

GREECE

State of Pet Homelessness Project

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the State of Pet Homelessness Project market report for Greece. 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 Greece. The full data sets from all 20 markets are available online at stateofpethomelessness.com.



This global data project across 20 countries consisted of:

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

Greece has an above 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.

4.09M TOTAL CATS AND DOGS IN GREECE

1.42M TOTAL DOGS

2.67M TOTAL CATS

1.26M
TOTAL OWNED
CATS AND DOGS

135K
TOTAL SHELTER
CATS AND DOGS

2.69M
TOTAL STRAY
CATS AND DOGS



760.5K (54%)

DOGS ARE HOMELESS



2.07M (78%)

CATS ARE HOMELESS

67.5K
IN SHELTERS

693K
STRAYS

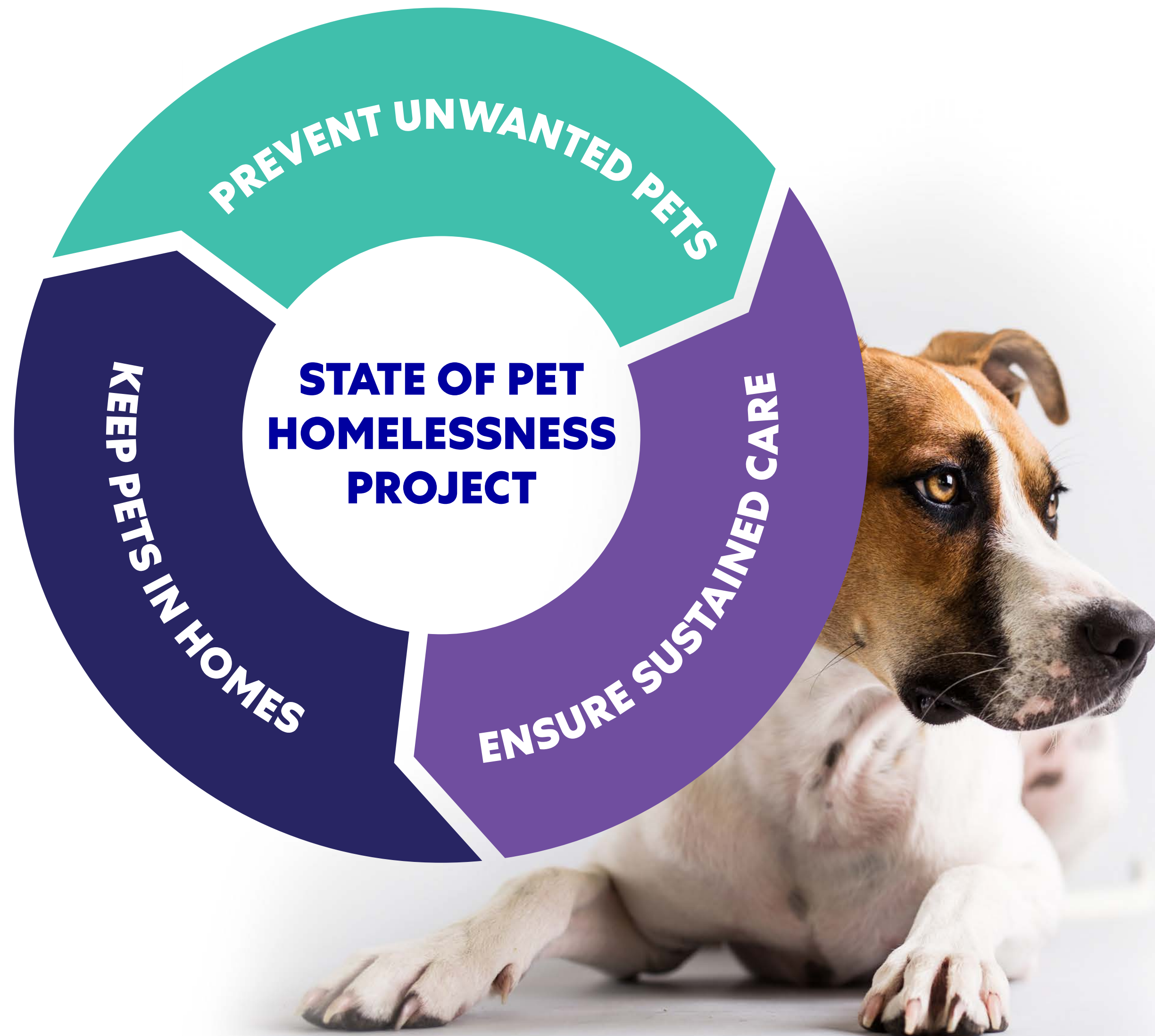
67.5K
IN SHELTERS

2M
STRAYS



2.83M
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

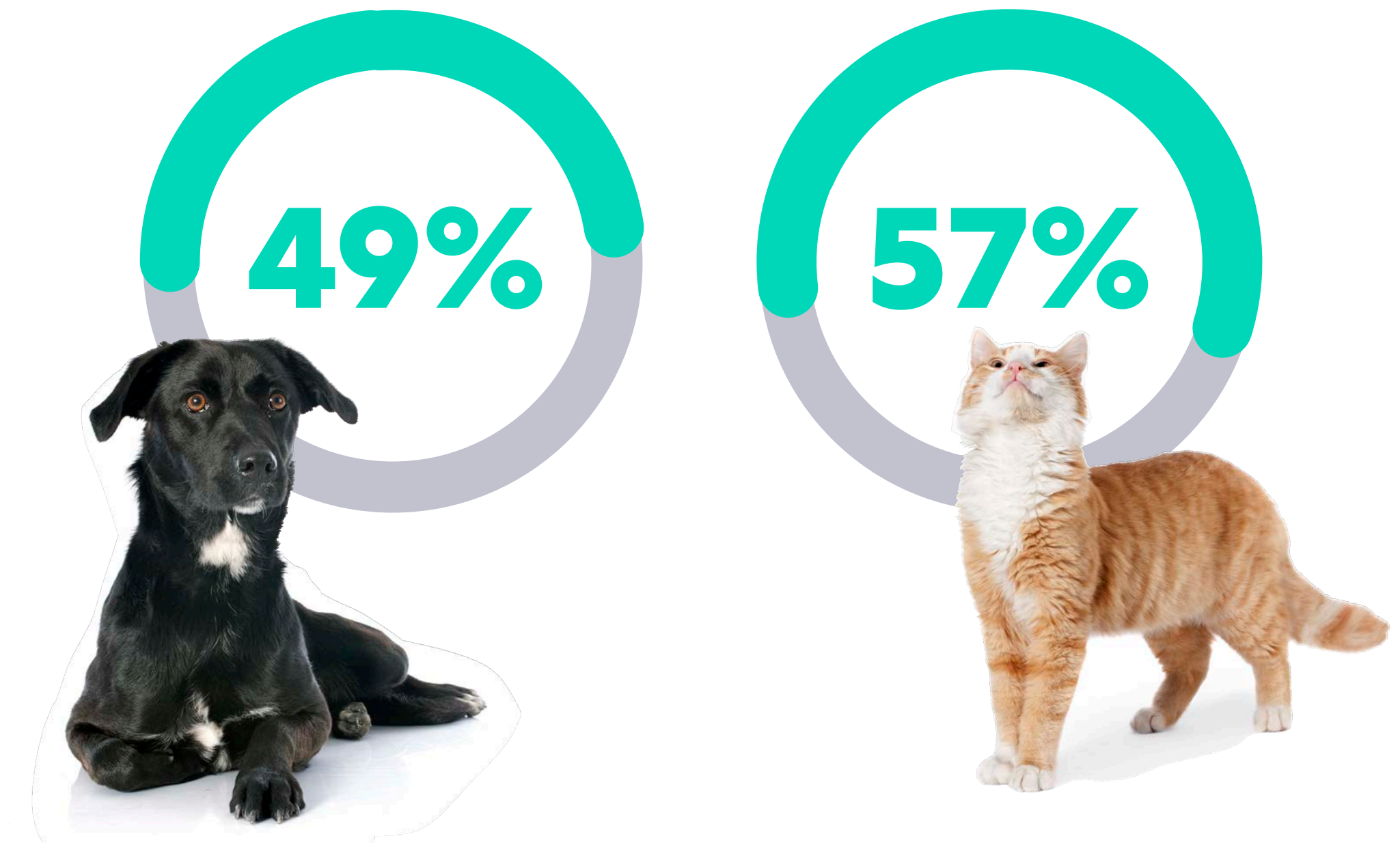
Keeping pets in homes is vital for both pet and owner to benefit from a longstanding bond. Pets are at risk of becoming homeless through being relinquished or abandoned if the pet ownership experience is difficult, or a pet owner can't access the advice and support they need. Pet owning practices which 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.



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.

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?¹



¹Sample definition: 625 current dog owners / 592 current cat owners who could identify if their pet was sterilized



