

**BRAZIL**

**State of Pet Homelessness Project**

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the State of Pet Homelessness Project market report for Brazil. This is a global data project undertaken by Mars alongside leading animal welfare experts and organizations across 20 countries. It seeks to help gather data and insights to better understand the number of dogs and cats who do not have regular access to the care they need, within a loving home or a community – and the factors that may contribute to solving the related challenges.

## OBJECTIVE

Our aim is that the data collected can help identify the points in the cycle where pets are most at risk for becoming or remaining homeless and inform actions that reduce its prevalence. Pets that don't receive the sustained human care they need are at risk of poor health and compromised welfare. Tackling pet homelessness helps both animals and people – bringing the benefits of the human-animal bond to more people and ensuring every pet gets the sustained care and nutrition they need to thrive. Until now, there was no common way of looking at the issue. It is our hope that sharing this work and the collected data, will create conversations, drive action, and make a difference in the lives of millions of homeless cats and dogs.

## HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

Measuring the scale of pet homelessness is a complex task, as the homeless pet population fluctuates constantly due to its many interconnected contributing factors. Stray pet numbers are difficult to count and increasing every day due to the rapid reproduction rates of unsterilized strays, and, in most countries, there is no single source of information on the shelter pet population at any given point in time.

The State of Pet Homelessness Project provides a wealth of data and uncovered insights into areas of action critical to tackling the pet homelessness challenge. Three areas were identified where we believe concerted effort and focus could make the biggest impact:

**PREVENT UNWANTED PETS. ENSURE SUSTAINED CARE. KEEP PETS IN HOMES.**

This report contains a small set of that data for Brazil. The full data sets from all 20 markets are available online at [stateofpethomelessness.com](https://stateofpethomelessness.com).



This global data project across 20 countries consisted of:

<b>930 SOURCES REVIEWED</b>	<b>44 ANALYST INTERVIEWS</b>	<b>~30,000 PUBLIC SURVEYS</b>	<b>9+ MONTHS OF FIELDWORK</b>
<b>7,700+ HOURS GATHERING DATA</b>	<b>180 DATA POINTS</b>	<b>200 PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS</b>	

Brazil has a below average level of overall pet homelessness of the 20 markets this project looked at. The opportunity is to understand how to prevent homelessness increasing and tackle the challenges that are present.

### 121.3M TOTAL CATS AND DOGS IN BRAZIL

82.1M TOTAL DOGS

39.2M TOTAL CATS

91.11M  
TOTAL OWNED  
CATS AND DOGS

185K  
TOTAL SHELTER  
CATS AND DOGS

30M  
TOTAL STRAY  
CATS AND DOGS



20.2M (25%)

DOGS ARE HOMELESS



10M (26%)

