

# The Grocer

Focus On: Petcare by Daniel Selwood

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There's been an [explosion in pet ownership](#) since the pandemic hit Britain. With more time at home, many households purchased the family pooches and pussies they'd been putting off getting for years. A total of 3.2 million households have bought a pet since the start of the pandemic, the Pet Food Manufacturers Association [PFMA] said in March. Some supermarkets have even [run out of pouched food](#). So why are sales of petcare products up just 0.5% on volumes down 4.1%?

**Smaller dog ownership:** There's been an increase in ownership of smaller dogs, which tend to live longer and, of course, need less food to sustain them. To what extent does the rise in smaller dog ownership explain the fall in volumes sales of petcare? Why are people going for smaller dogs? And how else is this impacting the market?

**Demographics:** According to the PFMA, more than half of the people who have become pet owners in the past year are young adults aged between 24 and 35. Many of these people bought pets to provide companionship and help them deal with the isolation of lockdown. So, what kind of pets have they been buying and how is this impacting the sort of petcare products that are in demand? And what happens when they return to work?

**Sector by sector:** This feature will pay close attention to the factors that are impacting the key subcategories in petcare. For example, there has been a sharp increase in products purporting to offer pets a 'more natural diet' closer to what animals would eat in the wild. Health orientated offerings and treats are also on the rise. Why? What are retailers and their suppliers expecting to be the hot sectors in the coming year?

**Pet health & welfare:** There has also been an increase in the development of products designed to suit the needs of pets at specific life stages and address specific health concerns. Why? What's more, Mars Petcare has made a pledge to end pet homelessness by 2030. How big a problem is this and what impact will a post-pandemic return to workspaces have on this?

**Channels, merchandising, ranging and marketing:** This feature will also pay close attention to how and where pet owners are shopping for petcare products and how this is changing, as well as ways in which retailers and their suppliers are adapting their approaches to ranging, merchandising and marketing.

**Innovation:** Central to this story will be an exploration of current and rising petcare trends and how this is impacting product and format innovation. We will be profiling four upcoming launches in a separate boxout. For this we require a high-res product image, launch date, rsp and full product details.