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Human Animal Bond Research Initiative Announces 2016 Research Grants

Washington, D.C. (December 13, 2016)– The Human Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) Foundation today announced funding for four research grants focused on the effects of human-animal interaction on human health, including outcomes for children undergoing hospital procedures; classroom learning; and the link between the health of pet owners and the health of their pets.

“The human-animal bond is an essential element of human wellness,” said Bob Vetere, President and CEO of the American Pet Products Association and President of the HABRI Board of Trustees. “HABRI-funded research projects are scientifically documenting how pets improve the health of people, pets and the communities where they live.”

For 2016, HABRI has awarded a total of \$175,000 to the following recipients and research projects:

- Zenithson Y. Ng, DVM, M.S. (University of Tennessee, Knoxville): The Effect Of Animal-Assisted Intervention On Preoperative Anxiety And Dose Of Sedation In Children
- Piers Barker, M.D (Duke University): Impact of Animal Assisted Therapy on Quality, Completeness, and Patient and Parental Satisfaction in Children Undergoing Clinical Echocardiography
- Amy McCullough, PhD (American Humane Association): Pets in the Classroom (PIC): What are the Social, Behavioral, and Academic Effects of Classroom Pets for Children, 8-10 years?
- Charles Faulkner, PhD (Lincoln Memorial University): Measuring the Impact of a Mutually Reinforcing Relationship Between Pet Owners and Their Pets

“We know from previous scientific research that animal-assisted therapy is effective in alleviating anxiety in hospital patients,” said Margaret Gruen, DVM, PhD, DACVB of Duke. “This is one of the first studies to focus on the potential of animal-assisted therapy to impact a clinical outcomes. If results are successful, this study could potentially add non-pharmacologic,

low-cost options to improve diagnostic quality for children having medical imaging procedures and could encourage broader use of therapy dogs in other pediatric cardiology settings”
“The PIC study will provide meaningful insight on the broad impact of child and animal relationships and help prepare schools and teachers with the responsibilities necessary to support the humane and effective incorporation of pets in classrooms and curricula,” said Dr. Amy McCullough, American Humane Association National Director of Research and Therapy.

HABRI’s annual grant program is managed in partnership with the Morris Animal Foundation, a nonprofit organization that invests in science that advances knowledge and improves health for companion animals, horses and wildlife. Proposals were evaluated by an independent Scientific Advisory Board comprised of experts in the field on study design, investigator capabilities, adequacy of facilities, cost effectiveness of budget, and potential for impact on the way these areas of interest are diagnosed, treated, or otherwise understood.

“HABRI is grateful for the commitment of the many companies and organizations that make HABRI’s research program possible,” added Vetere. “With their support, HABRI has built a strong pipeline of quality research projects to expand our knowledge of the healing power of the human-animal bond.”

The **HABRI Foundation** maintains the world’s largest online library of human-animal bond research and information; to date has funded more than half a million dollars in innovative research projects to scientifically document the health benefits of companion animals; and informs the public about human-animal bond research and the beneficial role of companion animals in society. For more information about the HABRI Foundation, visit www.habri.org.

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New HABRI Survey: Knowledge That Pets Improve Our Health Boosts Animal Welfare

***The More Pet Owners Learn about Scientific Research on the Benefits of
the Human-Animal Bond, the Better They'll Care for Their Companion
Animals***

(Washington, D.C.) September 7, 2016 – The Human Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) Foundation today announced the findings of a new survey on the impact of knowledge of the scientific benefits of the human-animal bond on how pet owners care for their companion animals. The survey asked pet owners about their awareness of research that shows pets improve human health and found that this knowledge has the power to motivate them to take better care of their pets in important ways.

“Scientific research shows that pets are good for our health, improving heart health, relieving stress and positively impacting conditions from autism to PTSD,” said HABRI Executive Director, Steven Feldman. “Now, for the first time, we have data to show that it’s a two-way street – when we know how good pets are for us, we are more likely to take better care of them!”

[According to the survey](#), seventy-one percent of pet owners were aware of scientifically documented health benefits from pets. Most importantly, when asked how knowledge of the scientific research on the human-animal bond would affect their actions:

- 89% of pet owners said they were more likely to take better care of their pets
- 75% of pet owners said they were more likely to microchip a pet to ensure it can be found if lost or stolen
- 51% of pet owners said they were more likely to purchase pet health insurance
- 62% of pet owners said they were less likely to skip visits to the veterinarian
- 74% of pet owners said they were less likely to give up a pet for any reason
- 88% of pet owners said they were more likely to provide their pets with high-quality nutrition
- 92% of pet owners said they were more likely to maintain their pet’s health, including keeping up with vaccines and preventative medicine

The survey also examined how different generations of pet owners viewed and reacted to the human-animal bond. For millennials, in particular, learning about the scientific research on the health benefits of pets had a large impact:

- 80% of millennials said this information makes them more likely to bring their pet along when they go out
- 75% of millennials said this information makes them more likely to travel with their pets
- 74% of millennials said this information makes them more likely to get an additional pet
- 74% of millennials think employers should consider allowing employees to bring pets to work

“When pet owners are educated about the scientific research on the human-animal bond, the response is tremendously positive for the welfare of the pet population,” said researcher Michael Cohen, Ph.D. “This research tells me that veterinarians and animal shelters should be talking about the benefits of pets to human health.”

The survey also asked pet owners about increased support for pet ownership in society:

- 84% agree health and life insurance companies should give discounts for owning a pet
- 87% would be more likely to buy products from pet-friendly businesses
- 69% agree the government should help make it more affordable to own a pet
- 88% agree doctors and specialists should recommend pets to patients for healthier living

“As HABRI continues to fund human-animal bond research, it will work hard to educate pet owners and the general public about the positive impacts of pet ownership on human health,” Feldman added. “As more people experience the healing power of the human-animal bond, more and more pets can get the highest level of care and welfare.”

