



Press Release

For immediate release

NEW DATA SUGGESTS THAT PET OBESITY IS ON THE RISE

Calabash, NC – July 10, 2008. A new nationwide study indicates that pet obesity continues to expand. According to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP), almost half of the nation's dogs and cats are now overweight or obese. The group conducted the National Pet Obesity Awareness Day study in October 2007 and found 43% of all dogs and 53% of all cats were classified as overweight or obese by a veterinary healthcare provider; 10% of all dogs and 19% of all cats were classified as obese.

"The startling fact was the number of obese cats," comments the study's lead investigator and founder of APOP, Dr. Ernie Ward. "We knew from a pilot study completed in early 2007 that obese cats were the fastest growing segment. It is alarming that almost one-in-five US cats is now clinically obese. This means we will continue to see an increase in cases of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and other weight-related diseases."

The study also looked into pet owners' assessment of their dog's or cat's weight. "We found that the majority of pet owners understand that their pet is too heavy," notes Dr. Ward. In fact, 53% of dog owners with overweight or obese canines classified their dog correctly and 66% of cat owners with flabby felines stated that their cat was overweight or obese. "As we questioned pet owners further, we discovered that many of them had never been told that their dog or cat needed to shed a few pounds. I believe that in order to win the war on obesity it must begin with bilateral communication: pet owners need to ask if their pet is too heavy and veterinarians need to tell owners when a pet is overweight."

According to APOP estimates, this study indicates that as many as 32 million dogs and 46 million cats in the US are overweight or obese. Almost 8 million dogs and 17 million cats are thought to be obese.

"Carrying a little extra weight isn't a stable condition that's simply annoying or unsightly. Fat is biologically active tissue and an excess amount negatively impacts almost every body system," states Dr. Ward. "We're in real danger of raising an entire generation of pets that will live a shorter life expectancy than the dogs and cats we enjoyed as children."



The nationwide study was conducted in 98 small animal veterinary clinics and included 704 dogs and 283 cats.

About APOP and Dr. Ward

The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention is an independent organization not associated with any veterinary pharmaceutical, pet food, or other veterinary industry organization. Dr. Ernie Ward is a licensed veterinarian, certified personal trainer, and USA Triathlon accredited coach. He and APOP help people and pets lose weight and sustain a healthy lifestyle by creating parallel weight loss and lifestyle programs.

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