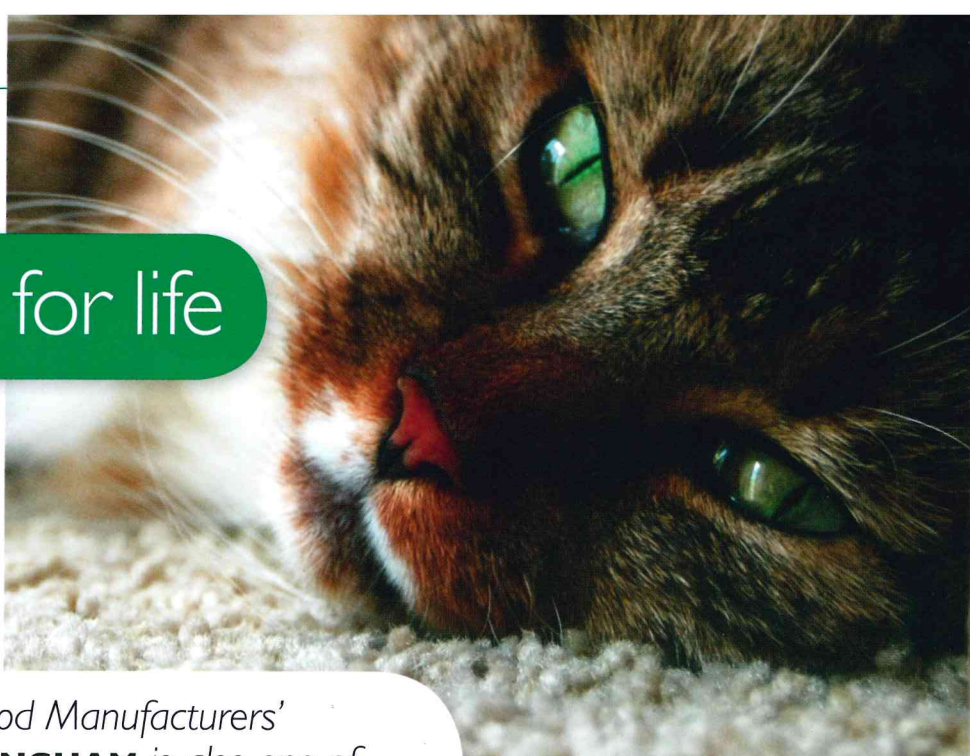


Companions for life



Chief executive of the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association **MICHAEL BELLINGHAM** is also one of the trustees of National Pet Month, which runs from 1 April to 6 May 2013. Here, he shares news on this year's theme and offers some top tips for the pet industry on how to maximise involvement in this event

About National Pet Month

National Pet Month, which began as National Pet Week in 1989, is now in its 24th year. It is a registered charity and grows more popular each year, with thousands helping to spread the key messages of responsible pet ownership; the mutual benefits of living with pets; the role of pet care specialists; and the value of working and assistance companion animals.

At the PFMA we are working closely with fellow trustees NOAH (National Office of Animal Health) and PCT (Pet Care Trust) – invaluable supported by sponsors Companion Care Vets and Pets At Home – to make sure everything is ready for 1 April when National Pet Month kicks off. Having raised over £12,000 last year, we are hoping that animal lovers will stage and attend even more events to raise money for local animal welfare charities.

The 2013 theme

National Pet Month is all about bringing the pet-owning public of the UK together and raising awareness of how important it is to look after our pets properly. This year, our theme is 'Your Pets and You – Companions for Life,' which recognises and celebrates the benefits of life-long companionship for both pet and owner.

What YOU can do...

If you love animals and perhaps run a local pet shop, work in a vet surgery or run a grooming practice, why not work with your local community to raise funds for National Pet Month. It is likely to generate interest from customers so you might benefit too! All you have to do is visit our website at

National Pet Month is all about bringing the pet-owning public of the UK together and raising awareness of how important it is to look after our pets properly

www.nationalpetmonth.org.uk for encouragement and to download an events pack with posters and tips on running a successful event. Don't forget to register your event on our interactive map too – this helps us keep track of all the activities and the money raised.

Some fundraising ideas...

- Hold themed days at your shop offering fun family activities.
- Organise a sponsored dog walk with a local welfare charity.
- Hold an open day at your local veterinary surgery.
- Encourage your local church to conduct a pet-friendly service.
- Hold a pet event or local dog show.
- Work with your local school and encourage them to enter one of our competitions.

Make sure your business raises awareness of National Pet Month

- Include a link to nationalpetmonth.org.uk on your website.
- Follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/NationalPetMonth.

- Follow us on Twitter @NatPetMonthUK.
- Perhaps you want to investigate the benefits of sponsoring National Pet Month this year or next. If you want to learn more please email nicole@pfma.org.uk

West Country retailer leads the way

If you need a little more inspiration, read about a fellow retailer's successful activities during National Pet Month.

Not Just Pets in the West Country puts a huge amount of effort into National Pet Month. It promotes responsible pet ownership throughout the month and finds that it helps business too! All of the teams at the three shops get behind the themed open days, as do the suppliers and partners.

The shops have run innovative fundraising activities, from selling raffle tickets and face painting, to selling cakes and holding educational sessions for customers and their families. Topics covered include pet handling, grooming, nutrition, training and behaviour, plus how to have fun with pets!

For more information see www.notjustpets.co.uk and the shop's Facebook page and Twitter feed if you want to follow progress throughout this year's National Pet Month.

About the PFMA

The Pet Food Manufacturers' Association is the principal trade body representing the UK pet food industry; a key focus of activity is to promote animal welfare and responsible pet ownership. Its 60 members account for over 90 per cent of the market and produce a wide range of products for cats, dogs, rabbits and other pet animals. To find out more or download some useful information sheets for you and your customers, please visit: www.pfma.org.uk

National Pet Month is a registered charity number 1114880.