WHAT THE PROFESSIONALS TELL US

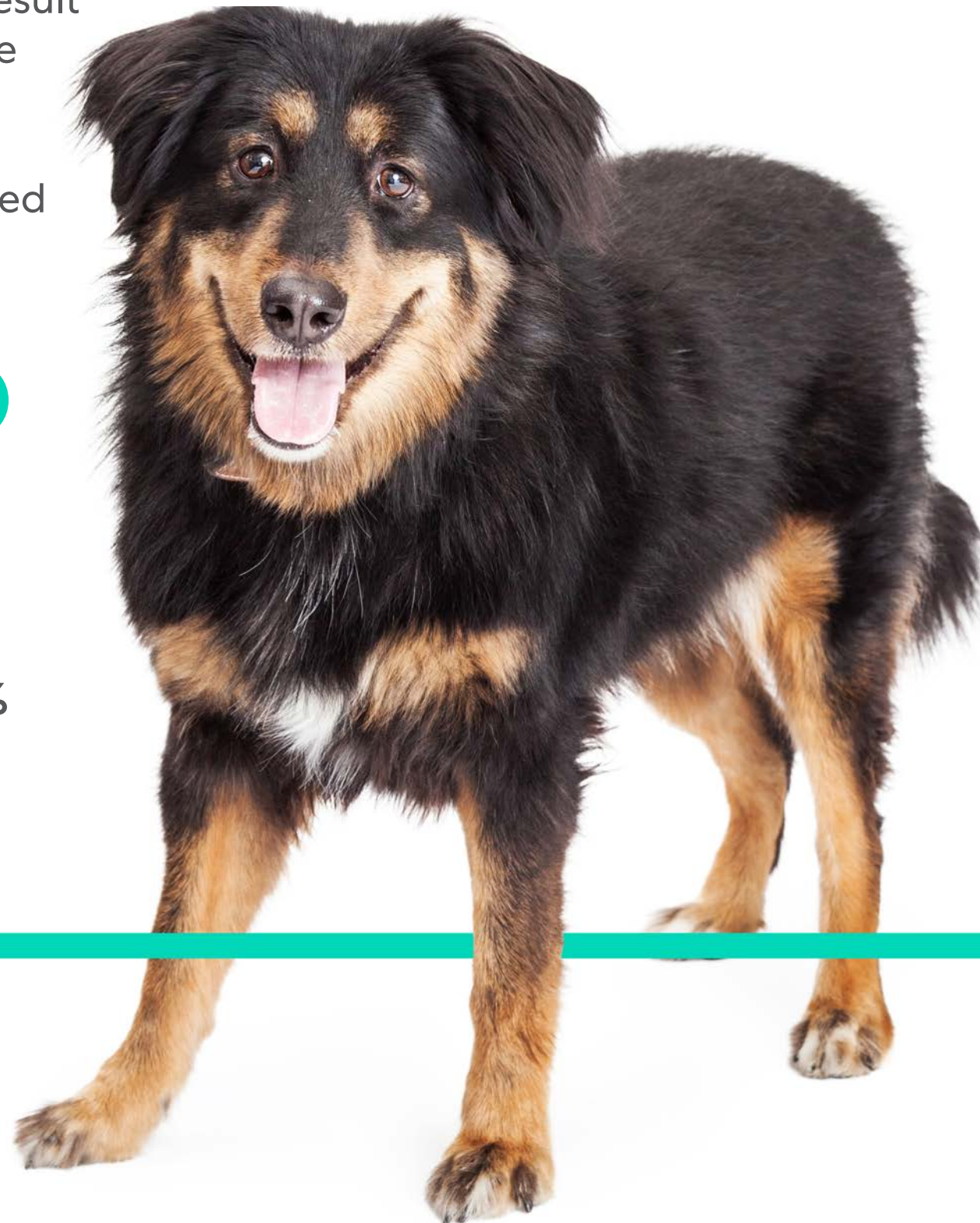
“Non-sterilization and abandonment are the biggest problems and causes we have.”

– Volunteer, Charity (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.

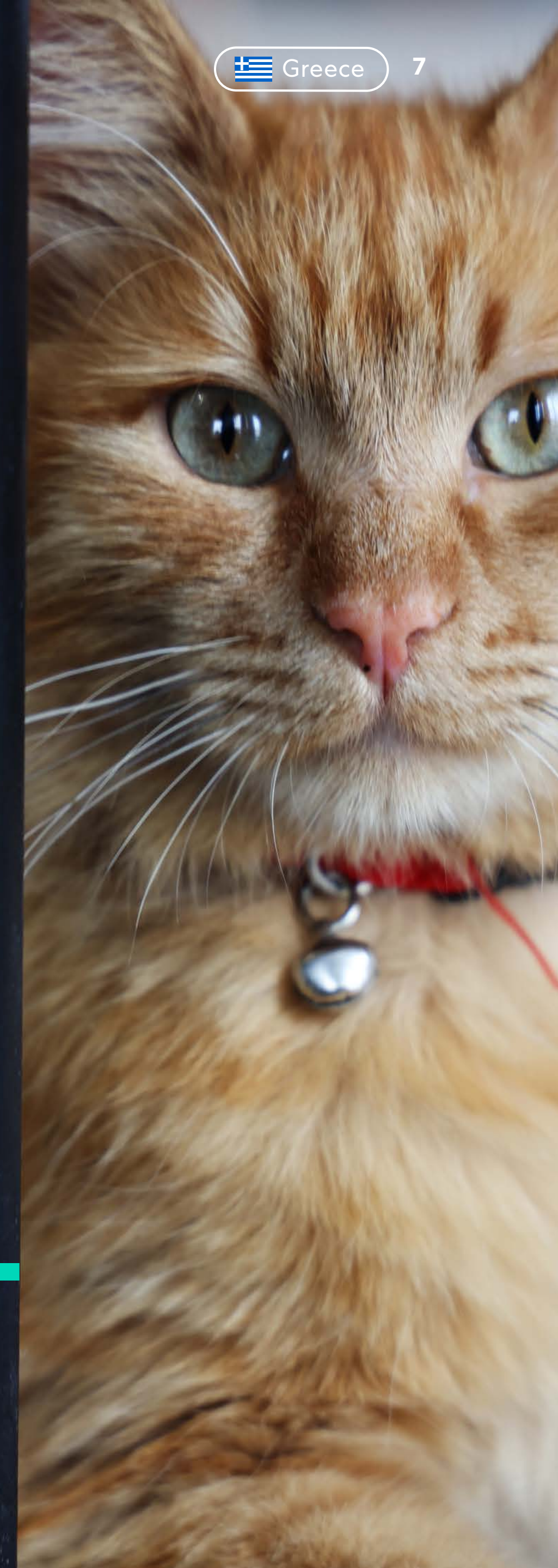


DOGS (Top 5 Responses)

