animals to live long, healthy, and happy lives.
• We want to be fully informed about the transmission of disease and the steps responsible pet owners should take to prevent its spread.
• Frequent **visits to a veterinarian** - the best source for the care all pets should receive.
The Basic Costs

- The cost of acquiring a new pet is significant.
- If you purchase your pet at a pet store or from a breeder, you can expect to spend anywhere between several hundred and several thousand dollars.
Additional Costs

The most obvious cost is food

- Medical care is another guaranteed expense
- toys, treats, beds, leashes, cages, carriers, obedience training sessions
- Pet insurance policies
Local restrictions

- Many cities and towns have local ordinances limiting the number of pets a person may have, and may also restrict or forbid certain pets, such as exotics.
- Certain breeds of dog, such as pit bulls and rottweilers, are banned in some places. Dog/other canid/wolf mixes are also banned in some places.
Ownership

• Owning an animal is not just a privilege—it's a responsibility. These animals depend on us for, at minimum, food and shelter, and deserve much more.
If you are considering taking an animal into your life, you need to think seriously about the commitment that animal ownership entails. If you already have an animal, you need to consider if you are fulfilling all your obligations as its owner.
PET OWNERSHIP
THINK FIRST

Recognize the Commitment
Pet Ownership

- Who?
- Why?
- What?
Responsible Pet Ownership

• What does a responsible pet owner provide for their pets?
Choosing a Pet

What kind of animal does my lifestyle allow?

How much time do I have to give to a pet?

What kind of personality do I have?

How much will the animal cost?

How much will it cost to keep the animal?

Does everyone in the family want a pet?

What will the future bring?
Choosing a Pet

- Are there allergies in the family?
- Is this animal a fad or status symbol?
- What will the animal be used for?
- Who will be responsible for the animal?
- What are the grooming needs of the pet?
- What is the activity level of the pet?
Choosing a Pet

• Do you own or rent your home?
• How much space do I have for a pet?
• Are there size restrictions?
• Will the animal need training?
• What age animal would work best?
MAKE THE COMMITMENT
Obtaining a pet

• List where pets can be obtained from.

• Advantages vs. disadvantages
Pets Plus

• List all the items that will be needed for your pet
Get Ready

• Get ready for your new friend before you bring him home, to make sure the transition will be as smooth as possible.

• Buy food, treats, a collar and leash, toys, grooming tools, habitats, beds, and other necessities in advance so your pet will have everything he needs.