

Never without a pet!

Companion animals, commonly known as pets, are increasingly becoming part of the family. Furthermore, 91% of owners believe that pets contribute to keeping the family united and over 90% believe that pets transmit joy and wellbeing, hence actively contributing towards the establishment of family serenity. The beneficial effects are accentuated when considering the elderly and 97% of pet owners would recommend the elderly to adopt a pet. This advice is also given to families with children as pets can help with the development of their relational capacities.

26th May 2014 – The ASSALCO – ZOOMARK 2014 Report was presented to the press. This year it has been enriched by a Study carried out by IRI Information Resources the final aim of which is that of researching the special relationship between mankind and pet.

The Study underlines without doubt the important social and family value that a pet has, and confirms what was already previously illustrated by the GFK Eurisko survey carried out for the ASSALCO – ZOOMARK 2013 Report.

It is immediately evident that the presence of a pet in the family is fundamental: 92% of the pet owners interviewed, also those responsible for the purchase of pet-related products and owners of either cats and/or dogs, declared that **they would no longer be able to live without the presence of a pet**. The Chairman of ASSALCO, Dr. Luigi Schiappapietra, declares: *“Pets have now become true members of the family and, for those who have the pleasure of living with pets, it has become impossible to do without such a deep attachment. This is also the reason why Italians ever more often try to take their pets with them wherever they go. The Institutions are making moves in this direction, allowing access to animals in an ever increasing number of places like hospitals and offices. Even owners of public places are often inviting their customers not to leave their pet at home so that the owner can share every possible moment with them”.*

According to the results of the IRI Study, 96% of Italian pet owners are **attentive to the health of their pets** and 90% of the pet owners interviewed confirm the fact that they take care of their pet personally. These two pieces of information together confirm the fact that **Italians love to take care of their pets just as they do with the other members of their family**.

Many beneficial effects are attributed to pets; first amongst them all is their capability to transmit **joy, wellbeing and serenity** in the family – this thought is shared by 94% of pet owners. Pets also contribute to the warmth of the family atmosphere, **keeping the family united** (91%), making family members **pass more time together** (87%), stimulating a **more active lifestyle** and **soothing the tensions of daily life and arguments** (84%). More than nine owners out of ten (91%) believe that, in the difficult moments of life, the company of a pet helps to **mitigate worries and heighten spirits**. The benefits tied to the presence of a pet are confirmed by 90% of the owners interviewed who affirm that **pets help to distract them and feel better** in this period of economic crisis and uncertainty, contributing to overcoming problems with greater optimism.

Children and the elderly are those family members who benefit from the presence of a pet the most: 88% of pet owners believe that **growing up with a pet stimulates a child's capacity to socialise**, contributing to helping them to easily relate with peers and to making them become more social adults. Furthermore, the presence of a pet in the home **educates the child to have respect and to take on responsibilities**.

88% of pet owners **personally recommend a family that has children to adopt a pet**, aware of the value that the presence of a pet can bring to the life of a child.

To be underlined, although it may not seem like a great overall result, is the fact that a surprising 55% of parents who own a pet confirm that **their children prefer playing with their pet than with video games**. Dogs, cats, and other pets, hence, are true **games companions** for the smaller members of the family.

Almost all (97%) the pet owners interviewed agree with the fact that **pets have a beneficial effect on the lives of the elderly**, encouraging them to remain active and stay young both physically and mentally, due to their taking care of the pet and spending their free time with them.

With respect to children, in the case of the elderly an even higher percentage of pet owners personally **recommend the presence of a pet in the home**: in fact, 97% of the pet owners interviewed share this thought.

From the Study, it is apparent that pet owners are very much aware of the **importance of a correct diet**, necessary so as to guarantee the health of their pet. In fact, as well as listening to the advice of the vet regarding the choice of pet food, almost all (92%) of the pet owners interviewed are convinced that **a correct choice of nutrition is crucial for the health and wellbeing of cats and dogs** and is therefore the best way to take care of them.

These and other contents in the ASSALCO – ZOOMARK 2014 Report, available at:

<http://www.assalco.it/index.php?action=shownews&id=1&nid=5321>

http://www.zoomark.it/media/zoomark/documenti/assalco/Assalco-Zoomark_Report_Excerpt.pdf

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ASSALCO – Italian Association of Pet-Food and Pet-Care Industries gathers the main Companies in the pet food and pet care sectors that operate in Italy. The member Companies represent **over 90% of the National market** regarding pet food. On a European level, ASSALCO is member of FEDIAF, the European Pet Food Industry Federation.

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