1. FRIEND/RELATIVE: 27%
2. Stray/I found it: 22%
3. Private Individual: 16%
4. Rescue Center/Shelter: 13%
5. Breeder: 8%

CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. STRAY/I FOUND IT: 53%
2. Friend/Relative: 17%
3. Born into the household: 11%
4. Private Individual: 7%
5. Rescue Center/Shelter: 4%



¹Sample definition: 625 current dog owners / 592 current cat owners



WHAT ACTIONS DO YOU TAKE IF YOU ENCOUNTER A STRAY?¹

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

45% ACT OF KINDNESS



2% CHASE IT AWAY



40% DO NOTHING



CAT

58% ACT OF KINDNESS



2% CHASE IT AWAY



33% DO NOTHING



¹Sample definition: 937 has seen a stray dog / 917 has seen a stray cat

WHICH MEASURES DO YOU THINK WOULD BEST REDUCE PET HOMELESSNESS?²

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

DOGS (Top 5 Responses)

1. STERILIZATION: 47%
2. Providing subsidized vet services: 40%
3. Fighting animal cruelty: 39%
4. Microchipping: 38%
5. Promoting programs so people know where to adopt: 36%

CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. FIGHTING ANIMAL CRUELTY: 47%
2. Providing subsidized vet services: 46%
3. Sterilization: 45%
4. Financial aid to owners, carers or fosters in low-income communities: 38%
5. Promoting programs so people know where to adopt: 38%

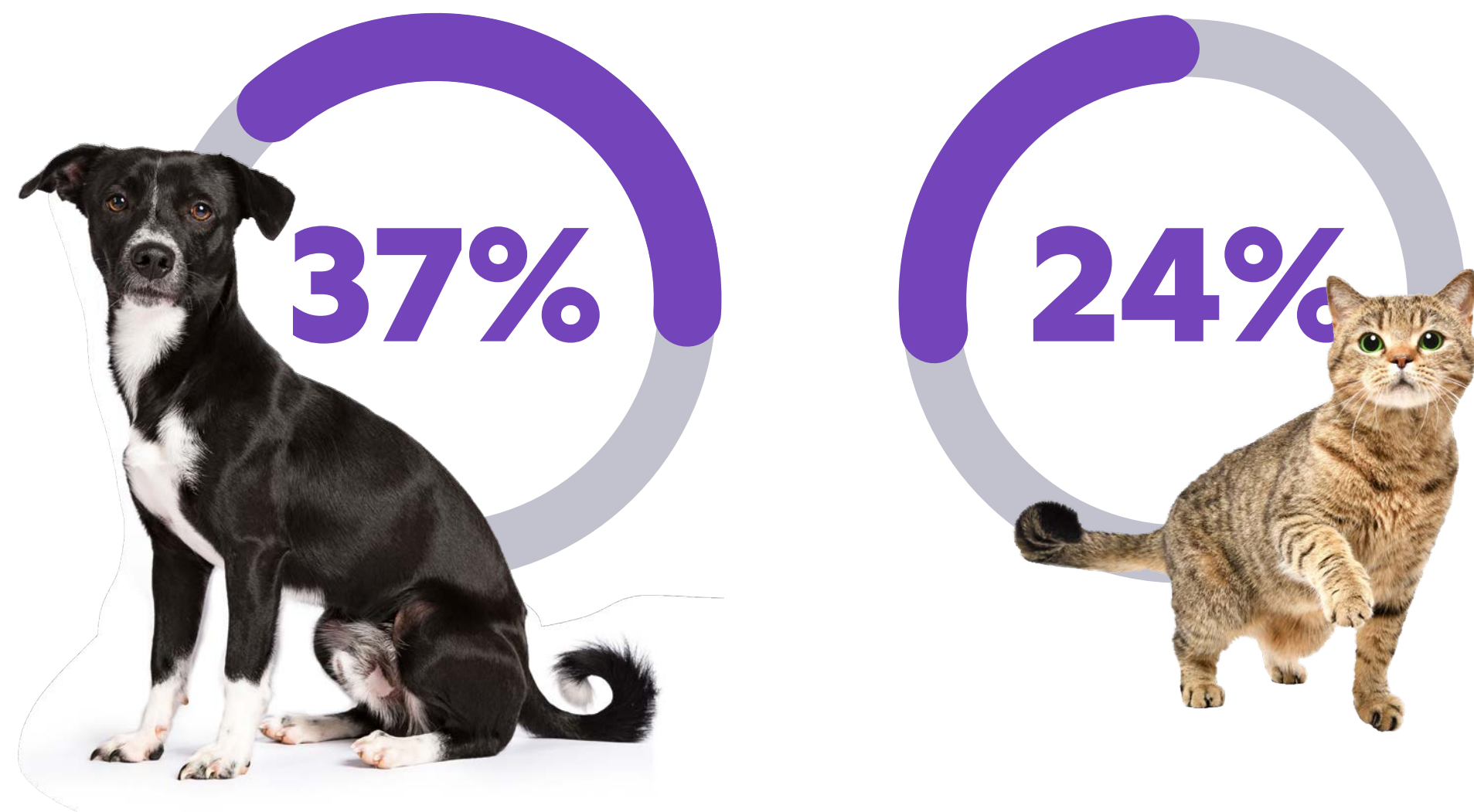
²Sample definition: 869 current or previous dog owners / 638 current or previous cat owners