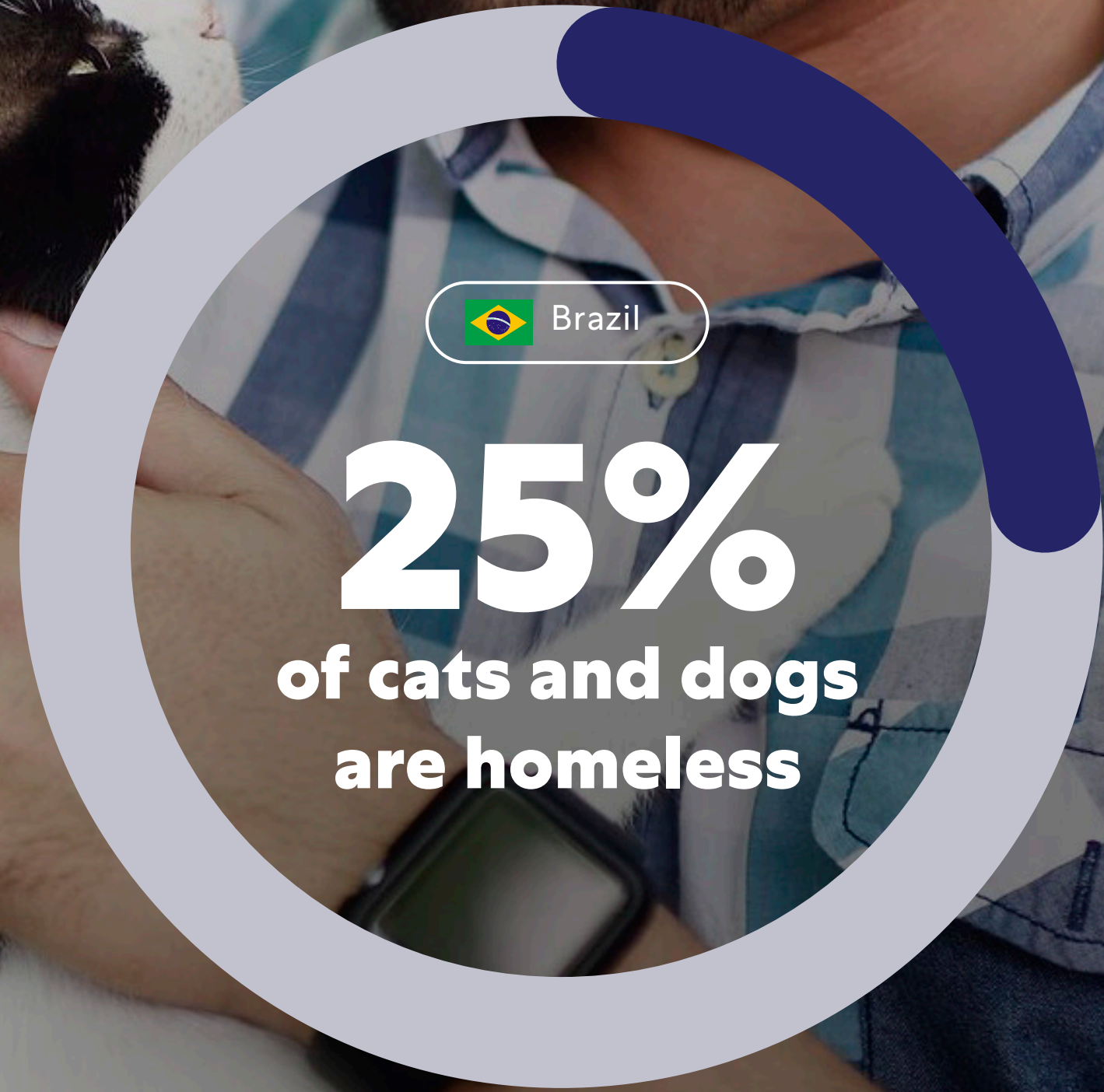
CATS ARE HOMELESS

177.6K  
IN SHELTERS

20M  
STRAYS

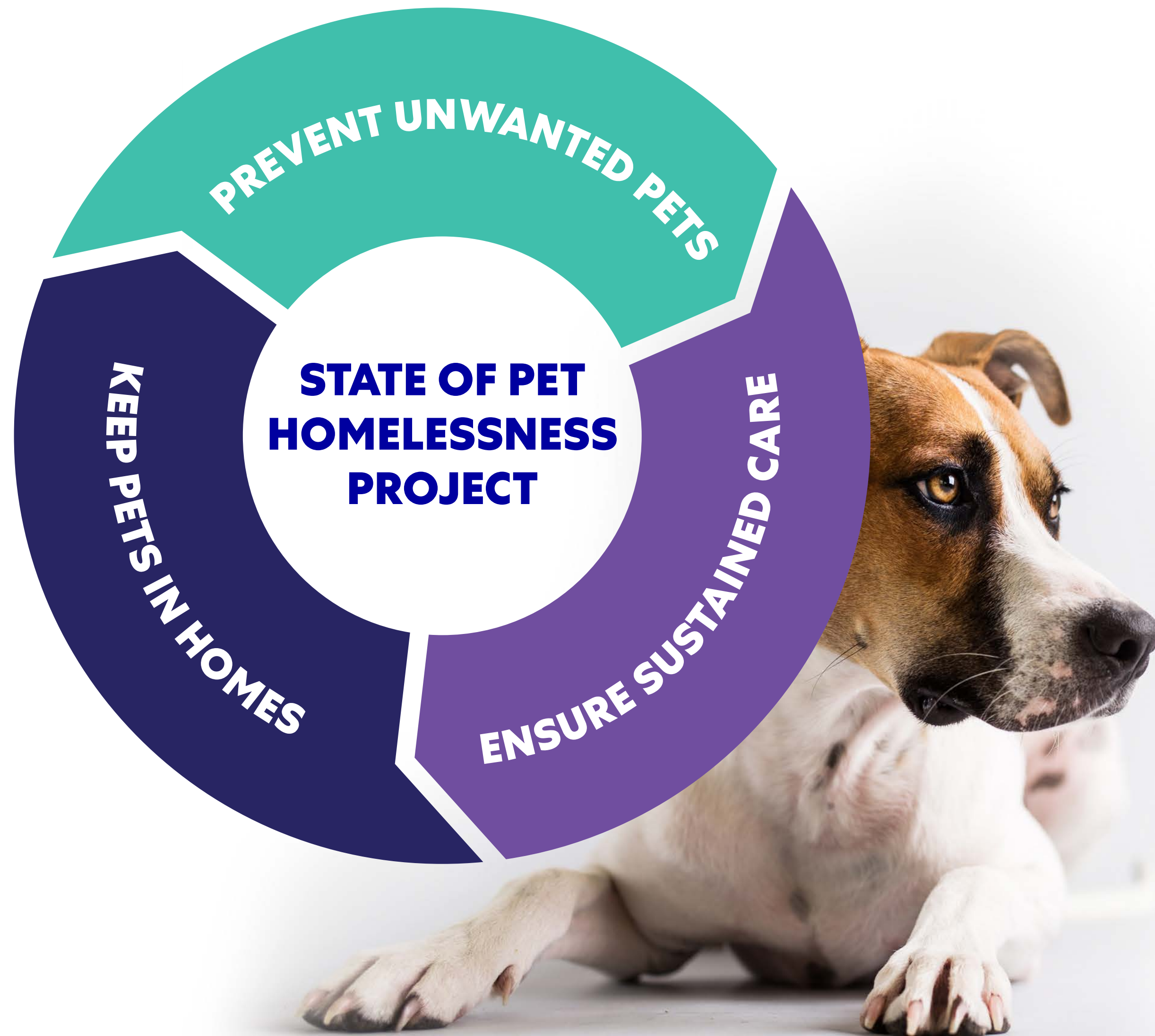
7.4K  
IN SHELTERS

10M  
STRAYS



30.19M  
TOTAL HOMELESS CATS AND DOGS

Pet Homelessness estimates based on primary and secondary research conducted by Euromonitor International (EMI) in 2022-2023, and owned pet estimates collected by Mars Consumer & Marketing Insights (CMI). Additional interviews were conducted with local expert organizations.



To bring transparency, awareness and insight to the challenge of pet homelessness, we have set out to build a data set that can offer insights into a range of attitudes and behaviors that impact the issue. Three interconnected themes emerged from the data, highlighting where interventions could help reduce pet homelessness.

### **PREVENT UNWANTED PETS**

Large populations of stray pets which can breed at a rapid rate are a huge part of the problem. This, coupled with irresponsible breeding practices, e.g. those that do not pay enough attention to health, temperament, positive early socialization, or to ensuring a good fit with the pet owner, can result in increasing numbers of homeless pets and groups of pets that are difficult to provide sustained care to or match with a home. Our data looks at this significant and critical piece of the challenge.

### **ENSURE SUSTAINED CARE**

Helping to provide more homeless pets with responsible loving homes, or the sustained human care they need in the community, is a foundational step in tackling pet homelessness. Achieving it requires an understanding of the key barriers to acquiring or adopting a pet, or accessing veterinary care, as well as facilitating pathways to ownership, and provision of care for community animals, whose home may not be a conventional house but still need access to sustained care. Shelters may provide care for cats and dogs, but resources are often strained and, if pets are not adopted to new homes, demand may exceed capacity.

### **KEEP PETS IN HOMES**

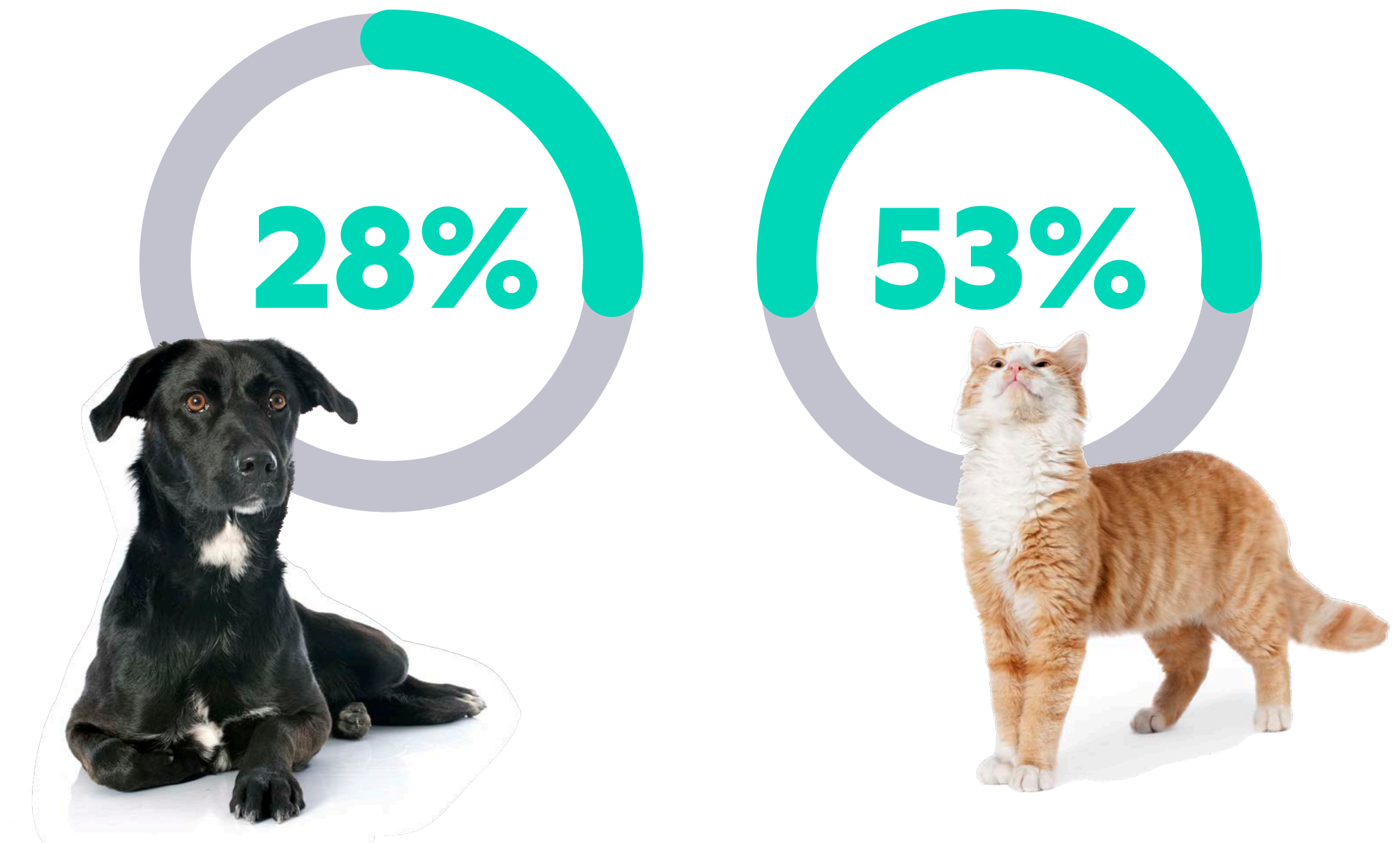
Keeping pets in homes is vital for both pet and owner to benefit from a longstanding bond. Pets are at risk of becoming homeless through being relinquished or abandoned if the pet ownership experience is difficult, or a pet owner can't access the advice and support they need. Pet owning practices which easily allow pets to stray or become lost can also result in owned pets becoming homeless. Our data looks at issues such as the cost of caring for a pet, common pet care practices and the incidence of lost pets.



