

# PETS & PEOPLE

## Annual Survey Proves Dogs Are Man's Best Friend <sup>TM</sup>

(NAPSA)—For as long as anyone can remember, dogs have been deemed man's best friend. But what truth lies in this old adage, and how deep does the bond between people and their four-legged friends run?

The makers of one popular food for dogs surveyed 1,500 dog owners and lovers from across the country to find out more about these beloved canine companions. From pet pampering to doggie socialization and nutrition, the survey dug up some interesting "tidbits" about all things dog.

It's clear that dogs play an integral and important role in our lives and, in most cases, are much more than just man's best friend. In fact, 70 percent of people surveyed said they consider their pooches to be a part of the family. In addition, 71 percent admit they even talk to their dog as if he was human and 22 percent say they include their pup in family vacations.

"PEDIGREE is not just about dog food; we work to understand dogs at their best through the lens of dog lovers," said Chris Jones, Franchise Director of Pet Care for Masterfoods USA. "This understanding is translated into the most complete range of products to bring out the best in dogs."

### Best Friends Forever

According to the survey, dogs may play an integral role in human social life. Whether it be a new found friend or a significant other, many dog owners report their pooches have played matchmaker a time or two. In fact, more than 50 percent of people surveyed say they have met a new

friend or acquaintance while walking their dogs and 15 percent even met their spouses that way.

Can dogs really attract dates? Does your four-legged friend know which mate is best suited for you? It seems some people think so. Forty-two percent of dog owners who participated in the survey admit they have or say they might, take their dog out for the sole purpose of meeting someone of the opposite sex. Others take this one step further, as 14 percent of women said they would even take their dog's opinion into consideration when choosing a mate—if Fido doesn't like him, then neither will she.

The survey also found that it's a dog-gone good life for pups these days. Among dog lovers surveyed, many spoil their dogs as they would a child. From showering their dog with gifts, to surprising them with unexpected treats (72 percent), people frequently pamper their pooches. Many even give their dogs presents during the holidays (50 percent), proving dogs really are another member of the family.

### What's in a Name?

Ask 1,500 people what they named their dog(s), and you'll get 1,181 different answers. While Max, Buddy and Bear were the most common names uncovered in the survey, it seems dog names are as individual as the pups themselves. There were, however, some interesting similarities, as "people" names were more common than the traditional Fido, Rufus or Spot. In fact, of those surveyed, nearly half (47 percent)

gave their dogs a human name, with the most common being Max, Jack, Molly and Daisy.

### A Happy Dog is a Healthy Dog

Nearly all dog lovers who participated in the survey believe their dogs are happy (99 percent) and most also report taking steps to keep them that way. The most common things people do to keep their dogs in good health include a daily romp around the block (55 percent) and keeping up with regular visits to the vet (41 percent). Dog owners surveyed also said that their pooches motivate them to live a healthier, more active lifestyle (68 percent). In fact, 49 percent incorporate their dog into their daily exercise regime, offering them both a good workout.

Dog lovers also realize that meals are important and proper nutrition is key. When asked what dinner time was like in their house, over half of dog owners surveyed say their pooches dart to the dish when their favorite fare is served (54 percent). Others add their dogs can be finicky if they don't provide the preferred food and that some will even stage a hunger strike if they don't like what's served. That's why it's important to choose a dog food that tastes delicious and contains all of the essential nutrients dogs need to thrive. PEDIGREE Food for Dogs offers proper nutrition in a variety of flavors, which means even the most finicky dog may be wagging his tail with enjoyment when it's time for meals.

For additional information as well as tips for keeping your dog healthy and happy, log on to [www.pedigree.com](http://www.pedigree.com).