

Optimistic outlook for pet care

While the uncertainties of the global economy have caused consumers in Europe and beyond to rein in their spending, the pet care industry around the world appears to be holding up relatively well. Even in countries enduring the toughest of austerity regimes such as Ireland, pet care has proved to be remarkably resistant to recession.

According to a recent Euromonitor report: "Despite overwhelming evidence of a dramatic fall in consumer confidence, one of the few areas in which Irish consumers appear unwilling to cut their spending significantly is on their pets. Although the premium pet food market registered a slight decline in 2010 as economy foods surged, at the other end of the market investment has been reported in everything from Christmas presents for pets to Valentine's Day cards. Lifestyle and health considerations gathered further interest over 2010 and premium foods continued to defy expectations. This trend will likely continue due to an increasing number of 'pet parents' who dote on their pets".

Almost everywhere one looks in the Western World, people are inclined to view their pets as members of the family and treat them accordingly. While this is most clearly evident in North America, it's also increasingly the case in European countries that hitherto have had a more robust attitude to the welfare of domestic pets. And it's a similar story in Japan.

It follows that as owners pay greater attention to the health, wellbeing and comfort of their pets, so the amount they spend on pet care products will increase. Not only are pet owners seeking out better quality food and treats, but they are also buying a wider range of non-food items as they indulge their animals with presents and pamper them in grooming parlours.

The luxury pet industry has continued to grow through the past few years of economic gloom because owners consider their pets to be family, according to Bob Vetere, president of American Pet Products Association. "People are cutting back on things for themselves; maybe they're taking a local vacation instead of an exotic vacation, to make sure they can do meaningful things for their pets," says Vetere. "As the world gets scarier and scarier, people find more and more comfort in Spike and Fluffy and Rover."

PetQuip's role is to help Britain's pet care industry take advantage of this burgeoning worldwide market. One of the ways we do that is by organising British exhibitor groups at major overseas trade fairs. In four month's time, a record number of British firms will be taking part in the PetQuip-organised exhibitor group at Interzoo 2012, acknowledged as the world's biggest trade fair for pet supplies.

Held every two years in the ancient German city of Nuremberg, Interzoo is by far the most important overseas exhibition for the British pet care industry. At the last edition of Interzoo in 2010, there were 95 British firms among the 1,498 exhibitors displaying pet food, grooming aids, accessories and services over an expanse of 90,800 square metres.

Buyers from every continent visit Interzoo. Two years ago, the show attracted more than 38,000 trade visitors from 115 countries. Almost 24,000 of them came from outside Germany. The top 10 countries for international visitors were Italy, France, The Netherlands, Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Spain, the Russian Federation, Poland, Austria and the USA.

Another way we pursue our goal of bringing buyers and suppliers together is by providing a free product finding service to buyers at both home and abroad. As you might expect, our members supply a vast array of products. If you are looking for new items to sell in your garden centre or would simply like to expand your existing product offer, please visit our website www.petquip.com, go to 'Product Directory' and click on a product category to find a supplier. Alternatively, fill in the form on the 'Services for trade buyers' page and forward it to us. On receipt of your form we will circulate a sales lead to our members and invite them to make direct contact with you.

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