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One unsterilized homeless pet can quickly create many more. Reducing uncontrolled or unplanned breeding is a critical approach to decreasing pet homelessness.

### IS YOUR PET NEUTERED/STERILIZED?<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Sample definition: 497 current dog owners / 439 current cat owners who could identify if their pet was sterilized

## WHAT THE PROFESSIONALS TELL US

**In the pandemic, there was a lot of adoption and the animals in the street had greatly diminished. After the pandemic, things got a little complicated, strays increased a lot and there weren't any more neutering campaigns. Since there was no sterilization, that was a snowball effect. The quantity of the neutering spots is not enough, it's just a drop in the ocean. But they're helping, but I think we've taken a step back."**

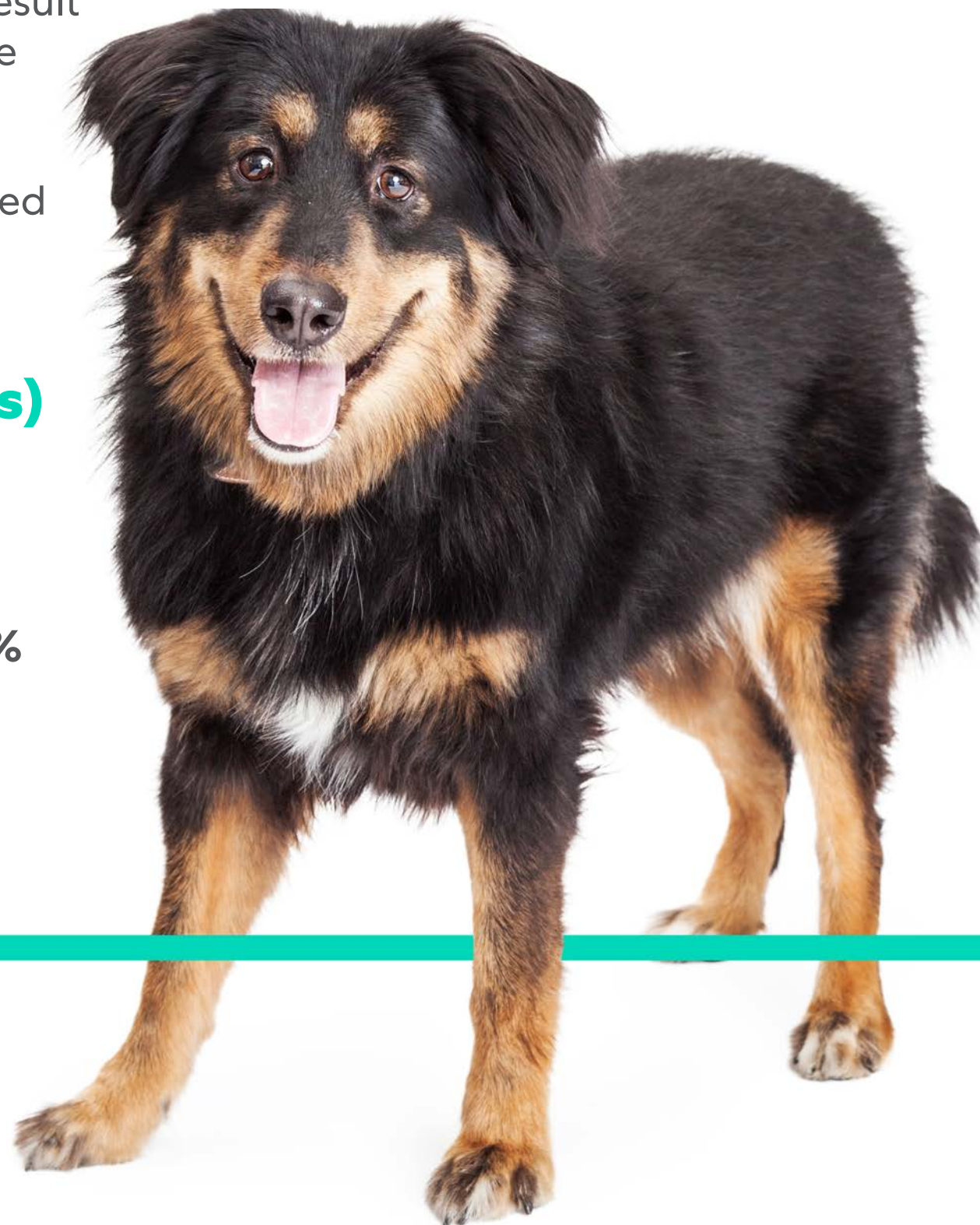
**-Founder and President, Shelter/foster (cats and dogs)**

## WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR PET?¹

Where people get their pets reveals important insights about the pathways to pet ownership and the proportion of people making a direct impact on homeless pet numbers through adoption of shelter pets or strays. Pet breeders are also key. While responsibly bred pets are more likely to be matched to lifelong homes, irresponsible breeding practices, e.g. those that neglect health and temperament issues, or fail to ensure a good fit with the pet owner can result in unwanted pets. These behaviors increase the numbers of pets for which a home cannot be found, or pets which may find a home but later be relinquished or rehomed due to problems.

