



POPULAR PETS

Michael Bellingham, chief executive of the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association, announces the findings of the latest pet population and market researchⁱ.

At the PFMA we have been collecting comprehensive regional pet population data annually for the past five years, enabling us to provide accurate figures and trends across different regions in the UK. These well-respected findings help our members monitor pet ownership and they are also frequently referenced by the pet industry, government, charities and the media.

The latest findings show significant growth of both the dog and cat populations. Dogs have increased from 7.6 to 8.6 million and cats from 7.8 to 8.5 million. Indoor caged birds are also growing in popularity with around one million kept as pets – up from around 800,000 in 2011. Small furries such as rabbits, guinea pigs and hamsters are still popular – with a stable combined population of around 2.7 million. Fish are tricky to monitor but the research indicates there are around 45 million fish kept in ponds and tanks in the UK.

We now have the highest pet population on record with 48 per cent or 13 million households owning pets. We are also outnumbered – there are seven million more pets than people in the UK!

PET FOOD MARKET GROWTH

In addition to studying the pet population, we collect data from our members to analyse trends

in the pet food marketⁱⁱ. The figures reflect the stable and growing pet populations and owners seem to be undeterred by the economic climate.

This year the pet food volume figures rose by one per cent and value by two per cent. The total pet and bird (wild bird) food market has now reached an all time high of £2.45 billion, of which pet food accounted for £2.19 billion.

DOG FOOD

The dog food market as a whole was static in volume terms in 2012, at around 770,000 tonnes. There was a rise in value of two per cent to an all-time high of £1,097 million (equivalent to around £130 per dog, per annum). Dry complete dog food is the dominant feed for UK dogs, accounting for 49 per cent of total volume. The relative decline in wet dog food and mixers has continued but seems to be stabilising.

Overall, dog treats showed growth of both three per cent in volume and value and we are now splitting this category into biscuit treats and other treats, which are similar in size by volume, at 28,000 tonnes and 31,000 tonnes, respectively. However, the value of the two markets is significantly different. Biscuit treats are worth £54 million, while other treats are worth £184 million.

CAT FOOD

The cat food market was static in volume terms in 2011, but rose in 2012 by one per cent to 414,000 tonnes. Value rose by two per cent to £936 million. Dry complete cat food was in previous years the strongest growing of the main meal categories across both dog and cat. However, it has now stabilised and growth in sectors 2012 was just one per cent in both volume and value. Single-serve wet cat food continued to significantly outgrow multi-serve, but the most dramatic area of growth was in treats, which grew 15 per cent in 2012.

SMALL ANIMALS, FISH AND BIRDS

Although the small animal pet food market has not seen volume growth, the value remains static at £67 million. Again, the indoor fish and outdoor fish food markets are hard to estimate but we did see a slight decline in value and volume terms with outdoor fish. Caged and aviary bird food showed no volume growth, although value increased by four per cent to £18 million.

TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS

At a macro level there are trends across both the dog and cat categories – reflecting human food production with more organic products, natural products and focus on provenance. There were also more health-supporting and life stage products plus a focus on products for obesity. The focus on obesity reflects the current situation with estimates suggesting that 50 per cent of pets exceed their ideal body condition and recent reports highlight that 18.5 million petsⁱⁱⁱ are fed inappropriate diets.

If you would like more advice on pet food, the market and how to give the right advice to your customers, please visit www.pfma.org.uk and look at our statistics section. You can also find more about our Weigh in Wednesdays where we have downloadable advice sheets, food diaries and posters.



ⁱ Each year PFMA commissions new research into the UK pet population conducted by TNS using face-to-face interviews on a representative sample of the UK pet population. This research allows us to discover regional as well as national trends in pet ownership. Research collated in March 2013 with over 2,000 UK adults.

ⁱⁱ PFMA Market Data Survey 2012

ⁱⁱⁱ PDSA Health and Wellbeing Report 2012