



LATEST VET SHOW RESULTS INDICATE A RISE IN CAT AND DOG OBESITY

The PFMA's Nicole Paley asks how retailers can tackle the problem of pet obesity

PFMA TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- A new obesity poster 'A step by step guide to prevent and manage pet obesity: helping you get hands on with your pet', enables pet care professionals to clearly demonstrate the multifaceted way owners can help overweight pets.
- PFMA has a range of Pet Size-O-Meters for cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs and birds. These handy charts help to raise awareness of what constitutes a healthy sized pet and advises owners on how they can check this at home.
- Online Calorie Calculator to help professionals and owners find out how much of their pet food they need to provide based on their pets' level of activity and weight.
- A downloadable 'Family Feeding Pledge', Food Diary and Weight Log, helping the family to take conscious control.

The pet industry is working hard to tackle obesity levels and we do hope that this new poster, alongside our other free and generic resources go some way to educating professionals and the public.

IMPROVED NUTRITION TEACHING NEEDED

Veterinary professionals at the show highlighted the need for improved nutrition teaching at vet school, giving the current provision four out of ten. In order to assess how confidence can be improved, PFMA also quizzed attendees on their preferred channels for receiving nutritional information:

- 77 percent voted for face to face training
- 66 percent would like online resources
- 60 percent requested generic posters and leaflets

PFMA is increasing the number of training events run throughout the year and continuing to improve its range of educational materials. If you have any thoughts on how this could be improved, we would love to hear from you and *please contact nicole@pfma.org.uk*. 🐾

*PFMA Report 'Pet Obesity: The Reality', 2009

PPFMA's survey of 215 veterinary professionals at the London Vet Show highlighted a rise in obesity among cats and dogs, which now stands at 52 percent of dogs and 47 percent of cats – three percent higher than 2016 levels.

Small mammals and birds fare slightly better with vets confirming 32 percent and 12 percent respectively are overweight or obese. With this worsening situation, Nicole Paley shares some thoughts on how retailers can continue to support the battle of the bulge.

Every year PFMA has a presence at London Vet Show and we conduct a survey of veterinary professionals from our stand. We are keen to get the latest views on pet nutrition and keep up to date on pet health trends, which of course includes obesity.

I always come away from the show with a refreshed passion for the pet care world we work in. From our experience, pet care professionals including vets, pet retailers and other service providers, are an engaged group, keen to talk about their work and what more can be done for the benefit of their customers, both the pet and owner.

This commitment is shared across the sector and it means we are very good at collaborating on common goals. A reduction in pet obesity is one of those common goals and welfare charities, vets, retailers, pet food manufacturers, all continue to arm owners with advice and resources to help with this battle.

We are having some cut through as recent research suggests that owners are more aware of obesity and the health implications. However, the major stumbling block is that many owners fail to recognise if their pet is overweight.

WHAT IS A HEALTHY BODY SHAPE?

Our perceptions have become blurred particularly when identifying overweight body shapes. When asked, pet owners' perception of what constitutes normal weight was found to be massively blurred, with over half of cat and dog owners unable to accurately identify a 'normal' dog or cat body shape.*

SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES TAKE THEIR TOLL

The latest PDSA Paw Report advises that obesity has been consistently identified as one of the top three welfare concerns for vets. Whilst pet obesity is a multi-factorial issue, the top reason for this cited in their report is a lack of exercise. A lack of activity can also mean a lack of mental stimulation which will have an impact on happiness and well-being.

HOW CAN RETAILERS HELP?

PFMA has developed a range of weight management resources including posters and factsheets which can be displayed in-store, linked to on websites, handed out to customers and used in staff training sessions. All can be downloaded from: www.pfma.org.uk/weight-management-tools or hard copies are available can be requested.