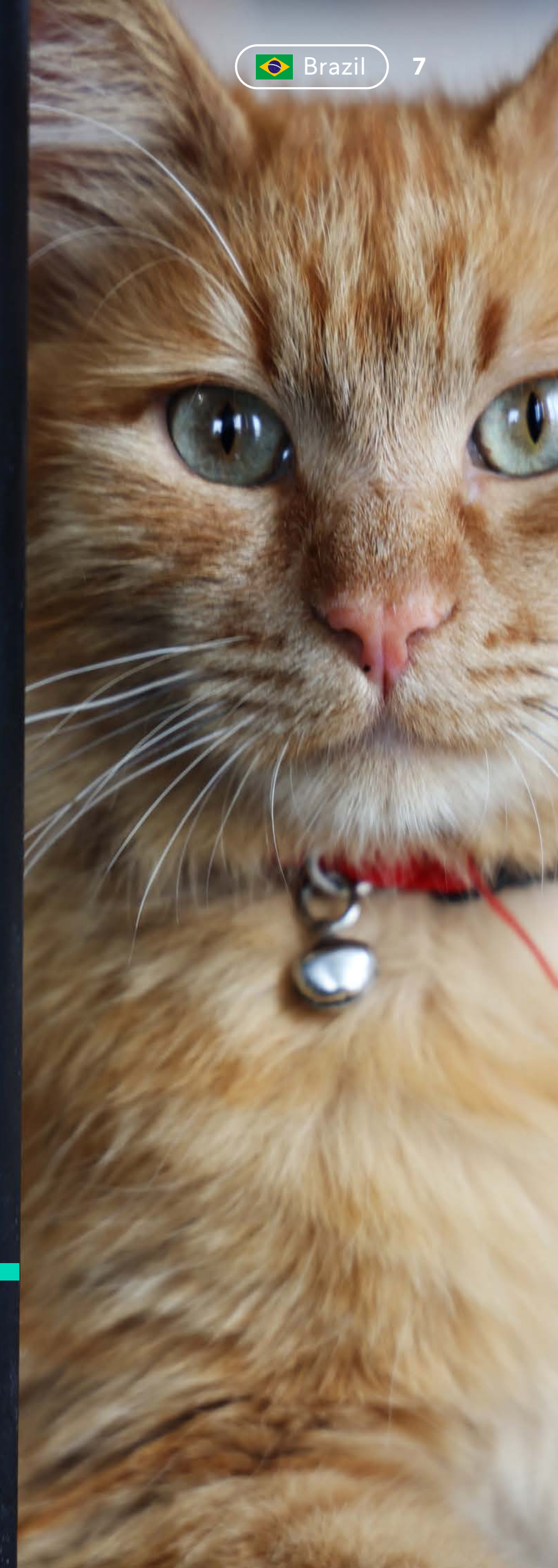
### DOGS (Top 5 Responses)

1. FRIEND/RELATIVE: 47%
2. Stray/found it: 11%
3. Born in the household: 8%
4. Private individual: 8%
5. (Tie) Breeder and rescue center/shelter: 7%



### CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. STRAY/I FOUND IT: 33%
2. Friend/relative: 32%
3. Born in the household: 10%
4. Rescue center/shelter: 8%
5. Pet shop: 5%



¹Sample definition: 497 current dog owners / 439 current cat owners



## WHAT ACTIONS DO YOU TAKE IF YOU ENCOUNTER A STRAY?<sup>1</sup>

Stray pets may interact with humans or remain hidden. Encouraging people to learn about appropriate ways to interact with different types of stray pets can help pets who would benefit from human care get access to what they need.

### DOG

49% ACT OF KINDNESS



6% CHASE IT AWAY



39% DO NOTHING



### CAT

48% ACT OF KINDNESS



2% CHASE IT AWAY



38% DO NOTHING



<sup>1</sup>Sample definition: 573 has seen a stray dog / 558 has seen a stray cat

## WHICH MEASURES DO YOU THINK WOULD BEST REDUCE PET HOMELESSNESS?<sup>2</sup>

Gathering opinions about potential solutions from a wide range of pet owners suggests solutions that can be quickly scaled.

### DOGS (Top 5 Responses)

1. FIGHTING ANIMAL CRUELTY: 34%
2. Promoting programs so people know where to adopt: 32%
3. Providing subsidized vet services: 31%
4. Sterilization: 29%
5. Supporting programs that connect people to shelters: 29%

### CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. FIGHTING ANIMAL CRUELTY: 36%
2. Providing subsidized vet services: 36%
3. Sterilization: 33%
4. Promoting programs so people know where to adopt: 32%
5. Supporting programs that connect people to shelters: 27%

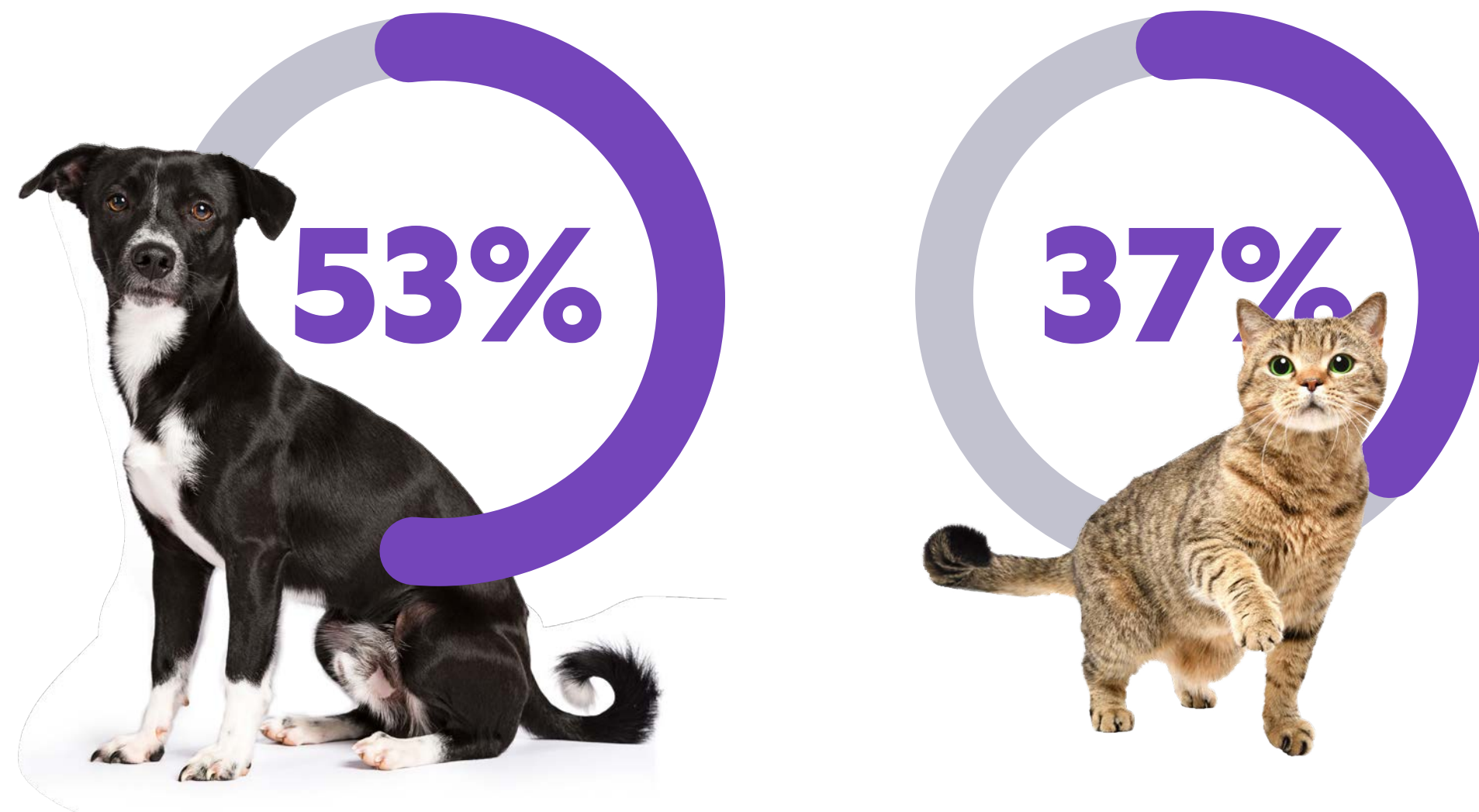
<sup>2</sup>Sample definition: 743 current or previous dog owners / 516 current or previous cat owners



