



Check against delivery.

A statement by Gordon Bonnet,
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Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft Zoologischer Fachbetriebe GmbH (organiser of Interzoo)
at the **press conference** of the ZZF at **Interzoo.digital**
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We live in complicated and challenging times. The intervals between changes are becoming ever shorter. This demands agility from us. At all times.

At the Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft Zoologischer Fachbetriebe we are proud to host the world's leading trade fair, Interzoo. This is our established brand.

Last year, we wanted to welcome the world to Interzoo in Nuremberg. The pandemic threw a spanner in the works. Then we were counting on this year. But as before, we were no longer allowed to meet physically.

Postponing once again was not an option for us, because the pet supplies sector needs a place to meet, talk, network, find things out, do business with each other. Which is why we have created a new brand. It is the sister of Interzoo, Interzoo.digital. We're breaking new ground here.

I have to admit, setting up something like this is a real accomplishment. But I am very proud and grateful for the dedication of my team, the platform operator Corussoft, our sales partner NürnbergMesse, the live studio team from SchokoPro and the speakers, experts, stand staff and the many helping hands who have created what you are experiencing here.

I hope you have the same impression that I do, that you are on a great, innovative platform here that enables new forms of business to be done. Please bear with us if there are still a few teething problems – we hope you will be just as convinced by the overall experience as we are.

In the same way that Interzoo.digital is a challenge for us as the organisers and hosts, it is equally a challenge for the vast majority of exhibitors, who are sounding out the possibilities of a digital trade fair for the very first time. For this reason, I would like to thank all exhibitors at Interzoo.digital most sincerely for their courage, energy, inventiveness and pioneering spirit. The results of the corporate presences more than speak for themselves. They show how digital product and corporate presentations, combined with virtual meetings and lectures given by real trade fair attendees, enable a completely new, interactive online experience. Technology is never an end in itself here, but the means of communication between people.

Even if the physical experience is missing, a platform has been created that has its own very special appeal. Interzoo.digital offers new possibilities for presentation, making contact, networking and obtaining information. These new experiences and possibilities will also affect future business meetings. And I am sure that Interzoo.digital will also act as an innovation booster for the entire pet sector. Our sector is not exactly seen as a digital pioneer and so it's no wonder that almost one quarter of the exhibitors are start-ups who have not exhibited at any previous Interzoo. Dr Arzt will go into the figures in more detail in a moment.

By registering for Interzoo.digital exhibitors have followed the digitisation road map and now have a lead in knowledge and experience over their competitors. After all, more and more providers domestically and abroad are competing for customers with their ranges – not only in B2C, but also in B2B. The visibility of your own online offering and clever use of social media channels are thus decisive factors for success. Even if Covid-19 hopefully relaxes its grip on us very soon, in the future there will be an increasing number of digital event formats. Anyone who already knows the ropes here will have their noses in front in the future.

Despite all the progress in digitisation, physical contact and the haptic presentation of innovations will remain the two most important arguments for a real trade fair event for many exhibitor companies and visitors.

In this respect we see Interzoo.digital as a first step in bringing the trade fair activities of the pet sector back to the accustomed high level during the ongoing pandemic.

Although real physical meetings are only possible within highly limited frameworks at the moment, the situation will slowly but surely improve over the next few months. So I am very pleased that our friends from Bologna Fiere will be putting on the Zoomark in November. We will visit each other and be represented with a stand alternately, as it should be among friends.

When the classic physical Interzoo in Nürnberg finally opens its doors in May 2022, the worldwide sector will meet again and present itself.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The pet sector worldwide is currently experiencing a rollercoaster ride. On the one hand, more and more people around the world want to live with a pet.

This is not a flash-in-the-pan as a result of the pandemic, but a long-term trend. Accordingly, the entire pet sector is growing strongly. Mr Holthenrich has just gone into this.

On the other hand, the regulations applying to the sector have increased considerably. Where preventing cruelty to animals or the dubious trade in puppies, or prohibiting extreme forms of pet breeding is concerned, this should definitely be welcomed and enjoys our support.

However, sometimes it seems as if pet owners, breeders and specialist pet retailers are under some sort of general suspicion, and a suspicion that has less to do with animal welfare. This is particularly unreasonable if you consider that it is precisely these groups of people who are especially fond of animals and show great respect for nature and living creatures. But some animal rights organisations have created an ideal imagination of an animal's life in the wild, compare this image with keeping an animal within four walls and come to the conclusion that animals are not being kept properly. This image is then reflected in party programmes and political demands.

This disregards the fact that wild animals often starve, do not receive any treatment if they become ill or get injured and are hunted by predators. Most pets enjoy their interactions with people and living in a loving home. The pre-condition for this is that pet owners can understand their pets' behaviour and create an environment where the animals can live out the behaviour characteristic of their species.

At the Zentralverband Zoologischer Fachbetriebe we are very concerned that politicians enable people and animals to live together while safeguarding animal welfare, and that they are not prevented from doing so.

Because parliamentary elections are taking place in Germany on 26 September, we are interested in finding out from the animal policy experts in the parliamentary parties where they stand on living together with pets. Therefore, from 1.30 pm to 3.00 pm on Friday, 4 June 2021, a public digital podium discussion (in German) is taking place as part of Interzoo.digital. Six members of the German parliament are taking part, Alois Gerig, Hiltrud Lotze, Renate Künast, Jan Nolte, Judith Skudelny and Kirsten Tackmann. The questions will involve expert knowledge in pet shops, online retail, husbandry systems, animal transports, invasive species, zoonotic diseases, catching animals in the wild, cruel breeding and positive lists.

This is just one part of the extensive conference programme of Interzoo.digital, to which I would like to draw your attention. Dr Rowena Arzt, who is responsible for trade fairs at WZF, will now explain to you what else makes Interzoo.digital so special.