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Gays own more pets than general population, online census finds

One-fifth of respondents spend between \$300 and \$432 a year on pet products

by Jeff Garber

Be it cats, dogs, parrots, ferrets or gerbils, pets hold an important place in the gay and lesbian community. Pet ownership is 10 percent more common among gay respondents than in the general population, a recent survey reveals.

With 8,831 respondents, the 2002-2003 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census is the largest and most comprehensive LGBT consumer study ever conducted. Prepared by GLCensus Partners (Syracuse University and OpusComm Group), the annual study fills the growing need among manufacturers and service providers for detailed information on consumer behavior and preferences of the LGBT community.

Pet ownership is one of several areas of consumer interest examined by the census.

"Most gay people adopt a pet for the same reason anyone does — it's fun and makes your life incomparably richer," explains Amy Falkner of Syracuse University, lead researcher on the project. "Many people consider their pets as important family members."

Overall, 78.5 percent of respondents reported keeping a pet. The census surveyed owners of cats, dogs, birds, ferrets, fish, horses, rabbits, reptiles and rodents. Ownership was higher in females than in males, with 86.9 percent of female respondents having a pet, as opposed to 70.8 percent of male respondents. Only 5.1 percent of respondents don't own a pet yet, but plan to within the next year.

The war between cats and dogs (and their owners) rages on. According to the survey, the winner is clear: cats rule and dogs drool. More than 48 percent of respondents own at least one cat, compared to 46.4 percent who own at least one dog. Many respondents have multiple-cat households, so totals report almost 1,000 more cats owned by respondents than dogs.

A higher percentage of female respondents, it seems, are pet owners. A gender preference for cats or dogs is revealed, with cats more popular among women. Just over 60 percent of female respondents own cats and just fewer than 53 percent own dogs. The canines eke out a win over cats for men,



Cats rule and dogs drool! More than 48 percent of respondents own at least one cat, while slightly more than 46 percent own at least one dog.

with 40.7 percent of male respondents owning dogs and 38.3 percent owning cats.

The GL Census, which concentrates on consumer information, finds that one-fifth of respondents who said they own a dog or cat spend between \$300 and \$432 a year on their pet.

"This new information is interesting not only to breeders and kennels, but to pet food manufacturers, veterinarians, [dog groomers] or anyone who works in the pet industry who wishes to court a significant market," says Jeffrey Garber, president of OpusComm Group Inc., and founder of the GLCensus Partners study. "Even airlines, hotels, and apartment complexes are evaluating their policies on dogs and cats in light of the strong gay interest in pet ownership."

About a third of the dogs listed in the survey came from a breeder (33.7 percent) while 22.7 percent were adopted from an animal shelter. Of cats, 27.5 percent were strayed or injured and taken in, while 24.9 percent were adopted from a shelter.

The new 2003-2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census is currently being conducted through August 18, 2003. The census will look for significant new findings in the areas of LGBT demographics, media habits and the following consumer categories: automotive, childcare, clothing and related accessories, computer equipment, electronics, entertainment, financial, food and beverage, home and garden, medical, personal care, pets, sports and fitness and travel as they relate to the LGBT community.

info:

www.opuscommgroup.com
www.glcensus.org

If you have a pet,
we should be your vet!



Dr. Margurette Straley
Dr. Leland McLaughlin, Jr.

Freedom
Animal Hospital

3055 Freedom Drive
Charlotte, NC 28208
Phone: 704-399-6534
Fax: 704-391-0210