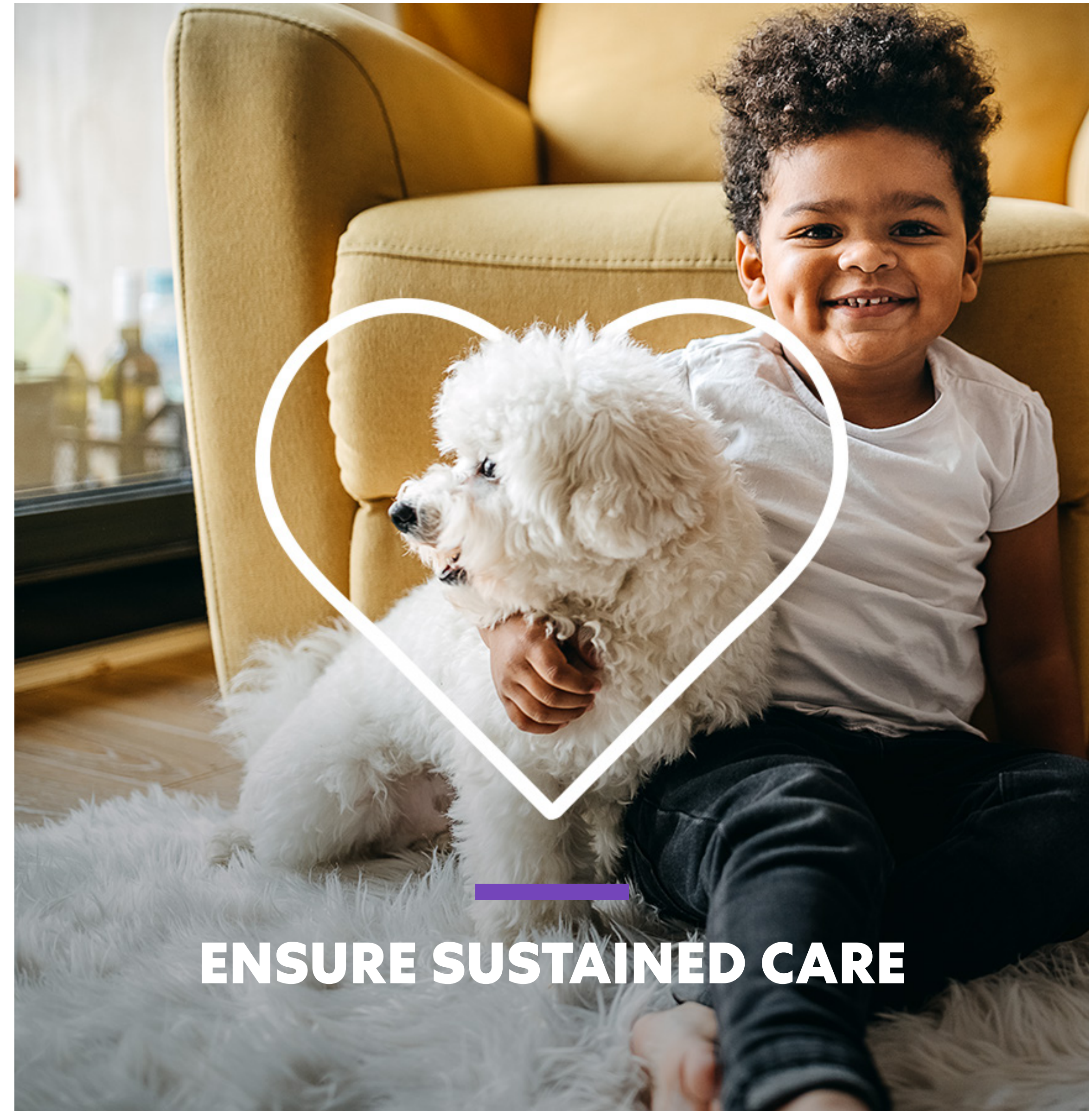
Helping to provide more homeless pets with responsible loving homes, or the sustained human care they need in the community, is a foundational step in tackling pet homelessness. Achieving it requires an understanding of the key barriers to acquiring or adopting a pet, or accessing veterinary care, as well as facilitating pathways to ownership, and provision of care for community animals, whose home may not be a conventional house but still need access to sustained care. Shelters may provide care for cats and dogs, but resources are often strained and, if pets are not adopted to new homes, demand may exceed capacity.

Getting more people interested in pet ownership and turning that interest into action creates more loving homes for pets.

