

Dog Owners Surveyed on Pet Sitting, Boarding

Keeping dogs in familiar surroundings tops list of reasons for choosing in-home pet care.

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As the holiday season draws near and vacation planning is underway, pet owners must secure arrangements for their dogs as well. According to a survey conducted by pet-sitting company Fetch! Pet Care Inc., 82.12 percent of pet owners said in-home pet sitting is the preferred method of care.

Other preferred methods of care were: in-home pet sitting at the sitter's residence (12.74 percent); group daycare (4.87 percent); and kennel boarding (less than 1 percent).

With kennel boarding drawing the lowest numbers, respondents were questioned about prior kennel experiences – 32.54 percent stated they've had a "bad experience" boarding a pet, and 12.38 percent said they've had more than one bad experience.

Nearly half of pet owners stated their biggest concern with kennel boarding was their pets' emotional health, citing issues such as depression and separation anxiety. Approximately 20 percent were most concerned with their pets' physical health due to the transmission of airborne diseases.

When respondents were asked about in-home pet sitting, three out of four people said it was the preferred way to care for their dogs because pets are able to maintain their normal daily routines in familiar surroundings. Other responses included no germ or virus exposure from other pets, personalized care, and convenience.

The survey was conducted Oct. 19 through 29, 2007, and 1,133 pet owners were surveyed; 55.83 percent owned at least one dog, 31.86 percent owned at least one cat, and 12.31 percent owned at least one "other" animal, including fish, reptiles and farm animals.