

Cats Cost Less to Own Than Dogs, Research Finds

Average annual price of ownership is \$599 for cats, \$947 for dogs, according to study.

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In the ongoing debate over what makes a better four-legged friend, a cat or dog, it appears as if cats may have the upper hand, at least when it comes to cost.

According to industry research firm IBISWorld Inc. of Santa Monica, Calif., the total cost to own a dog for the duration of its life (an estimated 13 years) is \$13,330, compared to \$8,506 for a cat.

In the first year, a dog owner can expect to pay \$1,966, while a cat owner will spend \$1,318. Thereafter, IBISWorld calculates that it costs \$947 per year for a dog compared to \$599 per year for a cat.

Here is a breakdown of the significant expenses for both animals as provided by IBISWorld:

Average Costs for Dogs

Average Costs for Cats Food\$3,900 Food\$2,444 Vet bills\$2,860 Litter\$1,560 Boarding\$1,586 Boarding\$1,300 Vaccines\$940 Vet bills\$800 Heartworm\$676 Flea control\$780 Misc.\$3,368 Misc.\$1,622 Total \$13,330 Total \$8,506

Toon van Beeck, senior analyst with IBISWorld, said those interested in owning a pet need to recognize the significant expenses that come along with it.

“Although one might think the initial outlay cost for a dog or cat can be high, it really only represents a mere 2.6 percent or 3.5 percent per pet, respectively, for the total cost over the animal’s lifetime,” van Beeck said.

Dog and cat ownership in the U.S. is expected to increase 2.4 percent in 2009 to 169 million, according to IBISWorld. Of these pets, 39 percent of households own a dog and 34 percent own a cat. Despite issues with population, 10 percent of dogs and 18 percent of cats are adopted from animal shelters, the firm reported.