Index Results – USA
State of Pet Homelessness Index

Methodology

We partnered with eight animal welfare experts from leading organizations around the globe to guide the development of the Index. Together, we built the Index, gathering data across 200+ data sources supplemented with quantitative data on consumer attitudes, ensuring a holistic view on pet homelessness and covering three key focus areas influencing the issue of pet homelessness.

The three focus areas influencing pet homelessness included in the Index were:

- **All pets Wanted**: evaluating reproduction control programs (spay/neuter and responsible breeding practices), roaming and street/stray populations, disease prevention, and cultural attitudes towards pet ownership
- **All pets Cared For**: evaluating rates of shelter adoption and pet ownership, assessing shelter pain points, and access to veterinary care
- **All pets Welcome**: evaluating barriers to responsible pet ownership, as well as government support and policy

All focus areas are then broken down into different categories of factors which impact this focus area.

KEY FOCUSA AREAS	CATEGORIES	FACTORS
ALL PETS **WANTED**	**Reproduction control**	Factors listed on following page.
	Street & stray populations	Factors listed on following page.
	Disease prevention	Factors listed on following page.
	Cultural attitudes towards pets	Factors listed on following page.
ALL PETS **CARED FOR**	**Pet adoption and ownership**	Factors listed on following page.
	Removing shelter pain points	Factors listed on following page.
	Improved health and vet care	Factors listed on following page.
ALL PETS **WELCOME**	**Barriers to Pet Ownership**	Factors listed on following page.
	Advocacy for Pet Ownership & Gov Support and Policy	Factors listed on following page.

Index modelling methodology overview:

- Modelling begins with data collection across a wide range of geographies.
- Data is standardized as needed to make it comparable to other geographies (e.g. changing "total" metrics to "per capita" metrics to account for different sizes of human population).
- Clustering algorithms allow us to group together countries which exhibit similar data patterns for factors relating to pet homelessness. This ensures that countries are compared fairly to one another, even if they take different approaches to solving pet homelessness.
- Next, unsupervised learning models are used to quantify the patterns in the data, and identify which metrics are most impactful, providing the weights used to create the index.
- Using weights provided by the statistical models, each factor's contribution to the category is computed by multiplying the weight by the factor value.
- These scores are then cumulated up to a category level and, ultimately, a total score for each country. Because each focus area is dependent on the weight of the factors with each of its categories, each focus area has its own weighting within the overall Index score. Therefore, the Index score is not the average of the scores across each focus area.
- These scores provide a view of each country's situation on the state of pet homelessness, relative to other countries that can also be used to gauge progress.
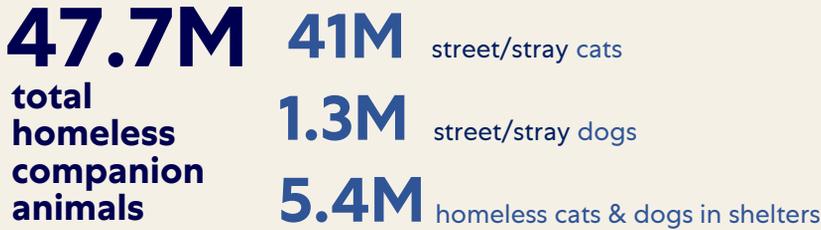
Framework for data analysis

Focus area	Focus area	Focus area

Category

Factors within this category

ALL PETS **WANTED**	ALL PETS **CARED FOR**	ALL PETS **WELCOME**
Reproduction control	**Pet adoption and ownership**	**Barriers to Pet Ownership**
Spay / neuter attitudes and programs	Number and rate of pet adoption	Overall pet care market
Spay / neuter amount and growth rate	Household penetration of pets	Cost of owning a pet
Population of owned pets, and prevalence of homes willing own pets	Attitudes towards pet adoption (incl. awareness and education)	Attitudes towards pets in the home
Euthanasia rates	Cost of adoption	Housing and travel regulations (breed bans, size bans)
Prevalence of responsible breeding (incl. DNA testing from Wisdom panel)	Transfer programs	**Advocacy for Pet Ownership & Gov Support and Policy**
Access to reproduction control	Rehoming programs (improve rehoming centre performance)	Nonprofits, charities and advocacy groups (including NGOs and lobbying groups)
Street & stray populations	**Removing shelter pain points**	Laws supporting animal rights
Factors contributing to street/stray/ free-roaming populations	Number and rate of fostering pets	Animal cruelty cases
Attitudes, stigma towards and programs around street/stray/free-roaming populations	Pet duration in shelters	Government funding
Prevalence of street/stray/free-roaming populations	Shelter resources (ex. Funding)	Acceptance of service animals
What's done with street/stray/free-roaming populations	Number and growth rate of shelters	
Community dog populations	Community first programmes to keep pets at home	
Disease prevention	**Improved health and vet care**	**SOCIETAL METRICS** FOR CONTEXUALIZATION
Animal vaccination amount and growth	Animal diseases	GDP
Human vaccination amount and growth	Human diseases transmitted from animals	Income levels
Attitudes behind vaccination	Veterinarian care (resource-based indicator)	Population
Improve dog welfare	Disease treatment costs	Education levels
Prevalence of rabies	Microchipping	Human Health
Cultural attitudes towards pets		Public health & Safety
Public perception / stigma towards pets and breeds		
Culture of population to better understand community pets		