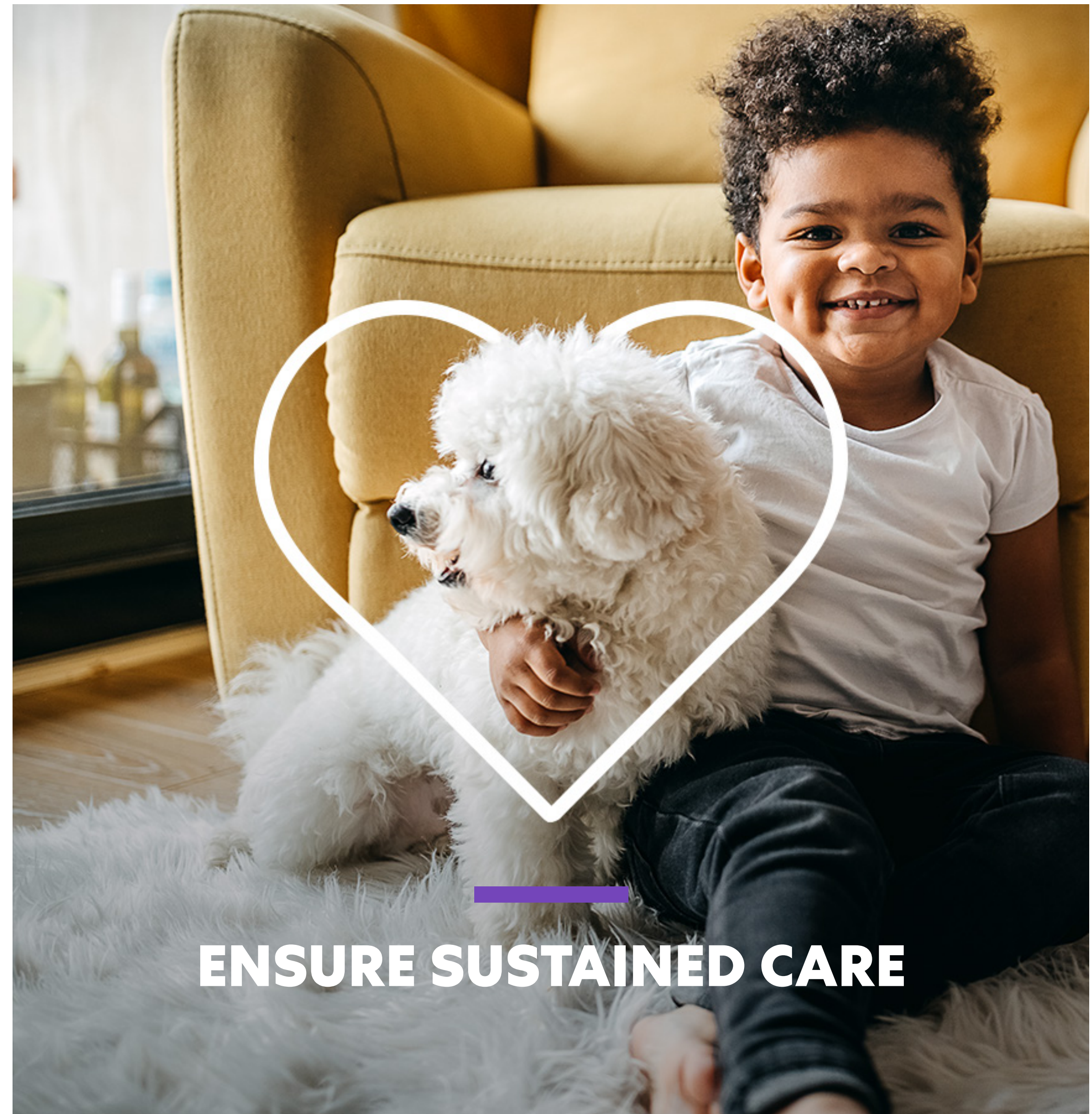
Helping to provide more homeless pets with responsible loving homes, or the sustained human care they need in the community, is a foundational step in tackling pet homelessness. Achieving it requires an understanding of the key barriers to acquiring or adopting a pet, or accessing veterinary care, as 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?¹



