

Pet Owners Cut-out Luxuries to Meet Pet Healthcare Needs in Downturn

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Despite recession, a specialist pet insurer (http://www.animalfriends.org.uk/pet_insurance.html), Animal Friends Insurance (<http://www.animalfriends.org.uk>), is reporting a 40 percent increase in pet owners purchasing insurance policies to care for the health and wellbeing of their pets.

A startling fact found in research done by Sainsbury's Finance in September, shows that 1.6 million pet owners have had to put down at least one pet dog or cat in the last five years because of not being able to cover a vet bill. To avoid this unnecessary heartache many are looking into getting lifetime policies for their pets.

As budgets tighten in the recession, families are cutting back on meals out, luxury food items and next year's holiday. However, it seems that these same families are making a big effort to purchase pet insurance as a precaution.

Elaine Fairfax, Founder and MD of Animal Friends, commented: "More claims are made for pet related illness rather than accidents. Similarly, insurers are reporting that they find claim ratios are 1 in 4 and often as high as 1 in 3 for pets requiring veterinary treatment each year. Another important fact is that veterinary fees are rising faster than inflation and pet insurance claims are made more frequently than other household or car insurance claims."

"With Christmas just around the corner there will be many new pet owners and it is even more important at a time like this that the annual message gets across: there is a cost to caring for pets. People wanting impartial advice on pet insurance can visit www.moneysavingexpert.com/insurance/cut-pet-insurance-costs," added Elaine.

Animal Friends are unique in the pet insurance sector as they are a not-for-profit company. All their net profits made from the sale of pet insurance policies go directly to charities which help animals in need. The charities that they provide aid to are worldwide and include Animal Asia, The Born Free Foundation, donkey and horse sanctuaries in Israel and the Gambia along with many others including smaller charities such as Somerset and Dorset Rescue and Woodlands Animal Sanctuary.

The company offers several levels of cover ranging from just a few pounds per month to comprehensive full lifetime policies to help protect pet owners (http://www.animalfriends.org.uk/life_insurance/life_insurance_that_rewards.html) against unforeseen medical expenses for ongoing conditions such as arthritis and to give them peace of mind.

In a recession charitable donations are hit hard too. In response to this, Animal Friends has teamed up with The Mayhew Animal Home, one of the busiest animal sanctuaries in London, rescuing thousands of animals from cruelty and neglect each year. To help the Mayhew's important work, Animal Friends Insurance will be donating £5 for every policy sold when a pet insurance purchase is made right until the end of December 08, a buyer just has to give the promotional code MAY1 at the time of purchase to trigger the donation. So whether you phone Animal Friends Insurance to buy a policy – or buy online – mention the promotional code MAY1 and Animal Friends will earmark £5 towards this worthy cause on

your behalf. The web site can be found at www.animalfriends.org.uk (<http://www.animalfriends.org.uk>).

In a report in the Dereham Times of Norfolk, David Green, spokesman for the RSPCA said, "The vast majority of responsible pet owners do get insurance. But people often do not appreciate the cost of vet treatment. People are out of touch with what it can cost. Insurance is a relatively small outlay in comparison."

More Information:

Christopher Fairfax, Marketing Director, Animal Friends Insurance - Tel. +44 (0) 844 557 1255
E-mail: chrisf@animalfriends.co.uk Web: www.animalfriends.org.uk (<http://www.animalfriends.org.uk>)
Animal Friends Insurance, London Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire, SP4 7RT

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Notes to editors:

About Animal Friends Insurance

Animal Friends Insurance is a non-profit making insurance business, which donates 100% of its net profits to animal welfare charities worldwide. The company was founded in 1998 and offers competitively priced dog and cat insurance products. In 2005 Animal Friends Insurance's managing director, Elaine Fairfax, won the NatWest everywoman Award for achieving the most outstanding success in business. Animal Friends currently insures around 30,000 pets at a £5 million gross written premium.