USA 🇺🇸

END PET HOMELESSNESS

Homeless Companion Animal Counts

47.7M
total homeless companion animals

41M street/stray cats

1.3M street/stray dogs

5.4M homeless cats & dogs in shelters

26% of companion **animals in the USA are homeless**
47.7M homeless companion animals
185.4M total companion animals

State of Pet Homelessness Index Score

Overall, the USA scored an 6.4 on a 10-point scale.

Legend
- Score for focus area: All Pets **Wanted**
- Score for focus area: All Pets **Cared for**
- Score for focus area: All Pets **Welcome**

State of Pet Homelessness Index Score

6.4

All Pets **Wanted** score
5.9

All Pets **Cared For** score
6.3

All Pets **Welcome** score
7.2

Key categories

Categories driving the Index score up ← → **Categories driving the Index score down**

Categories driving the score up
- Advocacy for Pet Ownership & Government Support & Policy
- Barriers to Pet Ownership

Categories with mixed impact on the score
- Removing Shelter Pain Points
- Pet Adoption & Ownership
- Street & Stray Populations
- Cultural Attitudes Towards Pets

Categories driving the score down
- Disease Prevention
- Reproduction Control
- Improved Health & Vet Care

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Specific factors to consider per focus area

5.9

All Pets Wanted Focus Area

Key factors driving this Focus Area Score up
Perception that stray/street cats and dogs are less frequent where I live or in my country

Key factors driving this Focus Area Score down
High concern over rabies, ticks and other conditions; higher prevalence of strays

6.3

All Pets Cared For Focus Area

Key factors driving this Focus Area Score up
Higher willingness to adopt from shelters compared to other countries

Key factors driving this Focus Area Score down
Lower interest in owning or fostering a dog or cat in the future

7.2

All Pets Welcome Focus Area

Key factors driving this Focus Area Score up
High desire for neighbourhood to have sufficient pet amenities

Key factors driving this Focus Area Score down
High perceived cost of owning a pet

Detail on key factors

- The general population in the USA report lower levels of **stray/street cat and dog populations** sightings in the USA compared to globally. 28% of the USA population report seeing a stray/street dog at least once a week, which is significantly lower than the global average of 41%.

- **High concern over rabies, ticks and other conditions in the USA** currently brings the 'All Pets Wanted' score down, with 35% of the general population believing that rabies, ticks and other conditions are a problem in their area. This is statistically higher than the global average of 29% who say rabies, tickets and other conditions are a problem where they live.

- **Higher willingness to adopt from shelters in the USA**, compared to other countries, currently drives the 'All Pets Cared For' scores up. 75% of the USA population would consider adopting from a shelter or rescue centre in the future, compared to the global average of 65%.

- The 'All Pets Cared For' score is currently brought down by **lower interest in owning or fostering a dog or cat in the future.** Scores for the USA population are lower than the global average for not wanting to own a cat (42% in the USA vs 43% globally), not owning a dog (52% in the USA versus 50% globally) or fostering a cat in the future (43% in the USA versus 44% globally).

- **High desire for neighbourhoods to have sufficient pet amenities**, such as groomers and parks, currently brings the 'All Pets Welcome' score up in the USA. The USA population are more likely to strongly agree that neighbourhood amenities are important when looking after a dog (24% in the USA versus 20% globally) or when looking after a cat (15% in the USA versus 13% globally).

- **Perceived costs associated to having a pet**, in the USA, bring the 'All Pets Welcome' score down. 56% of respondents who currently care for a dog in their community, but do not own one, state cost as a reason for which they are unwilling to own a dog. This is significantly higher than the global average of 36% who currently care for a dog in their community, but do not own one, who state cost as a reason for which they are unwilling to own a dog globally.

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