### ARE YOU THINKING OF GETTING A PET IN THE NEAR FUTURE?<sup>1</sup>

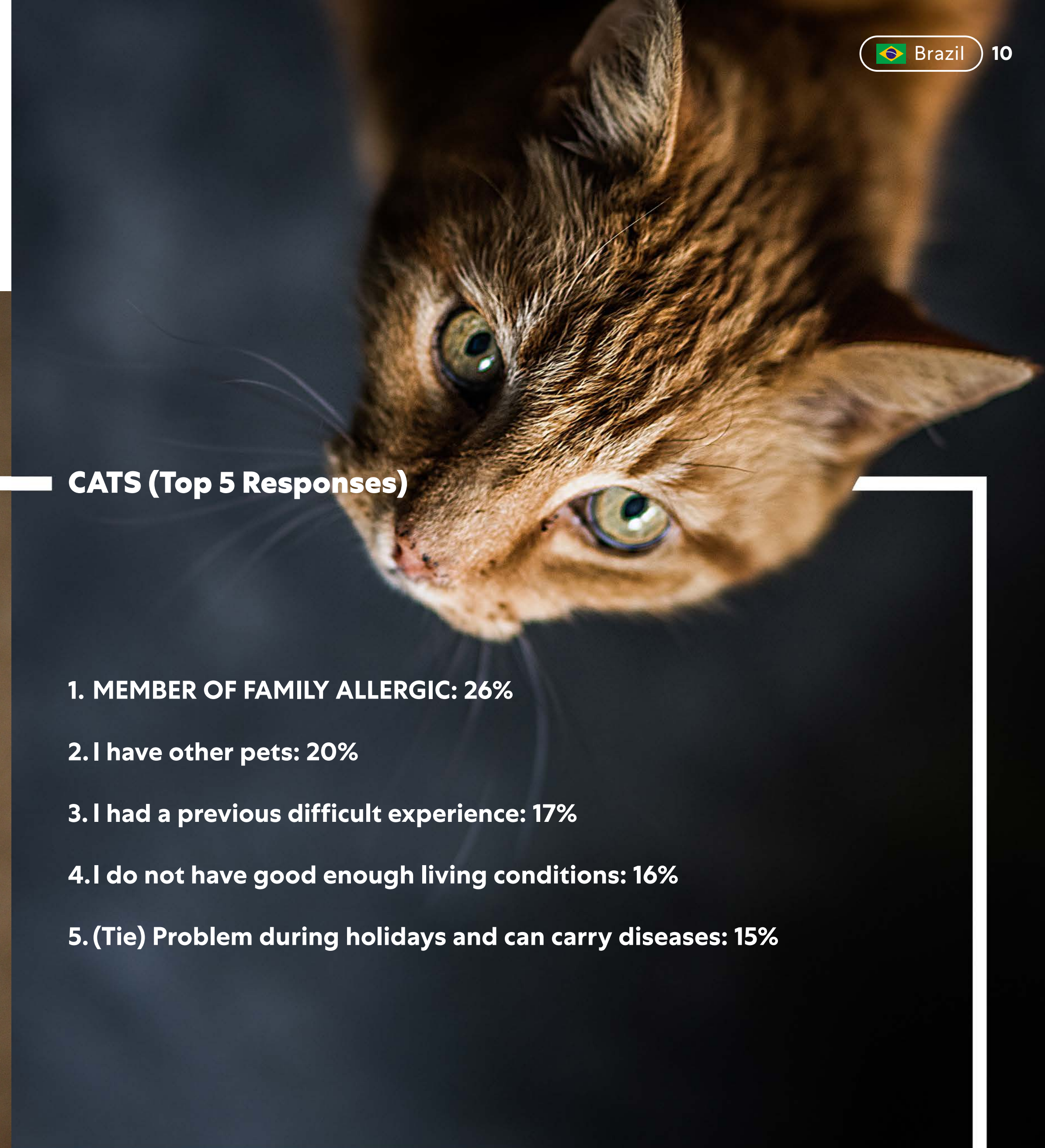


<sup>1</sup>Sample definition: 1241 owners and non-owners



## WHAT'S PREVENTING YOU FROM OWNING A PET?<sup>1</sup>

Reducing the initial barriers to pet ownership makes it easier for more people to become pet parents.



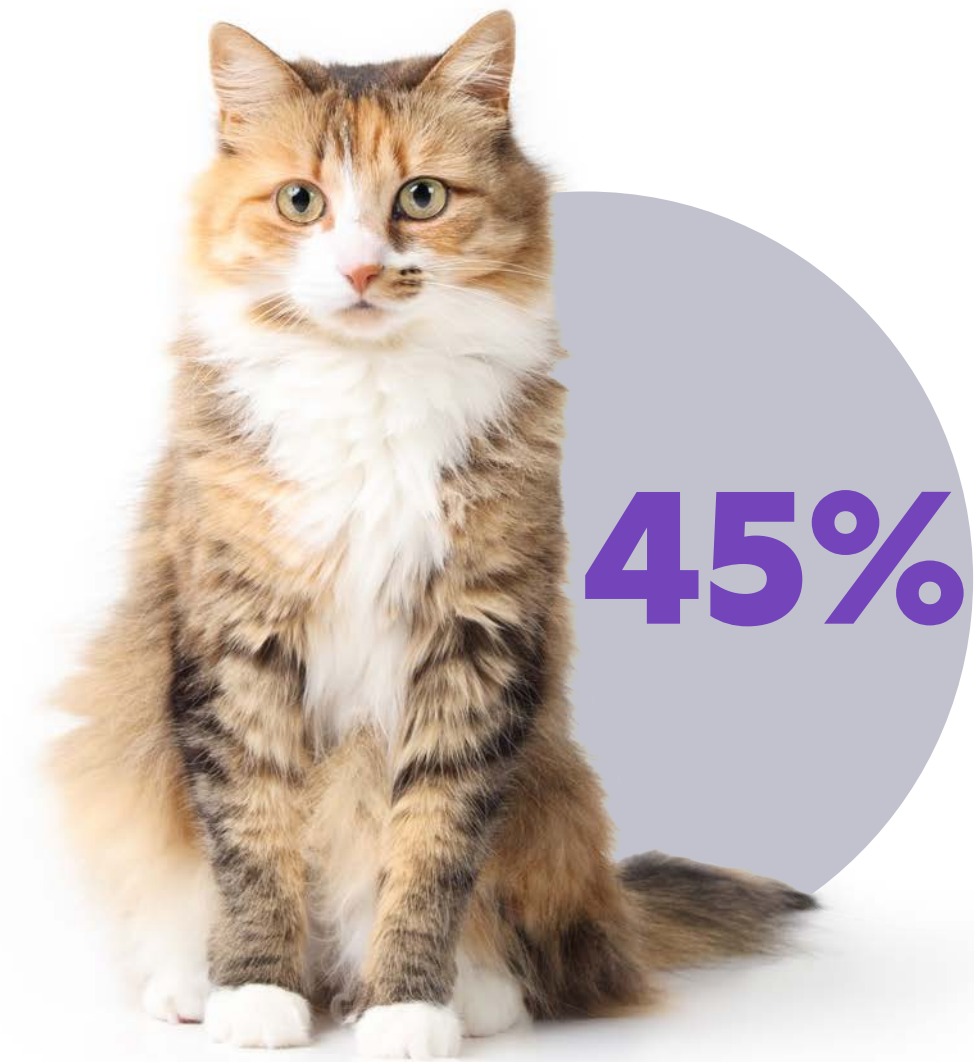
<sup>1</sup>Sample definition: 498 non-dog owners / 725 non-cat owners

WHAT THE PROFESSIONALS TELL US

**We regularly explain the adoption process on social media and promote positive cases to help to lower barriers for first-time adopters who might be afraid - we show the benefits of owning a dog, the costs, the expenses, how to educate the children, the difficulties they might face – so that they know that there’s support available.”**

– President, Shelter/foster (cats and dogs)





Changing the perception of rescued animals can get far more pets out of shelters and into loving homes.

**IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING GETTING A PET,  
DO YOU PLAN ON ADOPTING FROM A SHELTER?<sup>1</sup>**

**36%**  
**CONSIDERING  
GETTING A DOG  
FROM A SHELTER**

**45%**  
**CONSIDERING  
GETTING A CAT  
FROM A SHELTER**

<sup>1</sup>Sample definition: 400 dog considerers / 371 cat considerers



**KEEP PETS IN HOMES**

Keeping pets in homes is vital for both pet and owner to benefit from a longstanding bond. Pets are at risk of becoming homeless through being relinquished or abandoned if the pet ownership experience is difficult, or a pet owner can't access the advice and support they need. Pet owning practices which easily allow pets to stray or become lost can also result in owned pets becoming homeless. Our data looks at issues such as the cost of caring for a pet, common pet care practices and the incidence of lost pets.

