Latest Stats Show More Than 50 Million Overweight U.S. Cats: Purina® Cat Chow® "Why Weight?" Pledge Encourages Cat Owners to Check Their Cats for Extra Weight

Purina Cat Chow Partners with Tone it Up's Karena Dawn and Katrina Hodgson to Educate Cat Owners about the Heavy Issue of Cat Obesity and to Drive 100,000 "Why Weight?" Pledges; Program will Donate $50,000 to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention

ST. LOUIS (April 8, 2014) – As a cat owner, you know almost everything about your cat, from her favorite napping spot to playtime preferences. But her extra weight may not be so obvious. Purina Cat Chow announced today the Purina Cat Chow "Why Weight?" program asking people to commit a minute to their cat's health to determine if their cat is at a healthy weight. Cat owners can take the Purina Cat Chow "Why Weight?" Pledge until May 2 to learn how to assess their cat's weight and put that knowledge to use.

Purina Cat Chow is aiming to reach 100,000 "Why Weight?" pledges by May 2 and will donate $50,000 to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) to provide educational tools to veterinarians and support research to help reduce the number of overweight cats.

According to the latest data from APOP, more than 50 million owned cats in the United States are overweight – that's more than 58 percent of all owned cats.[1] The study also shows that less than 12 percent of cat owners realize that their cat may have a weight issue.[1]

"As cat people and cat owners, it's sometimes hard to admit or even realize that our cat may be too heavy, but even just a few extra pounds on your cat can be a weighty issue," said Vincent Biroscak, Purina Cat Chow brand director. "We're encouraging cat people to take the Purina Cat Chow 'Why Weight?' Pledge and commit to learning how to assess their cat's weight as well as put that knowledge to use so they can share a better life together with their cat."

The Weighty Facts on Cat Obesity

- 58 percent of owned cats (50 million) in the United States are too chubby[1]
- Less than 12 percent of cat owners realize that their cat may have a weight issue[1]
- 42 percent of pet owners don't know what a healthy weight even looks like for their pet[1]
- 3 extra pounds on a 10-pound kitty is the equivalent of 45 extra pounds on a 150-pound human[2]
- Overweight cats are 4.5 times more likely to develop diabetes[3]
- Heavy kitties are seven times more likely to experience joint pain[3]

Given the startling facts about cat obesity, Purina Cat Chow commissioned an online survey conducted by Harris Poll in March 2014 to reveal cat owners' thoughts and perceptions about the weight and health of their cats.

- 57 percent of cat owners don't measure their cat's food at feeding time[4]
- 28 percent of cat owners admit they don't know the proper amount to feed their cat[4]
- 34 percent of cat owners think a few extra pounds won't hurt their cat's health[4]

- 37 percent of cat owners think it's cute if a cat carries a few extra pounds as there's "more to love"[4]
- 27 percent of cat owners are unsure on how to help their cat lose weight[4]
- 23 percent of cat owners believe that cats get all the exercise they need on their own[4]

Purina Cat Chow "Why Weight?" Team Members

Purina Cat Chow is teaming up with the APOP, and its founder Dr. Ernie Ward, to raise awareness about the issue of cat obesity and educate more cat owners on the importance of keeping your cat at a healthy weight. According to the APOP, the health conditions associated with pet obesity include osteoarthritis, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, joint injury and pain, various forms of cancer and decreased life expectancy.[1]

"The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention has partnered with Purina Cat Chow because we have shared goals to educate more cat owners about the impact extra weight has on our cats," said Dr. Ward. "We're working to close the 'fat pet gap.' We want more cat owners to realize that their cat may have a weight issue and understand some steps they can take to remedy the problem through the 'Why Weight' program."

Karena Dawn and Katrina Hodgson are also teaming up with Purina Cat Chow to help raise awareness for the "Why Weight?" Pledge. Karena and Katrina are not only fitness and healthy lifestyle experts, as evidenced through their successful "Tone It Up" franchise; they're also passionate cat people. They've taken the Purina Cat Chow "Why Weight?" Pledge for their cat Monkey to ensure they help her maintain a healthy weight throughout her life.