¹Sample definition: 2001 owners and non-owners



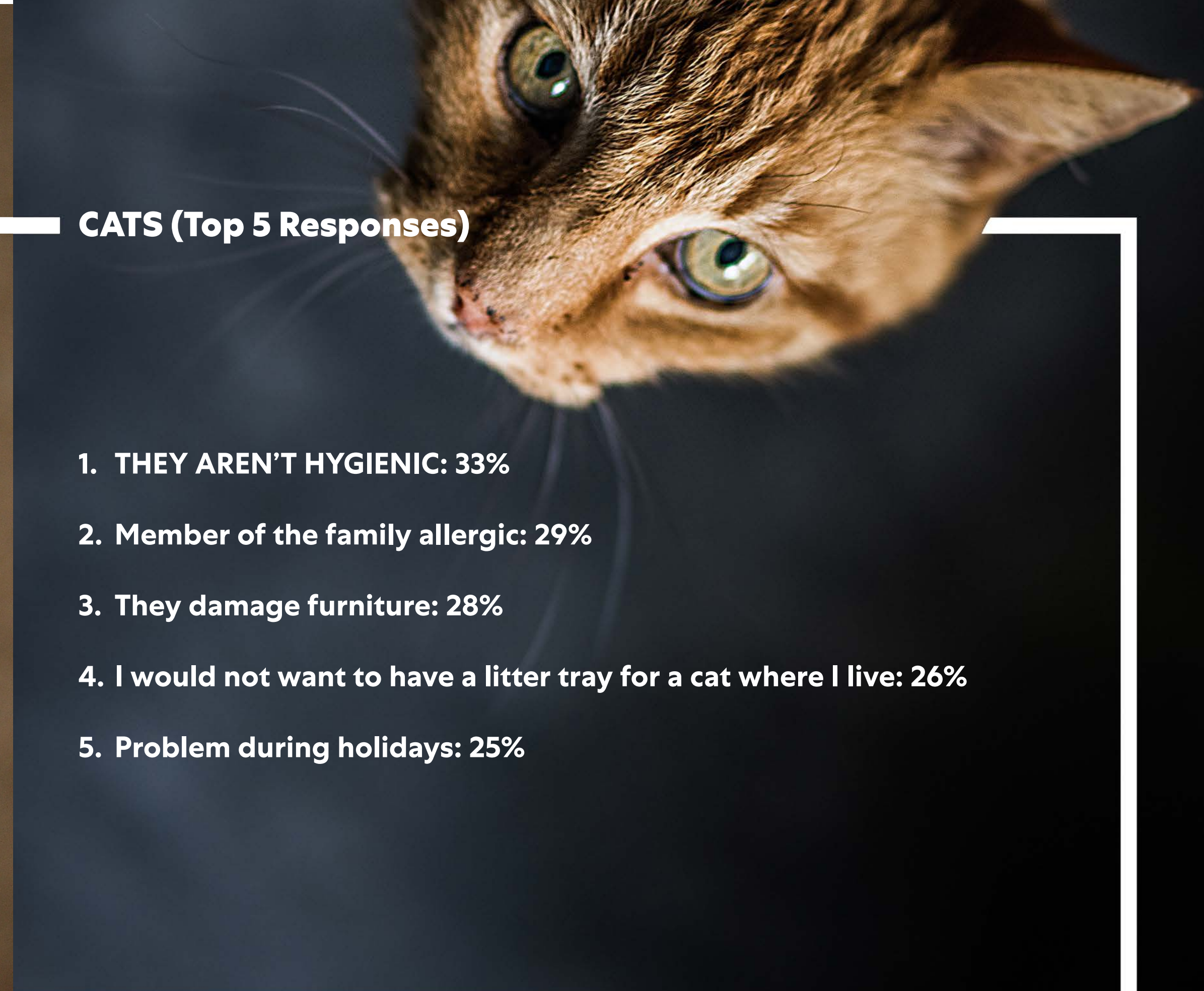
WHAT'S PREVENTING YOU FROM OWNING A PET?¹

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



DOGS (Top 5 Responses)

1. **BIG COMMITMENT: 45%**
2. **I do not have good enough living conditions: 37%**
3. **When I work, there is nobody at home to look after it: 36%**
4. **Problem during holidays: 34%**
5. **(Tie) A dog limits where I can go and Too expensive: 32%**



CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. **THEY AREN'T HYGIENIC: 33%**
2. **Member of the family allergic: 29%**
3. **They damage furniture: 28%**
4. **I would not want to have a litter tray for a cat where I live: 26%**
5. **Problem during holidays: 25%**

