

Pet economy – the dog and cat food market is worth more than €3 billion

The 17th Assalco-Zoomark Report showed that owners are committed to feeding their pets properly despite the difficult times.

8 May 2024 – In Italy there are almost **20 million dogs and cats** that - with rabbits, birds, fish and turtles - make up the **65 million pets** living in our homes.

In 2023 pet food had a turnover of more than **€3 billion** in the Italian market¹. The **dog and cat food** market, like most of the Consumer Packaged Goods categories, was impacted by a **significant inflationary dynamic** that generated an increase in turnover of **13.4%**. **673,000 tons** were sold, which was a stable volume compared to the previous year.

Assalco President Giorgio Massoni said: "*In 2023, the pet food market has proven to be resilient. This showed the attention that owners pay to their life companion pets.*"

The 17th Assalco-Zoomark Report², released annually by Assalco to track the development of the pet food and care market and highlight the role of pets within families and the society, was unveiled today at Zoomark International's Press Lunch. This previewed the upcoming event scheduled in Bologna from 5 to 7 May 2025.

"Zoomark is one of the flagship events of BolognaFiere. For over 20 editions, it has accompanied the growth of the pet industry, interpreting market needs and anticipating trends" emphasizes **Gianpiero Calzolari, President of BolognaFiere**.

CATS RULE

Cat products are **55.3%** of the total value, with a turnover of slightly above **€1,663 million**. **Dog** food accounts for **44.7%** of the total market, with more than **€1,344 million**.

The **wet food** segment was the most important with its **€1,467 million**, equivalent to 54.4% share of the market. The segment saw a turnover increase of 13.4% which was coupled with a volume increase of 1.1%. The **dry food** segment produced **€1,227 million** (+13.4% in value) and carved out 40.8% share.

INCREASE FOR OTHER PETS' FOOD

Euromonitor estimated that Italians have almost 30 million fish, slightly below 13 million birds and more than three million small mammals and reptiles. In 2023, the pet food market for these animals grew in value by **5.8%**, developing a turnover of **€14 million** for the large-scale retail trade.

The main segment is **bird** food, which covers almost 45%, while **rodent** food, in second place, accounts for 34% of the total.

HYGIENE PRODUCTS HAVE A PREDOMINANT POSITION IN PET CARE

The market for hygiene products, toys and accessories, i.e. leashes, kennels, bowls, cages, aviaries, aquariums, turtle tanks and various utensils, showed a positive trend in 2023. In the large-scale retail channel, the segment was worth **€85 million**, with a turnover increase of **6%**.

The **hygiene** sector, which includes products like absorbent sanitary pads, wipes, shampoos, brushes, deodorants, and care and beauty items, is the primary force behind this market, accounting for more than 51% of its value.

Cat litter, which is surveyed separately, is the most important non-food category in the large-scale retail channel. In 2023, this market reached **€100 million**, with a positive **value** trend of **+14%**.

¹ Grocery, traditional Petshops, Petshop Chains + Large-scale retail Petshops as surveyed by Circana

² Circana and the Associazione Nazionale Medici Veterinari Italiani (ANMVI - National Association of Italian Veterinary Doctors) contributed to the 17th Assalco Zoomark Report. The Report's digital version is available on the [Assalco.it](https://www.assalco.it) website

2023: BUYER ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES

2023 was a challenging year for Consumer goods in Italy: the main impacting events were inflation. Supply prices rose by 9.7% and eroded the purchasing power of Italian households. The energy crisis and ongoing conflicts contributed to the generalised rise in the price of Consumer goods.

REDUCING THE VAT RATE ON DOG AND CAT FOOD - A CIVILISED DECISION

The recent economic situation requires many households to monitor their spending carefully. Imposing a 22 per cent VAT rate on dog and cat food, and veterinary services, typically reserved for non-essential items, places an additional strain on families, equating these necessities to luxury goods. Requesting a reduction in the VAT rate to 10 per cent is perceived by animal and consumer groups, leading veterinary associations and the industry as a civilised decision, which is in line with European legislation that lists pet food products as eligible for reduced tax rates.

President **Massoni** said: *"Living with a pet entails responsibility. Owners want to provide a balanced and nutritious diet, take care of their pets' health, train them to live together and respect common spaces. Purchasing daily use products and facing specific expenses is necessary. This impacts the family budget. In Germany, a reduced VAT rate of seven per cent is applied to pet food, considering its daily use. While Italians are charged three times more VAT (22%) on the same products. Reducing the VAT rate to 10% on dog and cat food and veterinary services may have a beneficial effect on reducing pet abandonment and rehoming, an unfortunate behaviour often driven by financial reasons."*

For further information:

ASSALCO - Press Office

Silvia Vergani silvia.vergani@b-story.eu tel. +39 349 7668102
Massimo Spagarini massimo.spagarini@b-story.eu tel. +39 340 3587701

ASSALCO (Associazione Nazionale tra le Imprese per l'Alimentazione e la Cura degli Animali da Compagnia - National Association of Companies for Pet Food and Care), unites leading enterprises active in Italy's pet food and care industries, comprising more than **85% of the domestic pet food market share**. ASSALCO is affiliated with FEDIAF, the Federation representing the pet food industry at the European level.