

Significant growth in number of pets in Germany

There's a pet in almost every second household – upward trend

Düsseldorf/Wiesbaden, 8 May 2018. The number of pets in Germany, whether they are dogs, cats, guinea pigs or budgerigars, increased substantially in 2017. This was the result of a representative survey of 7,000 people carried out by market research institute Skopos on behalf of IVH (Industry Association of Pet Care Producers) and ZZF (German Pet Trade & Industry Association). The survey found that there are 34.3 million dogs, cats, small mammals and ornamental birds living in Germany – that is 2.7 million more pets than in 2016. There are also large numbers of ornamental fish and terrarium animals in German households.

Germany's favourite pet is the cat

The cat continues to be Germany's most popular pet. There are a total of 13.7 million feline friends in 22 percent of households. But dogs too are nosing ahead: Not only are they Germany's second favourite pet but their number has also seen a significant increase. In the meantime there are 9.2 million dogs in 18 percent of households, that's 600,000 more dogs than in 2016. In third place, there are 6.1 million small animals in seven percent of households. Their total has also risen by 1.1 million compared with 2016.

The number of ornamental birds is 5.3 million in four percent of households – 700,000 more than in 2016. In the same period there were 2.1 million aquariums and 1.6 million garden ponds with ornamental fish each in four percent of households. There were also 800,000 terrariums in one percent of households.

45 percent of all households have pets in them

These figures clearly show an increase in people's fondness for having pets at home. It's a trend that continues unabated. "Nowadays, there is a pet in almost every second household, whereas ten years ago only around every third household kept a pet," says Georg Müller, Chairman of IVH, the Industry Association of Pet Care Producers.

"Remarkable is that the increase in the pet population is only partly attributable to the rising number of households in Germany," says Norbert Holthenrich, President of ZZF, the German Pet Trade & Industry Association. "The pet

population in Germany is rising more than the number of households.” In 21 percent of households there are even two or more pets.

Holthenrich is not surprised that the number of dogs, cats, small animals and other species is increasing in Germany: “Animals are playing an increasingly important role in the lives of many people, whether they are families or single people, young or old.” He sees confirmation of this in psychological or socio-biological studies, for example. “Scientists have determined that living with animals is a natural human need that has evolved over thousands of years.”

Much-loved housemates in families and single-person households

However, pets are particularly popular with families with children, with 65 percent of all families owning a pet. “More and more parents are obviously becoming convinced of what educators and psychologists have been observing for quite some time now, namely, that living with animals has a positive effect on children,” says Müller, suggesting that this is one reason for the significant increase in the small animal population in families.

The number of pets in single-person households has also increased, with 33 percent of all people living on their own having a pet. Holthenrich also believes that another reason why the number of pets in Germany is increasing is the role that they play for many people meanwhile. “For many people in our society, especially those living alone, the pet as a social partner is becoming increasingly important,” he says. “Whether as a member of the family or a playmate, more and more people obviously feel good in the presence of an animal. Pets help them to relax and they love their pets.” This development is very likely to continue in the coming years.

Animal owners like to buy things for their precious pets

The sales figures from the pet food and pet supplies industry show how important pets are to people: This segment reported total sales of €4.838 billion in 2017. On top of the totals for convenience pet food (€3.173 billion) and supplies and accessories (€987 million), €580 million is earned in the online segment, as well as €98 million for wild bird seed.

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