The online survey, conducted by the [Cohen Research Group](#), included 2,000 interviews and had a margin of error of +2.2%.

The HABRI Foundation maintains the world’s largest online library of human-animal bond research and information; funds innovative research projects to scientifically document the health benefits of companion animals; and informs the public about human-animal bond research and the beneficial role of companion animals in society. For more information about the HABRI Foundation, visit www.habri.org.

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Survey: Pet Owners and the Human-Animal Bond September 2016

The Human Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) Foundation partnered with Cohen Research Group to conduct an online survey of 2,000 pet owners, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 2.2%.

This is the first survey of its kind to explore how pet owners' knowledge of the health benefits of the human-animal bond impacts pet care and welfare. The survey also looked for generational differences among pet owners on this subject. Key findings are as follows:

- **There is strong awareness of the health benefits of pet ownership.**
 - 71% of pet owners have heard about scientific research on the human-animal bond that demonstrates pet ownership can help improve physical or mental health in people
 - 88% of pet owners were aware that pets reduce stress
 - 86% of pet owners were aware that pets reduce depression
 - 84% of pet owners were aware that pets reduce anxiety
 - 81% of pet owners were aware that pets increase our sense of well-being
 - 80% of pet owners were aware that pets help with conditions like PTSD in war veterans
 - 68% of pet owners were aware that pets support healthy aging
 - 65% of pet owners were aware that pets help with conditions like autism
 - 60% of pet owners were aware that pets improve heart health
 - 56% of pet owners were aware that pets help with conditions like Alzheimer's disease
 - 47% of pet owners were aware that pets support child cognitive development and reading skills
 - 45% of pet owners were aware that pets support classroom learning
 - 32% of pet owners were aware that pets help prevent child allergies

- **The majority of pet owners have personal experience with the health benefits of pets.**
 - 74% of pet owners reported mental health improvements from pet ownership
 - 75% of pet owners reported a friend's or family member's mental health has improved from pet ownership
 - 54% of pet owners reported physical health improvements from pet ownership
 - 55% of pet owners reported a friend's or family member's physical health has improved from pet ownership

- 83% of baby boomers and 82% of greatest/silent generations reported more personal experience with mental health improvements from pets than millennials (62%) and generation X (72%)
- **The more pet owners learn about scientific research on the benefits of the human-animal bond, the more likely they are to take actions to improve pet health.**
 - When educated on the scientific research on the health benefits of pets:*
 - 92% of pet owners are more likely to maintain their pet's health, including keeping up with vaccines and preventative medicine
 - 89% of pet owners are more likely to take their pet to the vet for regular check-ups
 - 88% of pet owners are more likely to provide their pets with high-quality nutrition
 - 62% of pet owners are less likely to skip visits to the veterinarian
 - 51% of pet owners (78% of millennials) are more likely to purchase pet health insurance
- **Knowledge of the scientific research on the benefits of the human-animal bond improves animal welfare.**
 - When educated on the scientific research on the health benefits of pets:*
 - 89% of pet owners are more likely to take better care of their pets
 - 75% of pet owners are more likely to microchip a pet to ensure it can be found if lost or stolen
 - 74% of pet owners are less likely to give up a pet for any reason
 - In addition:*
 - 77% of pet owners believe that pets benefit from the human-animal bond as much as people
 - 80% of pet owners who were aware of the health benefits of pets reported spending most of the day or a big part of their day with their pets, compared to 71% of pet owners who were unaware
- **Knowledge of the scientific research on the benefits of the human-animal bond boosts pet ownership.**
 - When educated on the scientific research on the health benefits of pets:*
 - 87% of pet owners are more likely to recommend a pet to a friend or family member
 - 81% of pet owners are more likely to get another pet in the future (if the one they have now passes away)
 - 49% of pet owners (74% of millennials) are more likely to get an additional pet
 - 57% of pet owners that currently reported having multiple pets are more likely to get yet another pet
- **Veterinarians are trusted resources for scientific information on the human health benefits of pets and have an opportunity to further strengthen their relationships with pet owners, especially millennials.**

- Virtually all pet owners (97%) have a favorable opinion of their veterinarian
 - 66% of pet owners (77% of millennials) would have a more favorable view of their veterinarian if they discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them
 - 61% of pet owners (74% of millennials) would be more likely to visit their veterinarian if they discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them
 - 25% of millennials always talk to their veterinarians about the health benefits of pet ownership, more than generation X (16%), baby boomers (6%), or greatest/silent generation (4%)
- **Doctors can also benefit from increased communication on the human-animal bond.**
 - 88% of pet owners agree doctors and specialists should recommend pets to patients for healthier living
 - 65% of pet owners would have a more favorable view of a doctor who discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them
 - 59% of pet owners would be more likely to visit a doctor who discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them
- **Pet owners believe society should be more pet friendly and should act on the scientific research that shows pets improve human health.**
 - 93% of pet owners agree the government should provide service animals to veterans with PTSD
 - 69% of pet owners (83% of millennials) agree the government should help make it more affordable to own a pet
 - 84% agree health and life insurance companies should give discounts for owning a pet
 - 87% would be more likely to buy products from pet-friendly businesses
 - 58% of pet owners (74% of millennials) agree employers should consider allowing employees to bring pets to work
- **Pets are family**
 - 98% of pet owners agree that their pet is an important part of their family
 - 95% of pet owners could not imagine giving up their pet for any reason

For more information, please visit www.habri.org.