"Katrina and I believe in living a healthy lifestyle and as cat people, we're proud to partner with the Purina Cat Chow "Why Weight?" program to educate and inspire cat people to take an active role in learning about their cat's weight," said Karena Dawn. "Our cat Monkey gives us so much every day and asks for so little in return – it's worth the minute it takes to do a hands-on weight assessment to ensure we keep her happy and healthy."

Simple Solutions to Improving Your Cat's Weight

Every cat person who commits to building a better life with their cat by taking the Purina Cat Chow "Why Weight?" Pledge at www.catchow.com/whyweight has the opportunity to receive a free sample of Purina Cat Chow Healthy Weight formula. Just complete the simple steps following the pledge to have a sample sent to your selected address.

Cat owners can help their cat by making a few simple changes, such as measuring your cat's meals, adding playtime to your daily routine, and choosing high-quality nutrition such as Purina Cat Chow Healthy Weight formula. Also, be sure to schedule regular appointments with your veterinarian.

The Purina Cat Chow Healthy Weight formula is designed to help cat owners maintain a healthy weight for their cat and still feed them the flavor they love. The formula is high in fiber with a satisfying, hearty crunch.

Purina Cat Chow Healthy Weight formula helps promote a healthy weight and lean muscle. For more information on specific ingredients used in the Purina Cat Chow Healthy Weight formula, visit catchow.com/products.

The Purina Cat Chow Community on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube offers a place for cat

The Purina Cat Chow Community – on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube – offers a place for cat owners to gather and connect with like-minded people to celebrate all things 'cat.' Cat owners can gather valuable advice, tips and support from other Community members, or just share photos and stories about their furry friends. Visit www.facebook.com/purinacatchow to learn more and join the community.

About Nestlé Purina PetCare and Purina Cat Chow Brand Cat Food

The North American headquarters for Nestlé Purina PetCare is located at Checkerboard Square in St. Louis, Mo., where Ralston Purina was founded more than a century ago. Nestlé Purina PetCare promotes responsible pet care, humane education, community involvement and the positive bond between people and their pets. One of the leading global players in the pet food industry, Nestlé Purina PetCare is part of the Swiss-based Nestlé S.A. – the world's largest food company. With nutrition for each life stage, Purina® Cat Chow® brand Cat Food offers a family of products with 100 percent complete and balanced nutrition for physical health and well being. For more information on Purina Cat Chow, visit catchow.com.

About APOP

The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention was founded in 2005 by Dr. Ernie Ward with the primary mission of documenting pet obesity levels in the United States to raise awareness of the issue and its negative impact on pets. The APOP board is made up of veterinary nutritionists and internal medicine specialists. The Association conducts annual research to substantiate pet obesity prevalence levels in the United States and offers resources and tools to veterinarians and pet owners to better equip them to recognize and fight pet obesity. APOP will announce an industry alliance in 2014 with the goal of increasing the organization's effectiveness.

Sources:

[1]Ernie Ward, DVM, CVFT Founder, Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP), *Annual Pet Obesity Prevalence Study, 2014*, www.petobesityprevention.com.

[2]Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP), *Pet Weight Translator*, http://www.petobesityprevention.com/pet-weight-translator.

[3]Cornell Feline Health Center, *Cat Watch: How Often Should You Feed Your Cat?*, http://www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/health_resources/CW_Feed.cfm.

[4]Harris Poll Survey Methodology: The Harris Poll survey was conducted online within the United States between March 13 and 17, 2014 among 3,035 adults aged 18 and older, of whom 994 are cat owners, by Harris Poll on behalf of Purina Cat Chow via its Quick Query omnibus product. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

Media Contacts

Bill Etling
Nestlé Purina PetCare

Nestlé Purina PetCare
314-982-4825
william.etling@purina.nestle.com

Megan McGovern
Publicis Consultants PR
404-870-6852
megan.mcgovern@publicis-pr.com