Pets are lost more frequently than many may realize, leading to an unintended yet noteworthy increase in homeless pets. Keeping pets from straying is a beneficial objective for pets and the people who care for them.

**HAVE YOU EVER HAD A PET GO MISSING?¹**

**DOGS**  
**39% (24.14M)**

35% (8.45M) of those who lost their dog got them back.

**CATS**  
**31% (9.06M)**

33% (2.99M) of those who lost their cat got them back.

**HAVE YOU HAD A PET GO MISSING IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?¹**

**DOGS**  
**7%**



**CATS**  
**8%**

¹Sample definition: 1160 has or had a pet



## WHAT ARE THE BEST METHODS TO HELP LOST PETS?<sup>1</sup>

Understanding public perceptions of lost pet prevention techniques and how to help find lost pets can focus community efforts and increase utilization.

### DOGS (Top 5 Responses)

1. TAGS WITH CONTACT DETAILS: 58%
2. Microchipping: 37%
3. Updates in social networks: 32%
4. Communication from shelters when pets are lost by an owner: 18%
5. Direct access to contact pet shelters/rescue centers: 14%

### CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. TAGS WITH CONTACT DETAILS: 52%
2. Microchipping: 46%
3. Updates in social networks: 26%
4. Communication from shelters when pets are lost by an owner: 17%
5. (Tie) Communication from shelters when the pet turns up in their shelter and local news channels: 14%

### IS YOUR PET MICROCHIPPED?<sup>2</sup>

Microchipping is considered an effective way to permanently identify pets but, crucially, reuniting lost pets with owners via this method relies on owner contact details being registered and kept up to date on the microchip database.

DOGS

8%

CATS

10%

<sup>1</sup>Sample definition: 450 has lost a dog / 307 has lost a cat

<sup>2</sup>Sample definition: 497 current dog owners / 439 current cat owners

## WHY MIGHT YOU CONSIDER REHOMING YOUR PET?<sup>1</sup>

Caring for a pet is a significant commitment of time, energy and money. Understanding the potential causes for rehoming can guide the efforts of organizations and businesses in supporting current pet owners to continue to care for their cat or dog.



### DOGS (Top 5 Responses)

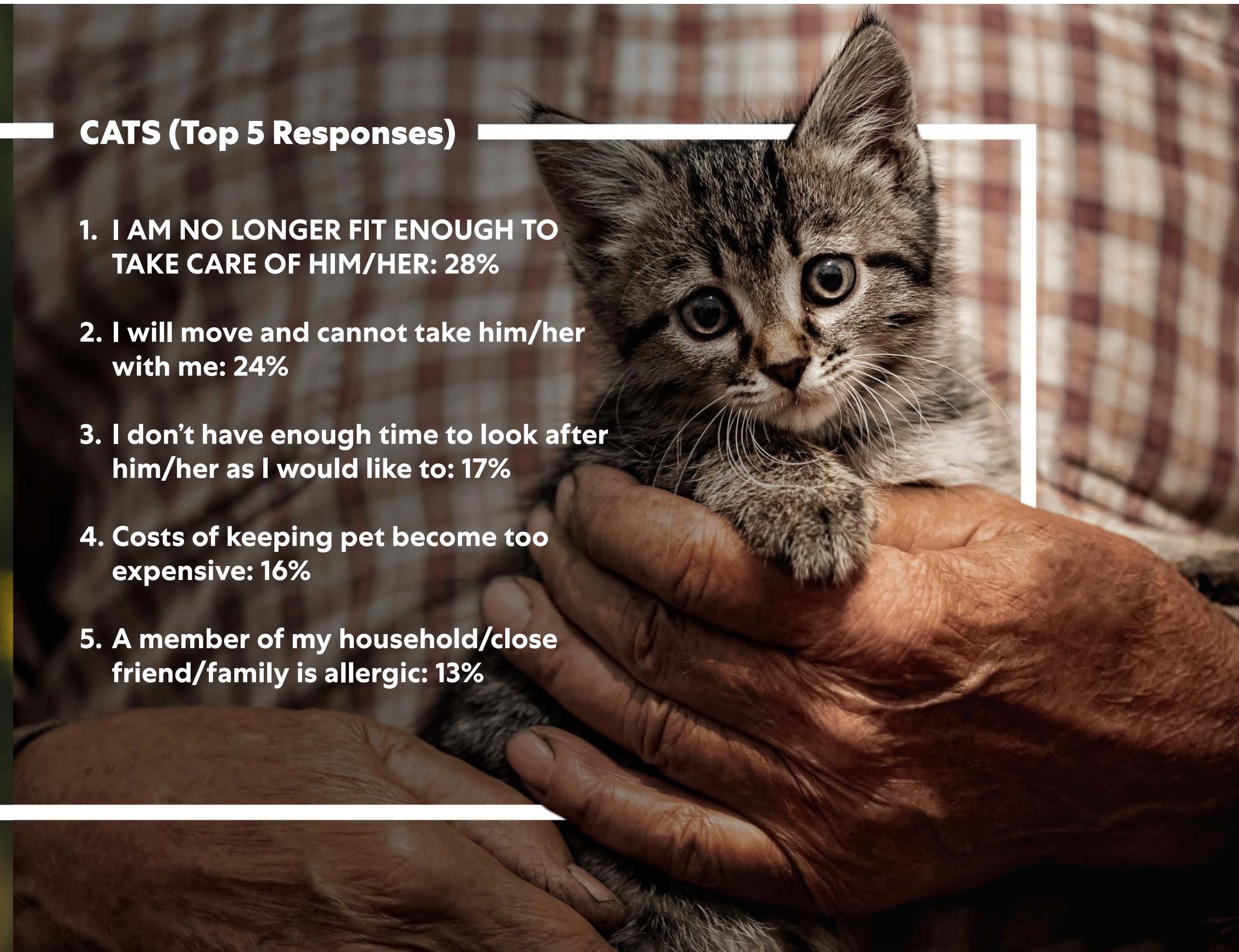
1. I AM NO LONGER FIT ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF HIM/HER: 29%
2. I will move and cannot take him/her with me: 23%
3. I don't have enough time to look after him/her as I would like to: 17%
4. A member of my household/close friend/family is allergic: 12%
5. Its behavior is inappropriate: 8%

## ARE YOU CONSIDERING GIVING UP YOUR PET IN THE NEXT YEAR<sup>2</sup>

The benefits of pet ownership are numerous, but when confronted with significant challenges, giving up or rehoming might seem like the only option.

