

## Dogs Surrendered for Reasons Unrelated to Pet

**Study shows 86 percent of pets surrendered to shelters are there because of reasons related to the owners' circumstances.**

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In an effort to review reasons why animals are relinquished to shelters, PetHealth Inc. conducted a study based on data collected from close to 800 animal welfare organizations and approximately 1.4 million dogs and cats brought through the organizations' doors.

Officials created a list of 30 reasons pets were turned over to shelters. Each of the 30 reasons was further separated into two categories – owner-specific reasons and pet-specific reasons. For example, owner-related reasons for relinquishing an animal include moving, allergies, or home owner insurance policy restrictions. Pet-related reasons include animal health, demonstrated aggression, or hyperactivity.

Animals who were returned to the shelter after being initially adopted were analyzed separately – classified as a “return” animal rather than a “surrender” animal, and those statistics were compiled separately.

The study showed that 86 percent of the surrendered animals were turned over due to owner-specific reasons – not a single reason deemed pet-specific cracked the top 10.

The Top 10 reasons reported for surrender were: Too many pets (18 percent) Unwanted/Incompatible (10 percent) Moving/Deployed (10 percent) Stray/Found/Abandoned (8 percent) Inability to care for (8 percent) Financial/Home insurance policy restrictions (6 percent) Euthanasia request (5 percent) Other/Unclear reason (4 percent) Unwanted litter/Pregnant female (4 percent) Allergic to animal (4 percent)

For animals who were brought back to the shelter after an adoption, results were mixed. Pet-specific reasons were more common and included behavioral, barking, or training issues (9 percent), problems with family pets (8 percent), animal health or age (8 percent) and aggression towards humans (4 percent).

However, the survey showed that the most common reasons, including returned animals, were owner-specific. “Unwanted/incompatible” was the most common reason given at 12 percent and the inability to care for the animal came in second at 11 percent.

PetHealth Inc. works with animal welfare organizations to reduce operating costs in an effort to benefit pets and pet owners. The results of the study were published in PetPoint Journal #7, which was distributed in November. The electronic journal is published bi-weekly by PetHealth Inc., and distributed to animal welfare organizations.