

## America's Spending on Pets Continues to Increase, APPA Says

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Despite the economic recession, the American Pet Product Association reported continued growth in the U.S. pet market as Americans continue to spend money on their pets. The U.S. pet market continues to grow despite the economic recession, according to figures released Feb. 5 by the American Pet Products Association. Overall spending in the pet industry, which includes food, supplies, veterinary care, live animal purchases and other pet care services, increased 5.4 percent to \$45.5 billion in 2009, compared to \$43.2 billion in 2008.

No declines were reported in any category since 2007. Moreover, APPA projects U.S. spending on pets to increase 4.9 percent to \$47.74 billion in 2010.

"While the pet industry has appeared resilient during the recession, I believe the industry will get a boost even above its current performance as the economy recovers and pet owners become among the first to return to previous spending patterns in an effort to make up for the times that they have not been able to buy all of the items they wanted for their pets," APPA president Bob Vetere said.

Veterinary care continues to lead as the category experiencing the most growth. Spending on veterinary care increased 8.5 percent to \$12.04 billion in 2009, compared to \$11.1 billion in 2008. According to APPA, medical advances have helped pets live longer and made for a broader and more elaborate menu of services.

"From CAT scans, root canals and cancer surgery to antibiotics, anti-depressants and even grief counseling, pet owners have more medical choices and spending options than ever before," the APPA stated. "This leads to an anticipated growth of another 6 percent in this category for 2010."

Pet services, such as grooming and boarding, showed continued growth as a category, especially since more pet services emulate those offered for humans, according to the APPA. In 2009, spending on pet services reached \$3.36 billion, compared to \$3.2 billion in 2008.

The APPA stated that more people worked longer hours last year, resulting in an increased demand for dog daycare, pet sitting, pet walking and similar services. There also has been an increase in pet-friendly destinations for pet owners who are taking more budget-friendly vacations but want to bring along their companion animals.

Supplies and over-the-counter medications showed steady growth of about 4 percent, reaching \$10.41 billion in 2009. This category is expected to experience the second highest growth in 2010 next to veterinary care.

Health and wellness ranked as the most powerful trend of 2009 and was seen across all categories, according to the APPA. "We feel our pets give us so much it is no longer enough to simply give them a treat," Vetere said. "We want to keep our pets healthier longer and are willing to spend what it takes to make it happen."

Overall, 2009's spending figures exceeded APPA projections in all categories. The APPA forecasts continued growth across all categories in 2010.

"People become more attached to their pets in times of uncertainty and stress, so we continue to reward them for their unconditional love and companionship," Vetere said. "Couple this with the trend of humanizing products and services for our pets and the result is an overall increase in spending so we can strengthen that human-animal bond."