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The Benefits of Pets

To individuals and the economy

Pets are great for people

Man's best friend has always been valued as a companion but today, many of us see our pets as part of the family. In fact, research has shown that 91% of people report feeling "very close" to their pets – almost as many as report feeling very close to their family.⁽¹⁾ The presence of animals in people's lives has a significant positive influence on the social, emotional and physical well-being of people. Pets provide companionship, encourage exercise and increase social interaction. They give pleasure, teach responsibility, they love and are loved in return.

Pets are also important in their contribution to our economy as there are a vast array of pet related products and services, including veterinary care and the prepared pet food industry, creating diverse pet-related employment opportunities.

The contribution of pets to the Australian economy

Australia has one of the highest levels of pet ownership in the world, with over 60% of our nation's households owning a pet. A report released by the Australian Companion Animal Council in 2010, reported that there were 3.41 million dogs and 2.35 million cats in Australia.

We collectively spent just over \$6 billion on pets in 2001, with dogs accounting for nearly 60% and cats around 23% of expenditure. Around 47,000 people are employed in the pet related industries – consisting of a diverse range of jobs including veterinarians and veterinary nurses, retailers in pet shops and larger chains, pet groomers and over 4,500 people employed in pet food manufacture.

Sales of prepared pet foods for dogs and cats totaled nearly \$1.7 billion dollars in 2009, making up 3.2% of all major food product sales in Australia ⁽²⁾

Australia has excellent primary industries producing high quality grains and meats providing first class ingredients for pet food production. The prepared pet food manufacturers operating in Australia operate to exacting standards and make pet foods of international quality, competing in highly competitive global markets with very considerable success. This

is demonstrated by the remarkable success that our locally based pet food manufacturers have had in globally competitive export markets. In 2008/09, some 154,000 tonnes of pet food was exported from Australia, made up of both dry and moist pet foods, with Japan, New Zealand, Thailand and Korea being our major export markets, ensuring that a large number of pets living in Asia enjoy Australian made pet foods on a daily basis.



So, whether you are nine or ninety, part of a family or living alone, a pet can bring you hours of companionship and unconditional love, not to mention all the physical and mental health benefits. Aside from the very real benefits of owning a pet, your much loved companion is also contributing in a small way to a vibrant and substantial pet industry that offers substantial employment and export success, providing broad and tangible benefits to Australians.

Sources:

(1) Petcare Information and Advisory Service (www.petnet.com.au)

(2) Contribution of the pet care industry to the Aust. Economy, 7th edition, 2010 ACAC Inc

