

**The Pet Food Manufacturers Association held its AGM and Annual Conference in London on March 22 entitled Animal Welfare: A Balancing Act? It also revealed latest figures on the UK's pet population and pet food market data**

THE PET Food Manufacturers Association has launched its three-year Pet Food Vision, which focuses on three core pillars underpinning its work – animal welfare, nutrition, safety and standards.

The spotlight turns to a different pillar in each year, and this year the PFMA focuses on animal welfare.

The PFMA says the welfare of both farm and companion animals is important, and that it is a co-sponsor of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW).

It is committed to join other voices in the welfare sector to 'ensure animal welfare is a key consideration as Brexit discussions progress'.

At the conference, the PFMA invited panelists to address the audience on the future of food, farming and the environment; building a business case for animal welfare; and communicating welfare to the public.

The PFMA had earlier surveyed the public for his views on animal welfare when making food purchasing decisions. The 2,121 respondents were asked when purchasing meat, how important was it that animals are raised with high animal welfare standards?

An overwhelming 75% said it's important when buying meat, and when pet owners were asked, the figure rose to 84%. When asked if they would spend more on higher welfare products, 26% said they would spend 20% more, and 29% said they would spend 10% more. Only 16% of respondents said they would spend no more.

The trade body had also asked its



From left: Gudrun Ravetz (British Veterinary Association), Dr Jim Ormond (Article 13), David Bowles (RSPCA) and Lord Trees took to the stage for the session *Communicating Welfare to the Public*



The three core pillars of the PFMA's Pet Food Vision

**HiLife MD takes over as chairman**

TONY PARKINSON, managing director of Town & Country Petfoods, takes over as PFMA chairman from Peter Kersh, managing director of World Feeds.

Tony has spent most of his career in the pet industry, having joined family business Town & Country Petfoods 30 years ago. Home to the HiLife brand of pet food, it supplies dog and cat foods and treats to major UK grocery stores, pet specialists and other sectors.

"Peter will be a tough act to follow," said Tony. "But I'm looking forward to the challenge. I'm delighted that he and I will continue to work together over the next two years, along with the new vice chairman, Derek Evans from Butchers Pet Care. Our role is to support the excellent team at PFMA through the very specific difficulties the industry faces over Brexit and pursue our ambitious vision to confirm the UK's position at the forefront of the world's pet food industry."



Tony Parkinson

members if they recognised that animal welfare was an important business issue, and 82% said yes.

Three-quarters of its members also said they are committed to taking

action to improve performance in this area.

The PFMA said it is committed to communicating welfare messages to the public through the National Pet Month initiative and through its support of the Animal Welfare Education Alliance.

Next year, the PFMA will focus on pet nutrition. 2019 will also be the 10th anniversary of the PFMA's first Obesity White Paper, and it will deliver the second Companion Animal Nutrition Conference in June 2019. It also aims to launch nutrition guidelines for fish.

Finally, in 2020 the PFMA will address safety and standards, focusing on safe sourcing, safe pet food products and a safe environment, with an eye on traceability, sustainability and industry best practice.

**PFMA unveils three-year vision for trade**



**UK PET FOOD MARKET GROWS IN VALUE**

THE TOTAL UK pet food market saw slight growth in value last year to nudge above the £2.6bn mark to a new high of £2.65bn (excluding wild bird), driven mainly by continued growth in the dog treats category.

Dog treats continued a 10-year trend to grow both in value and volume by 4%, reaching £449m and a new high of 112,000 tonnes. For the first time in 10 years, there was no change in the value of cat treats, which stayed at £126m. Volume figures were not available.

Michael Bellingham, chief executive of the PFMA (whose 81 members account for more than 90% of the UK market), said: "Our latest data has shown that the pet food market continues at an all-time high to £2.6bn. The most dynamic areas of growth in both the cat and dog food markets have been in specialist, niche products, including those with health benefits."

**IMPACT OF RAW?**

In the dog food category, dry dog food is valued at £584m (up 2%), wet dog at £314m (down 1%) and mixer down 1% to £24m. Yet volumes of dog wet and mixer have hit 10-year lows, dropping by 4% and 2% respectively (wet: down 10,000 tonnes to 263,000 tonnes; mixer: down 1,000 to 36,000 tonnes.) with dry dog food growing ever so slightly by 1,000 tonnes to 419,000 tonnes.

According to the PFMA's Pet Data Report, the dog population has grown by 400,000 pets to hit a new record of 9m dogs. Current PFMA market data does not

include raw food figures. However, Natures Menu told *pbwnews* that the raw market is worth an estimated £91m (up 31%) with volume around 600 tonnes a week, so by extrapolation, this could represent a figure in the region of approximately 31,000 tonnes a year.

**CAT PLAYS CATCH-UP**

As a whole, the cat sector continues to play catch-up with dog on the value front. Total cat is now worth £1.14bn against dog's £1.37bn, representing the continued move by pet owners to premium ranges.

