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Survey Reveals Majority of Pet Owners Consider Kennel Boarding a 'Necessary Evil'

Americans Rate In-Home Pet Care as Top Dog, Survey Finds

BERKELEY, CA, October 30, 2007 – With two-thirds (about 71.1 million) of American households owning one or more pets and with holiday travel planning well underway, millions of pet owners throughout the U.S. are now considering care options for their four-legged family members. Among the many available animal care services, in-home pet sitting is the unequivocal service “top dog.” This according to a recent survey conducted by FETCH! Pet Care (www.fetchpetcare.com), America’s first, only and most sophisticated pet care franchise, in which a whopping 82.12% of respondents selected “in home pet sitting at the pet’s residence” as “the most convenient, healthful and nurturing method of pet care” among other options: “in-home pet sitting at sitter’s residence” (12.74%), “group day care” (4.87%) and kennel boarding (0.27%). With kennel boarding garnering less than 1% consumer confidence on this point, it’s no surprise that more than three-quarters of respondents (75.93%) “consider or think others might consider kennel boarding a pet as a ‘necessary evil.’”

Why do pet owners regard kennel boarding pets in this harsh manner? More than a quarter of respondents (32.54%) indicated they’ve had a “bad experience” with kennel boarding a pet, with a shocking 12.38% indicating they have had a bad experience “more than once.”

Almost half of respondents (49.64%) indicated their “biggest concern about kennel boarding” was that “it puts my pet’s emotional health at risk, including depression, separation anxiety, and stress from alpha dogs.” Amid reports regarding the highly contagious and potentially deadly strains of canine influenza and Parvo disease - not to mention the pervasive kennel cough virus – it’s understandable that nearly one-fifth (19.86%) of respondents indicated their biggest kennel boarding concern was because “it puts my pet’s physical health at risk due to transmittable airborne diseases.” The negative implications of kennel boarding are apparently not just for animals, as almost one-quarter of respondents (24.64%) concede that “it makes me feel guilty and anxious knowing my pet is in a kennel.”

When asked if they will “kennel board their pet in the future,” a revealing 39.08% of respondents indicated “definitely no,” while 37.03% indicated “I hope not,” and 19.01% offered a reluctant “probably, if I have no other choice.”

Kennel boarding is not the only pet care concern uncovered by the survey. A full 27.64% of respondents indicated they have had a neighbor or neighborhood child take care of their pet but “prefer not to,” with 1.24% even indicating they “deeply regret it.” Almost one-fifth of respondents (19.84%) indicate they will “never” have a neighbor or neighborhood child take care of their pet.

Just why is in-home pet care the clear-cut preference among survey respondents? Nearly three-fourths (74.65%) indicated the “greatest benefit of at-home pet care” is that the “pet maintains daily routine in comfortable and familiar surroundings.” Other reasons included “pet receives regular affection, attention and nurturing” (15.46%), “pet not exposed to germs, viruses and diseases common to group care” (2.64%), “pet receives regular exercise” (2.29%), “personalized care, medical needs and otherwise” (2.29%), and “convenience” (2.20%).

By a landslide (64.91%), respondents felt “overnight sitting or daily visits in the pet’s home” was “the most valuable pet care service.” “Boarding and daycare in the sitter’s home” (12.18%), “private and group on-leash dog walks” (11.55%), “group off-leash dog adventures” (4.12%), “pet taxiing to the groomer, vet and/or trainer” (0.72%), “yard pet waste cleanup” (0.63%), and “miscellaneous home care (watering plants, taking in mail, etc.)” (5.91%) made up the difference on this point.

When asked “how important do you feel it is for a pet care professional to be professionally trained, screened, background checked, bonded and insured?,” an overwhelming 80.67% of respondents indicated “extremely – I won’t entrust my pet otherwise.”

Consumers and interested business affiliates can reach FETCH! Pet Care through its Web site at www.FetchPetCare.com or via toll-free telephone at 1-866-FETCH-ME, where they simply enter their 5-digit zip code to be quickly connected to the FETCH! Pet Care office nearest them.

Survey Methodology

Between October 19 - 29, 2007 1,133 pet owners were surveyed, with 55.83% owning one or more dogs, 31.86% owning one or more cats and 12.31% owning one or more other animals (fish, reptile/amphibian, farm animal or other).

About FETCH! Pet Care, Inc.

Founded in 2002 and with over 1,400 service areas across the United States, FETCH! Pet Care is the pet sitting industry market leader - the new face of pet care in the 21st century. The company offers a humane alternative to kennel boarding by providing loving, in-home overnight and/or daily care to any kind of pet in the most professional and reliable manner possible. FETCH! Pet Care’s carefully selected, screened and trained pet sitters and dog walkers, who are all pet owners themselves, have serviced over 10,000 clients this past year alone. The company has been featured in *Small Business Opportunities* magazine’s top 20 “Boom Businesses” to get into in 2007, named among *Pet Product News International’s* “25 to Watch in 2007” and included in *Entrepreneur* magazine’s coveted Franchise 500 list in January 2007 and in its “7 Hot Businesses That Can Make You Rich” feature in September 2007. For franchise information or to find a location near you, visit the company’s Web site at www.FetchPetCare.com or call the corporate office at 1-866-FETCHME.

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