**DOGS**  
**11%**

**CATS**  
**13%**



### CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. I AM NO LONGER FIT ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF HIM/HER: 28%
2. I will move and cannot take him/her with me: 24%
3. I don't have enough time to look after him/her as I would like to: 17%
4. Costs of keeping pet become too expensive: 16%
5. A member of my household/close friend/family is allergic: 13%

<sup>1</sup>Sample definition: 743 current or previous dog owners / 516 current or previous cat owners

<sup>2</sup>Sample definition: 497 current dog owners / 439 current cat owners

WHAT THE PROFESSIONALS TELL US

**I think today, the main reason is financial. But there are several cultural issues involved as well. In the countryside, the relationships with animals are different. If it's a problem - sick or its behavior or becoming a financial burden - they open the gate and put it out on the street.”**

- Founder, Animal rights NGO (cats and dogs)



## TAKEAWAYS

Brazil is below the global average<sup>1</sup> of 35% homeless cats and dogs. However, there are still significant opportunities to address the stray pet population and help more pets find the sustained human care and nutrition they need to thrive.



Brazil

**25%**  
of cats and dogs  
are homeless

## PREVENT UNWANTED PETS

Increasing neutering/sterilization rates of both pets and strays could help tackle population growth of pets which end up homeless or lacking sustained care. Rates of neutering in Brazil are quite low (only 28% of owners report that their dog is sterilized, and 53% for cats).

Around half of the public have acted with kindness when seeing strays (49% for dogs, 48% for cats).

## ENSURE SUSTAINED CARE

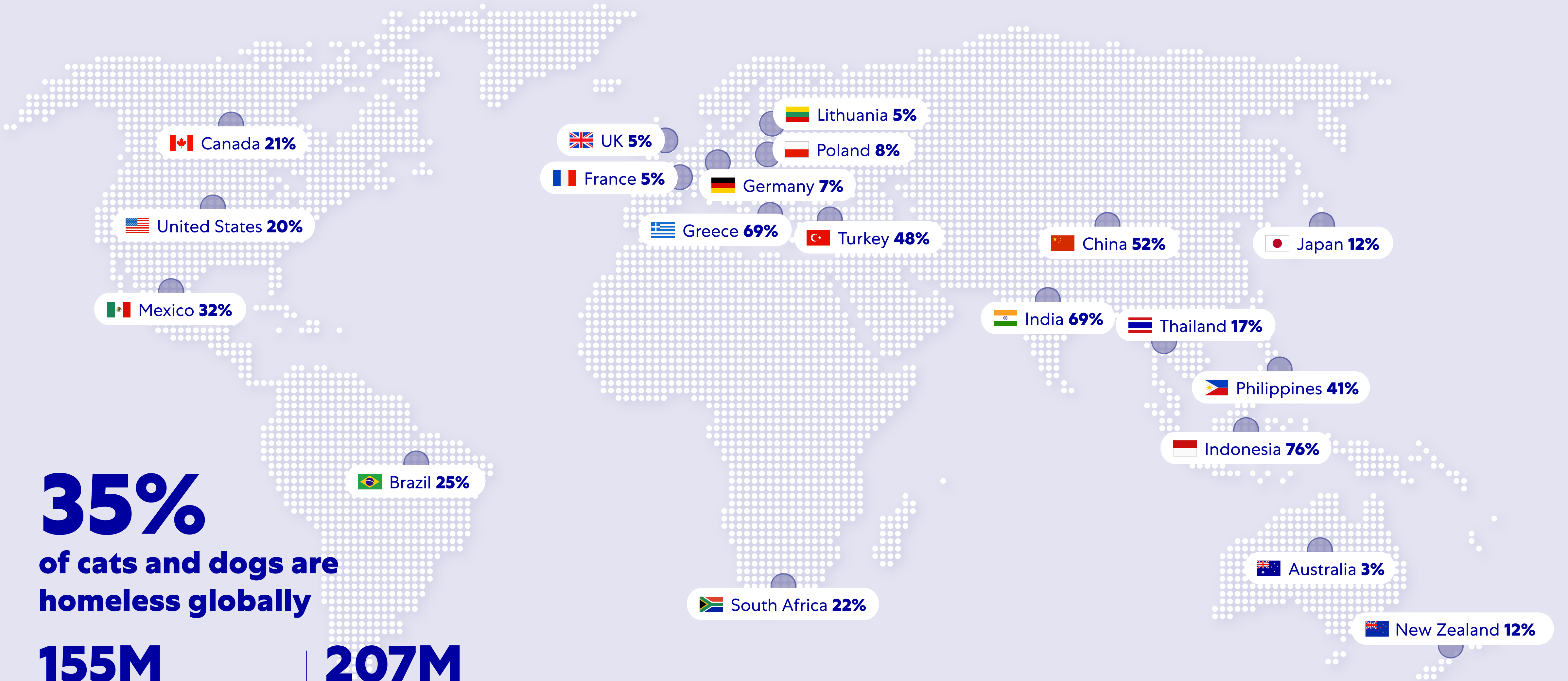
Findings suggest that many in Brazil are interested in owning pets (53% of people are thinking of getting a dog and 37% are thinking about cat ownership in the near future).

## KEEP PETS IN HOMES

Around a third of cats and dogs have ever been lost (31% of cats and 39% of dogs) with recovery rates in the lower half of all surveyed (33% of cats and 35% of dogs are found). Encouraging microchipping may help reunite lost pets with their owners, as currently only 10% of cats and 8% of dogs have a microchip, one of the lowest rates in the world.

<sup>1</sup>“average” or “global average” refers to the average of the 20 countries included in this project

## 20 COUNTRIES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY



**35%**  
of cats and dogs are  
homeless globally

**155M**  
HOMELESS DOGS

**207M**  
HOMELESS CATS



At Mars, we have worked for many years to play our part in tackling pet homelessness issues around the world, with a wide range of programs, partnerships and donations to support vulnerable pets.

#### WE ADVOCATE FOR:

- Organizations and individuals to get involved in recognizing, measuring and acting to change the issue of pet homelessness; helping to improve the accuracy and availability of data around the number of homeless pets.
- Pet-friendly government legislation and policies to keep pets and people together and enable more people to benefit from the companionship of pets.
- Pet owner and prospective pet owner education to promote and support responsible pet ownership.
- Programs to help homeless pets find a loving home or receive sustained care.
- Programs to limit the uncontrolled breeding of stray and street pets.
- Programs to reduce the number of pets at risk of becoming homeless.

#### WHERE DID THE DATA COME FROM:

The data in this report is drawn from three sources:

1. Pet Homelessness estimates based on primary and secondary research conducted by EMI in 2022-2023, and owned pet estimates collected by Mars CMI.
2. Public sample surveys (online and in the field) of pet owners and non-pet owners conducted by Kantar in 2022-2023.
3. Pet Professional interviews, such as shelters and NGOs working in the pet homelessness space.

To find out more about the State of Pet Homelessness Project and the actions that we are taking alongside partners and stakeholders please visit: [stateofpethomelessness.com](https://stateofpethomelessness.com).

The following partner organizations are among those working to drive the efforts to end pet homelessness and are members of the advisory panel of the State of Pet Homelessness Project. Please continue to support them and the local resources in Brazil.





Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this research study are solely the beliefs and personal opinions of the individuals who participated in the interviews or surveys. These perspectives do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of Mars or any affiliated organizations. The purpose of this research is to gather varied viewpoints and insights from different individuals and these should not be interpreted as endorsed or supported by Mars.