

PETS & PEOPLE

American Pets Get Top-Dog Treatment

(NAPSA)—If you like pampering your pet, you're not alone.

Now reaching \$40 billion, Americans' spending on their pets has hit an all-time high, according to industry groups. But along with that increase in spending has come an increase in pets. Pet ownership is currently at its highest level, with more than 71 million households in the U.S. owning at least one pet. Those increases indicate that pets have firmly made their marks on our hearts.

"There is nothing that more clearly demonstrates that over the past two decades we have come to realize people consider pets a part of the family and treat them accordingly," says Bob Vetere, president of the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA)—the company that publishes the National Pet Owners Survey.

So what are we buying our pampered—and loved—pets? You may be surprised. Vetere says new pet products range from travel accommodations to kosher foods. Here's a look at APPMA's 2007-2008 Survey results:

Happy Holidays

More than half of all pet owners purchased a gift for their pets in the past 12 months, with Christmas being the most popular gift-giving holiday. Pet owners also shell out the big bucks on Easter, Halloween, Valentine's Day and Hanukkah. On average,



Fancy Fido—Twenty-six percent of dogs in the U.S. have their own bed.

dog owners spend \$66 per year on treats and \$41 per year on toys.

Eat Up

The Survey shows an increase in the number of pet owners who consider specially formulated or organic pet foods worth the extra time and money.

To Your Health

The percentage of dog owners with health insurance coverage for their dogs remained steady at 3 percent. More dogs are given medication (77 percent) than any other pet type.

Homeopathy Is Where The Heart Is

The use of homeopathic remedies has been steadily on the rise among dog owners since 2002. According to the latest statistics, 6 percent of dog owners and 4 percent of cat owners chose homeopathic remedies.

Pearly Whites

Three out of 10 dog owners

have dental products for their dog, including a toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, tartar/breath control/whitening products or floss.

Happy Trails

Pet owners prefer to have family or friends care for their animals while they are on vacation. However, other arrangements made when pet owners travel include professional pet-sitting services, boarding at a kennel, taking pets along on vacation or leaving pets home alone.

Sweet Dreams

Man's best friend is receiving the royal treatment. More than a quarter of all dogs now have their own beds.

Showing You Care

Of course, people don't just show love for pets through what they buy. For instance, in the event of an emergency evacuation, nearly seven out of 10 owners of dogs, cats, birds and small animals said they would take their pets with them.

Plus, three out of 10 people who lost a pet memorialized their friend in some way—most commonly with a memorial/garden stone for the home or yard. Also, 15 percent of dog owners and 11 percent of cat owners placed their pet's ashes in an urn in 2006.

For more information about the Survey, visit the Web site at www.appma.org.