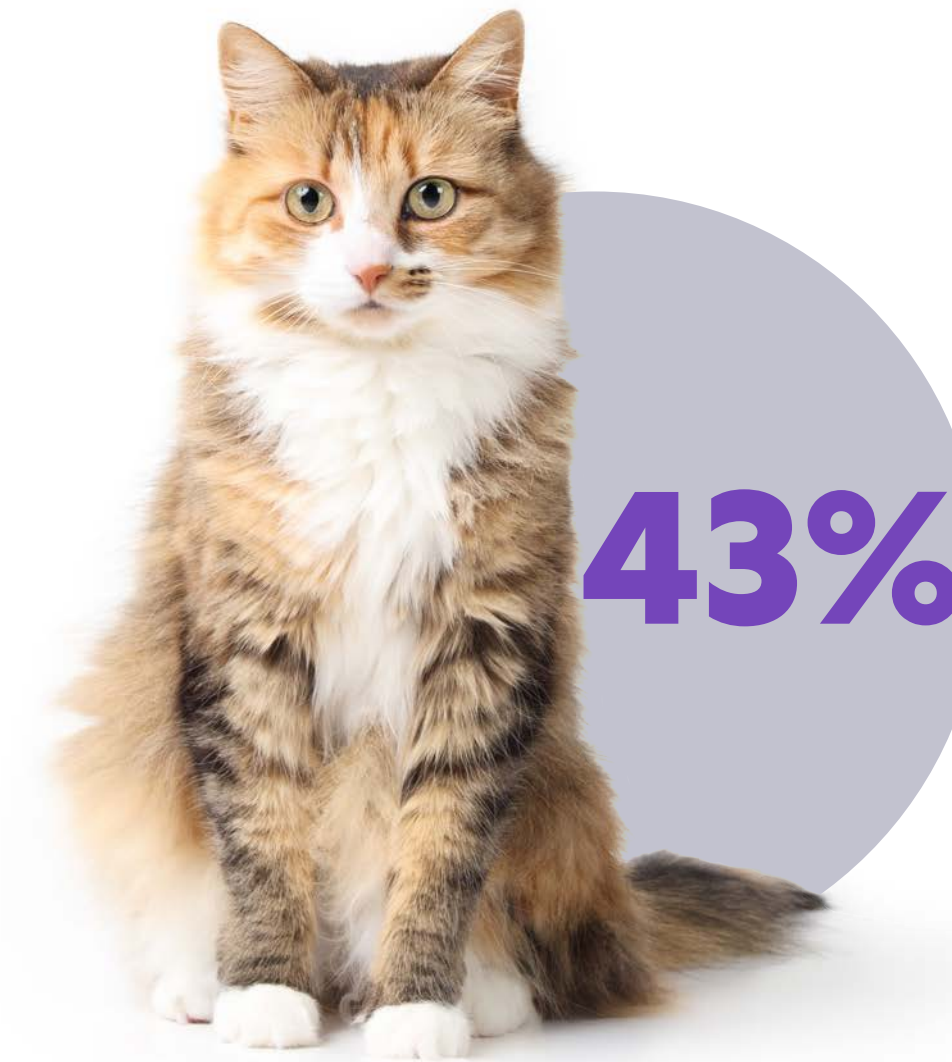
¹Sample definition: 1132 non-dog owners / 1363 non-cat owners

WHAT THE PROFESSIONALS TELL US

“

The main reasons people get a pet are that they want companionship and the love that an animal offers and to offer it back. We have many who say that I have always wanted an animal and now is the time.”

– Volunteer, Foster organization (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?¹**

49%
**CONSIDERING
GETTING A DOG
FROM A SHELTER**

43%
**CONSIDERING
GETTING A CAT
FROM A SHELTER**

¹Sample definition: 507 dog considerers / 412 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
31% (204K)

38% (77.5K) of those who lost their dog got them back.

CATS
28% (170K)

32% (54.3K) of those who lost their cat got them back.

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

DOGS
2%



CATS
4%

¹Sample definition: 1691 has or had a pet



WHAT ARE THE BEST METHODS TO HELP LOST PETS?¹

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. MICROCHIPPING: 63%
2. Tags with contact details: 53%
3. Updates in social networks: 34%
4. Direct access to contact pet shelters/rescue centers: 22%
5. Communication from shelters when pets are lost by an owner: 17%

CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. MICROCHIPPING: 62%
2. Tags with contact details: 55%
3. Updates in social networks: 34%
4. Direct access to contact pet shelters/rescue centers: 21%
5. Communication from shelters when pets are lost by an owner: 21%

IS YOUR PET MICROCHIPPED?²

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
62%

CATS
27%

¹Sample definition: 519 has lost a dog / 462 has lost a cat

²Sample definition: 625 current dog owners / 592 current cat owners

WHY MIGHT YOU CONSIDER REHOMING YOUR PET?¹

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 DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO LOOK AFTER HIM/HER AS I WOULD LIKE TO: 20%
2. I am no longer fit enough to take care of him/her: 19%
3. I will move and cannot take him/her with me: 17%
4. Its behavior is inappropriate: 17%
5. A member of my household/close friend/family is allergic: 16%

ARE YOU CONSIDERING GIVING UP YOUR PET IN THE NEXT YEAR²

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

DOGS
7%

CATS
5%



CATS (Top 5 Responses)

1. I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO LOOK AFTER HIM/HER AS I WOULD LIKE TO: 20%
2. I will move and cannot take him/her with me: 20%
3. I am no longer fit enough to take care of him/her: 19%
4. A member of my household/close friend/family is allergic: 17%
5. Costs of keeping pet become too expensive: 14%

¹Sample definition: 869 current or previous dog owners / 638 current or previous cat owners

²Sample definition: 625 current dog owners / 592 current cat owners

WHAT THE PROFESSIONALS TELL US

Rehoming is a nice idea. But in Greece, because we already have too large of a volume of animals for homes, it is not very easy to do.”

