

Friends for Life

Chief executive of the PFMA Michael Bellingham unveils new research highlighting that 92 per cent of pet owners with overweight pets do not see obesity as a life threatening risk. It is for this reason that the PFMA urges retailers to join its 'Friends for Life' campaign

There really couldn't be a greater incentive!

Through 'Friends for Life' we will be engaging with pet owners, encouraging them to identify their pet's body condition and providing them with the tools to work towards the ideal – not just for the duration of the campaign, but for life and we need your help to make this happen.

Each Wednesday throughout May (starting on 08 May) the campaign encourages owners to contact their local vet, retailer or other pet specialist to seek advice on weight management, feeding and a healthy lifestyle for their pet to see

if they can improve their regular care routine. These days will be called 'Weigh in Wednesdays' and there will be a media campaign to raise awareness with owners.

BRINGING TOGETHER RETAILERS, PET CARE PROFESSIONALS AND PET FOOD MANUFACTURERS

There's no denying pet obesity is a big issue and as such it's not something just one group can make a difference on by working in isolation. It's important that we talk to pet owners through as many channels as possible and retailers are key, it's where pet owners go regularly for advice in an informal, non-challenging environment. We are providing you with all the help and advice you need to get involved with the campaign and are on hand to answer any questions you have.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

We hope we've made it easy for you to become involved by producing materials for you to give your customers and display in store. Your

customers may already come to you for advice but by championing Weigh in Wednesdays you can highlight the fact that you have joined us in being an expert voice. Weigh in Wednesdays could become a regular occurrence and through offering advice you can add value to the service you already provide.

YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Educate your staff on the campaign and encourage them to communicate the key messages to pet owners.
- Display a campaign poster.
- Give pet owners a campaign leaflet and Pet Size-O-Meter at point of sale.
- Signpost our campaign in any newsletter you issue in April/May.
- Use the hashtag #weighinweds on Twitter.
- Hold your own Weigh in Wednesday event in store.

We look forward to working with you. With your help we can really make a difference and help pet owners keep a friend for life.

TOOLKIT FOR RETAILERS AVAILABLE NOW

A toolkit has been created so sharing the campaign content and supporting the cause couldn't be easier. There is an additional social media toolkit too, so if you are active on social media please do request this and start a conversation! Visit www.pfma.org.uk/weighinwednesday to download your toolkit today or call 020 7379 9009 to speak to a member of the team.

We are about to launch our health and wellbeing campaign 2013 with new research that highlights the mismatch between pet owner's perception of their pet's body condition and the reality.

Pet obesity is not a new issue but we are rapidly reaching a crisis point – almost half of all pets seen by vets in the UK are overweight. Despite this figure nearly all pet owners with overweight pets do not see pet obesity as a life threatening risk and 20 per cent of pet owners with overweight pets do not acknowledge the problem.

EMPOWERING PET OWNERS TO TAKE CONTROL

The pet industry can help to make a difference through education and empowerment which is why we are launching 'Friends for Life', a national awareness campaign to promote the importance of responsible feeding, weight management and healthy lifestyle. Research has shown that by keeping pets to their ideal body condition their lifespan can be extended by up to two years.