

Dogs Better Than Coffee and TV, Survey Says

Survey shows nearly half of dog owners could not live without their dog on a daily basis.

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Nearly half (48 percent) of dog owners polled said they could not live without their dog on a daily basis — more so than their morning cup of coffee (35 percent), television (35 percent), car (26 percent), cell phone/BlackBerry (23 percent) or best human friend (15 percent).

In conjunction with the launch of a new website and contest, Beneful, a brand of dog food made by St. Louis-based Nestle Purina Petcare, has released the results of its recent survey on dog ownership.

According to the national survey, 95 percent of the 797 dog owners age 25 and up polled agreed that spending time with their four-legged friend lifted their spirits. Ninety-two percent said their dog helps them enjoy life's simple pleasures. Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed chose their dog as the ideal travel companion.

Additional survey findings include: Of the dog owners surveyed, 59 percent said they enjoy going for a walk or run with their dog, 44 percent said they enjoy driving with their dog, 27 percent said they enjoy running errands with their dog and 22 percent said they enjoy taking their dog on vacation.

Nearly a third said they spend at least eight waking hours with their dog, with women nearly twice as likely as men to say they spend the majority of their day with their dog.

Nine in 10 dog owners said they take comfort in coming home to their dog during these uncertain times.

Nearly 91 percent of those polled said their dog makes their life more fulfilling.

When asked what it is about their dog that makes life better, 80 percent of the dog owners polled said it is that their dog is always happy to see them; 75 percent said it is the unconditional love; and 63 percent said it is their dog's reliability.

Beneful launched a new website on Aug. 4 called WagWorld.com.

"Our dogs are our best friends and help make every day full of play and adventure," said Matt Ferch, Beneful assistant brand manager. "We created WagWorld to celebrate that relationship between dog owners and their best buddies and to provide them with a place where they can discover and share dog-friendly places wherever their adventures may take them."

In celebration of the launch, Beneful has kicked off a search for the top dog-friendly locations in the country. The "Top 10 Togetherful Cities in America" contest invites dog owners to visit WagWorld.com and "buzz" about their favorite dog-friendly locale. The 10 cities with the most activity, including postings, reviews and photo uploads, by Sept. 27 will make the list. Beneful expects to announce the list in October.