

Dog Owners Willing to Sacrifice for Pets

AKC survey reveals dog owners are willing to sacrifice luxuries for a pet's care.

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Many pet owners are willing to sacrifice luxuries during the tough economic climate in order to provide for their dogs, according to a survey released Monday, Dec. 8, by the American Kennel Club (AKC).

The AKC polled more than 1,000 people on its website for a one-week period at the end of November, asking participants questions about what they would give up or cutback on for their dog.

The survey found that more than 96 percent of those polled would forgo gourmet coffee to save money for their dogs' expenses. Ninety-seven percent said they would give up massages or spa treatments in order to afford a veterinarian bill, and nearly 79 percent said they would cancel a teeth-whitening appointment so that Buddy could have his annual teeth cleaning.

The survey also found that with the holidays approaching, 69 percent of respondents would cut back on gifts for their friends or extended family before skimping on gifts for their dog. Nearly nine percent said they would scale back on gifts for their spouse before cutting back on gifts for their dog.

The only item that gave dogs a run for their money was the Internet, with more than 70 percent of those polled indicating they would not be able to give up Internet access. According to the AKC, one respondent would give up "pretty much anything. I need the gym and I need the Internet, everything else is fair game."

In addition to the survey, PetPartners Inc., provider of the AKC Pet Healthcare Plan, reported sales are holding up and pet owners are renewing their policies in consistently high numbers. The AKC attributes those results to pet owners viewing insurance as a way to manage their pet's healthcare costs.

Other survey results reported by the AKC included:

Holiday gifts 81 percent of respondents said they purchase gifts for their dogs during the holidays. 69 percent spend up to \$50; 24 percent spend \$50 to \$100; 3 percent spend more than \$150. 59 percent expect to spend the same amount on gifts for their dog as they did last year.

Money-saving practices 52 percent of those polled said they look for sales and/or clip coupons before shopping for pet products. 48 percent are purchasing fewer toys/treats and other non-essential dog supplies. 34 percent have begun buying dog food in bulk.

Giving up indulgences 67 percent would cancel their travel plans if they could not afford to pay to board their dog. 65 percent would regularly eat Ramen noodles before they would skimp on their dog's high-quality food. 59 percent would perm or color their own hair to keep their dog's appointment at the groomers.

Cutbacks for dog's well-being 97 percent of those polled said they are willing to eat more meals at home. 72 percent would cancel their gym membership. 50 percent would cancel cable or satellite service. 94 percent would curb spending on new clothes. 89 percent would push back plans for home remodeling. 88 percent would forgo buying a new car or buy a less-expensive model.