– Director, Shelter (dogs)



TAKEAWAYS

Greece is above the global average¹ of 35% homeless cats and dogs. There are significant opportunities to address the stray pet population and help more pets find the sustained human care and nutrition they need to thrive.

Greece

69%
of cats and dogs
are homeless

PREVENT UNWANTED PETS

People appear to be comfortable with stray cats as people lead with an act of kindness towards them (58%). This suggests that stray cats may get some care, even if they are not living in homes.

Greece has the highest percentage of owned cats and dogs that were taken in as strays (22% of dogs and 53% of cats).

ENSURE SUSTAINED CARE

Despite high consideration of adopting from shelters in the future (49% for dogs and 43% for cats), very few currently owned pets were acquired from shelters (13% of dogs and 4% of cats).

KEEP PETS IN HOMES

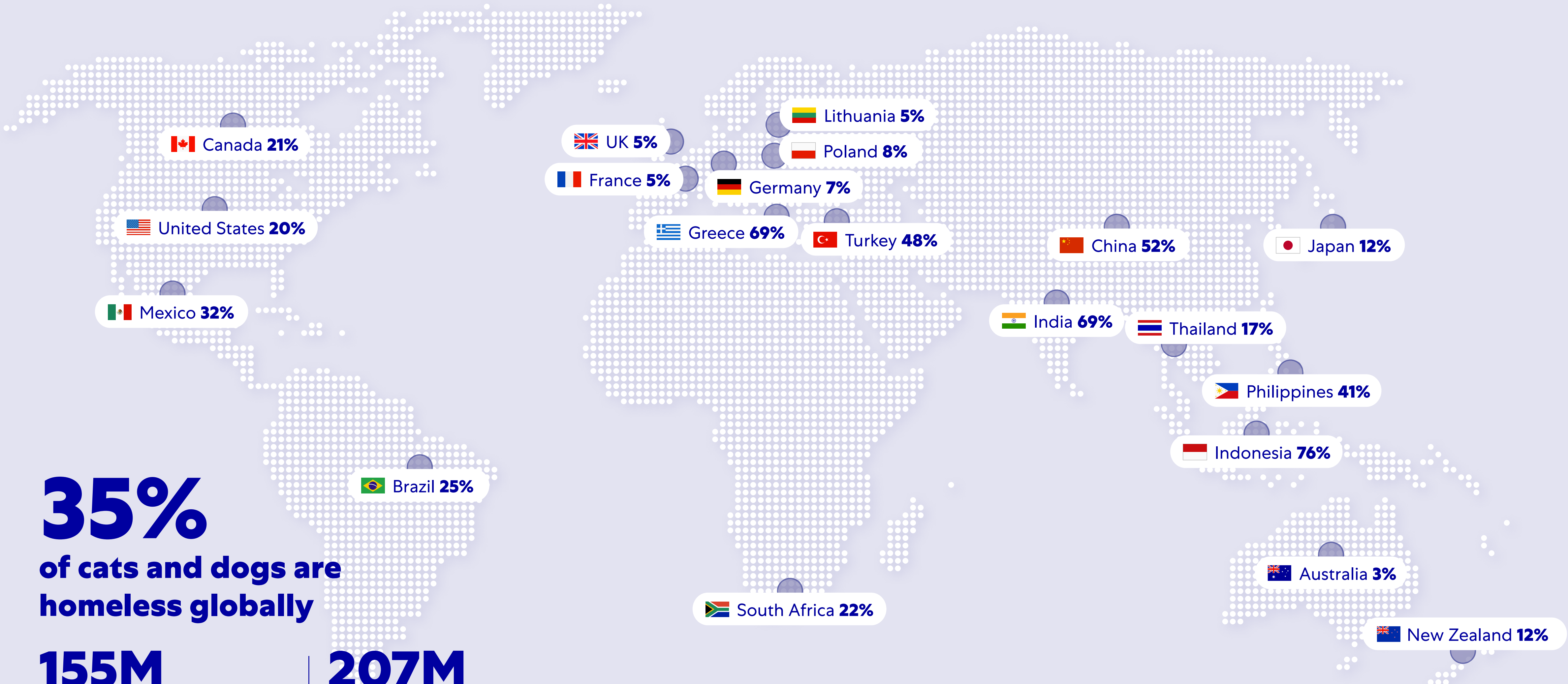
Around a third of dog and cat owners reported that they had lost a pet in the past, with only 38% of dogs and 32% of lost cats being found by their owners.

Sterilization and microchipping rates are relatively low in cats with 57% being sterilized and only 27% microchipped. In comparison, the sterilization and microchipping rates for dogs are around the global average with 49% sterilized and 62% microchipped.

The public recognizes that identification of pets by microchip is important, ranking it the number one way to find lost pets. The 62% of dog owners and 23% of cat owners that have their pets microchipped are in compliance with the current legislation of compulsory microchipping. Preventing straying or encouraging methods to easily reunite lost pets with their owners could have a significant impact on this issue.

¹“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.

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 Greece.






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.