

Are we slowly killing our pets with kindness?

- **Obesity in cats and dogs is on the rise due to trend of humanising pets**
- **Similar to humans, obesity in pets can lead to chronic conditions such as diabetes and arthritis**
- **Global animal health organisation, HealthforAnimals, promotes innovation in pet health technologies as best way to tackle endemic problem**

Brussels, 29 February 2016. More pets will develop 'human lifestyle' diseases because of a growing tendency to treat them like people, a leading animal health association has warned.

HealthforAnimals, the global animal medicines association, has cautioned that inappropriate food, overindulgence and poor exercise have all contributed to a 'humanisation' of pets' lifestyle and their environment, which has led to an increased prevalence of obesity. As in humans, obesity in pets is associated with chronic, and even life-threatening conditions such as diabetes, arthritis and liver disease.

Carel du Marchie Sarvaas, executive director of HealthforAnimals, commented on this worrying global trend: "It is wonderful that animals are playing such a central role in our family lives but it is essential that we do not over-indulge our pets. Pet ownership is shown to have positive health benefits for people and as more of us become owners, we must in turn make sure we keep our animals healthy. We would encourage owners to have regular check-ups with their vets to ensure that their pet's health is monitored and that any signs of life-threatening conditions are spotted as early as possible."

Pet ownership is on the rise globally; by the end of 2016 it is projected that Brazil will become the second largest market for pet products, overtaking Japan. The largest market remains the United States of America with an estimated \$60.59 billion spent last year alone.⁴ As noted by the Euromonitor, there is also a growing trend for single-pet households, who are far more likely to indulge their pets.⁵ Owners around the globe are proving happy to spend more to treat their pets, with the average pet owner in Australia willing to spend nearly \$5,600 on average per year.⁶

Mr du Marchie Sarvaas added that just as we in much of the western world are struggling with obesity, vets are noticing a worrying correlation in the health of cats and dogs. A survey by HealthforAnimals, the global

Fat Cat Stats – a global problem

UK

Vets in the UK claim that **45% of dogs** and **40% of cats** they see are **overweight**.¹

US

In the US **43.8 million dogs** and **55 million cats** are overweight or obese.²

Australia

A study by vets in Australia found that approximately **a third of cats** down-under are overweight or obese. With dogs it was much the same with **33.5%** identified as being overweight and **7.6% as obese**.³

animal medicines association, revealed 40 per cent of those working in animal health believe that obesity is the condition the sector can play the biggest role in combatting.

HealthforAnimals has now launched a report, 'Innovation in animal health,' which outlines the key innovations currently being developed in pet health to tackle these problems. These innovations include improvement in the quality of pet food and increasing real-time communication between vets and pet owners, for example, mobile technology where vets can provide diet advice.

Mr du Marchie Sarvaas continued: 'Pet obesity is a serious problem with significant health and welfare implications for animals. Fortunately, there are many ways in which the animal health industry is tackling pet health problems, through education and promoting responsible pet ownership'

To be the first to hear about upcoming content, follow HealthforAnimals on Twitter @Health4Animals. For more information about lifestyle related diseases in pets, or to read the HealthforAnimals report: 'Innovation in Animal Health', visit the HealthforAnimals website at: www.healthforanimals.org

ENDS

Notes for editors

HealthforAnimals

HealthforAnimals is an organisation representing manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in both developed and developing countries across five continents. The mission of HealthforAnimals is to foster a greater understanding of animal health matters and promote a predictable, science-based regulatory environment that facilitates the supply of innovative and quality animal medicines, vaccines and other animal health products into a competitive market place. These products contribute to a healthy and safe food supply as well as a high standard of health and welfare for animals and people.

For further information on HealthforAnimals visit: <http://healthforanimals.org/>

The HealthforAnimals report: 'Innovation in animal health' can be accessed here: <http://healthforanimals.org/innovation-in-animal-health/>

The Human-Animal Bond interactive infographic can be found at: <http://healthforanimals.org/human-animal-bond/>

References

- ¹ http://www.pfma.org.uk/_assets/docs/PFMA_WhitePaper_2014.pdf
- ² <http://www.petobesityprevention.org/pet-obesity-fact-risks/>
- ³ <http://www.pfiaa.com.au/Feeding-Pets/Incidence-risk-factors-and-Managing-obesity-in-dogs-and-cats.aspx#fn2>
- ⁴ http://www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp
- ⁵ <http://www.euromonitor.com/pet-care-in-the-united-kingdom/report>
- ⁶ <http://www.suncorpbank.com.au/blog/the-cost-of-pets>

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