Wet single-serve continues its rise in value to hit an all-time high of £658m (up 5%), while dry cat food has registered an increase of 4% to £268m. The wet multi-format continues to fall out of favour and marks a 10-year declining trend with a new low of £90m, down 7%.

Volume figures in cat food repeat the picture from the dog category – wet single is down 2,000 tonnes to 225,000 (-1%); wet multi has plunged nearly a fifth by 17,000 tonnes to 67,000, while dry reversed last year's growth and dropped by 1,000 tonnes to 95,000 tonnes.

**WILD BIRD BUCKS TEND**

Figures for small animals, fish and caged birds generally dipped against last year, with only wild bird food showing clear signs of growth.

Michael said: "The rabbit food segment is the largest of the three small mammal markets and in terms of feeding the birds, overall the market has shown growth."

Rabbit food dropped to a 10-year low in value and volume to £45m (-6%) with 46,000 tonnes (-5%), while guinea pig dipped 1% in volume to 12,900

tonnes, valued at £12m (-2%), and rodent maintained its 7,000 tonnes at £8.3m.

Indoor fish also maintained its volume of 1,000 tonnes, but dipped in value to £52m. Outdoor fish saw a volume of 2,000 tonnes valued at £15m. Caged birds registered a volume of 12,000 tonnes and a drop in value to £11m, down 7%.

Pigeon food remained the same at £6m, with 5,000 tonnes being produced. Wild bird food however has grown to £210m (up from last year's £200m), with an output of 148,000 tonnes against the previous year's figure of 140,000.

According to the PFMA, of the 93% of households which have some form of outdoor space, 43% feed wild birds over winter, and rural dwellers are more likely to feed birds than those in urban areas.



**Dog population surges to new high of 9m**

THE UK pet dog population has hit a new record at 9m dogs, says the Pet Food Manufacturers Association.

The growth in dogs marks an increase of 400,000 pets over last year – 26% of households now own a dog, representing an increase of around 300,000 households.

Michael Bellingham, PFMA chief executive, said: "I was not surprised to read about the growth of the dog population among households with children as personally I have recently joined this movement."

"Tessa, a schnoodle, is very much part of our family and I am delighted that 11% more families in the UK are benefiting from dog ownership. Pets in varied shapes and sizes – from lizards and snakes to hamsters and cats – can bring so much joy to children.

"With the demands of modern life and the pull of digital companions, we are so pleased that more children will benefit from the social, emotional and physical benefits of pet interaction."

The PFMA 2018 pet population data, based on interviews with 8,000 households, reveals that 13m households, or 45% of UK households, now have a pet. This means 600,000 more households acquired a pet this year.

The PFMA says the rise in dog ownership is the key driver of this growth. The number of households with children owning a dog has grown by 11% to 2.3m – 230,000 more than last year.

Dogs are not the only pets to have seen a rise. The cat population is at its highest in five years at 8m – 18% of households own a cat, which equates

to 140,000 more cats and 75,000 more households.

PFMA figures revealed that numbers of small animals being kept as pets remained constant, with only guinea pigs dropping.

The number of rabbits being kept as pets stayed the same as last year at

**THE PFMA'S TOP PETS FOR 2018 ARE:**

- 9m dogs
- 8m cats
- 900,000 rabbits
- 500,000 indoor birds
- 500,000 domestic fowl
- 400,000 guinea pigs
- 300,000 hamsters
- 300,000 tortoises and turtles
- 200,000 lizards
- 200,000 snakes
- 200,000 horses and ponies as pets

900,000, as did hamsters at 300,000, gerbils, ferrets and rats at 100,000, and mice at 50,000.

Guinea pigs dropped by 100,000 to 400,000 animals.

The PFMA said there are 3m indoor fish tanks (7% of households) and 1.3m outdoor ponds. It says its

methodology for assessing the number of fish has changed and it is looking at one year's worth of data.

Next year it will be able to 'confidently publish numbers'. Each year 4,000 UK adults are interviewed by TNS/Solus Consulting in face-to-face interviews.

To reduce statistical uncertainty, survey results are averaged over two years, giving an effective sample of more than 8,000 people.

- Key findings include:
- 5m households own a cat (75,000 more than last year)
  - 6.6m households own a dog (300,000 more than last year)
  - 4.4m (53%) households with children own a pet
  - 28% of UK households with children now own a dog, compared to 24% last year
  - 2.3m families have a child and a dog compared to 2m last year

You can view the full Pet Data Report at [www.pfma.org.uk/statistics](http://www.pfma.org.uk/statistics)

**Popular breeds**

- Staffordshire bull terrier
- Retriever (Labrador)
- Jack russell
- Spaniel (cocker)
- Cavalier King Charles spaniel
- Chihuahua (smooth coat)
- West Highland white terrier
- Spaniel (English springer)
- Shih tzu
- Yorkshire terrier
- German shepherd
- Border terrier
- Border collie
- Pug

