Pet owner emergency preparedness and perceptions survey

Taranaki & Wellington Regions

February 2010

Supported by Taranaki Regional Council and Wellington SPCA
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**Bibliographical reference**

background

In 2009, Taranaki Regional Council approached Mercalli Disaster Management Consulting to facilitate a Companion Animal Emergency Management Workshop for early 2010. This request coincided with an invitation from Conferenz for Mercalli to also provide a presentation at the 9th Annual Emergency Management Conference in Wellington, 22 February 2010 on companion animal emergency management. To support both of these events, Mercalli Disaster Management Consulting undertook a survey of companion animal (pet) owners in the Taranaki and Wellington Regions with the support of Taranaki Regional Council and the Wellington Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). The sub-discipline of companion animal emergency management is a new field both nationally and internationally, and the survey is believed to be the first comprehensive pet owner emergency preparedness and perception research of its kind in New Zealand.

objectives

The survey had three key objectives:

1. To provide current data to support further research of companion animal emergency management in New Zealand.

2. To provide New Zealand specific data to contrast similar research in other countries to enable emergency planners to enhance the protection of companion animals during disaster.

3. To provide geographically relevant data to supplement and contrast international research being presented at the Taranaki Companion Animal Emergency Management Workshop and 9th Annual Emergency Management Conference.
methodology

Companion animal owners living within the Taranaki and Wellington Regions were invited to complete an anonymous and confidential online survey.

The online survey was pre-tested through a pilot by key stakeholders.

The survey was marketed through:

**Taranaki:**
- Flyer (annex a) letter box drop (n=1,000) in the Bell Block area
- Email notification to Taranaki Regional Council staff
- Notice of Taranaki Regional Council staff intranet
- Flyer hand outs by local animal control and pet shop staff (n=200)

**Wellington:**
- Flyer (annex a) letter box drop (n=1,000) across the Porirua, Johnsonville and Tawa areas.

**Both:**
- Facebook: general status postings
- Word of mouth

sample size

The sample size for this survey was:

<table>
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<th>Region</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>n=35</td>
<td>cf. 113 (Colmar Brunton, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taranaki</td>
<td>n=55</td>
<td>cf. 26 (Colmar Brunton, 2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>n=2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>n=92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management Campaign Monitoring Research, 2009 carried out by Colmar Brunton.
results

age

What is your age?

- 0-15 years: 1%
- 16-25 years: 4%
- 26-35 years: 9%
- 36-45 years: 15%
- 46-55 years: 24%
- 56-65 years: 21%
- 66 years or older: 26%
gender

What gender are you?

- Female: 70%
- Male: 30%
Which region do you live in?

- Taranaki: 61%
- Wellington: 39%
ethnicity

Which ethnic group do you most associate yourself with?

- NZ European/Pakeha: 76%
- Maori: 1%
- Pacific Islander: 9%
- Asian: 2%
- European: 2%
- American: 0%
- African: 1%
- Other: 10%
income

What is your annual household income?

- Under $20,000: 8%
- $20,000 - $40,000: 23%
- $40,001 - $60,000: 29%
- $60,001 - $80,000: 16%
- $80,000 - $100,000: 24%
- Over $100,000: 0%
household size

How many people permanently live at your household? (including yourself)
education

What is the highest level of educational qualification you have obtained?

- No formal qualification: 19%
- High School qualification: 32%
- Tertiary/Trade qualification: 19%
- University/Polytechnic Degree: 25%
- Post-Graduate qualification: 22%
- Other: 1%
general emergency preparedness

Do you have a family survival plan and emergency supplies including water (3 litres per person for three days), torch, radio, batteries, food, can opener, first aid kit?

- Yes - all of these: 33%
- Partial - some of these: 15%
- No - none of these: 52%
How many dogs live at home with you?
cats

How many cats live at home with you?

- 0%: 0 cats
- 1%: 1 cat
- 2%: 2 cats
- 5%: 5 cats
- 14%: 14 cats
- 37%: 37 cats
- 40%: 40 cats
- Other: 1%
other animals

How many other pets (other than cats or dogs) live at home with you? List the type of animal and how many you have (example: 2 fish, 1 rabbit).

- 3 fish
- Goldfish
- 2 rabbits
- 1 duck
- 5 goldfish
- 1 cockatiel 1 rabbit, 1 guinea pig, 2 fish, 2 birds, 1 turtle
- 1 guinea pig
- 1 budgie
- 25 pond fish and 10 aviary birds
- 3 fish
- 1 Lorikeet
- 2 fish
- 2 fish
- 4 rabbits
- 1 foster rabbit
- 1 foster kitten
- 6 goldfish
- 2 budgies
- 1 fish
- 2 fish
- 3 fish
- 1 fish
- 8 fish
- 17 budgies and 1 cockatiel
- 1 bird

Some respondents also listed farm animals and livestock including horses, donkeys, chickens, pigs etc but these are outside the scope of the research.
cat pet carriers

If you have cats, do you have a pet carrier (cage) for each animal?

- 76% Yes (I have a cage for each cat)
- 13% Partially (only for some of my cats)
- 11% No (I do not have a cage)
dog muzzles and leashes

If you have dogs, do you have a muzzle and leash for each dog?

- Yes (leads and muzzles for each dog)
- Partially - Some/all muzzles but no leads
- Partially - Some/all leads but no muzzles
- Partially - Some leads and some muzzles
- No (no leads or muzzles)
vaccination status

Do you have a current Vaccination Certificate (that are can access and evacuate now with) for your cats and/or dogs?

- Yes: 73%
- Partially: 20%
- No: 7%
part of the family

Please indicate whether you agree or not with the following statement: "Pets are part of the family".

- Strongly Agree: 79%
- Agree: 20%
- Unsure: 0%
- Disagree: 0%
- Strongly Disagree: 1%
leaving pets behind

If there was an emergency (such as a flood, chemical spill etc) and you were asked to evacuate, indicate whether you agree or not with the following statement:

*I would be prepared to leave my pets behind.*
evacuating without pets

If there was an emergency (such as a flood, chemical spill etc) and you were asked to evacuate, indicate whether you agree or not with the following statement:

*I will not evacuate unless I can take my pets with me*

- **Strongly Agree**: 38%
- **Agree**: 18%
- **Unsure**: 15%
- **Disagree**: 15%
- **Strongly Disagree**: 14%
If there was an emergency (such as a flood, chemical spill etc) and you were asked to evacuate, indicate whether you agree or not with the following statement:

*Officials should be able to destroy pets left in the evacuated area if required*

- **Strongly Agree** 6%
- **Agree** 13%
- **Unsure** 22%
- **Disagree** 29%
- **Strongly Disagree** 30%
ongoing care

If there was an emergency (such as a flood, chemical spill etc) and you were asked to evacuate, indicate whether you agree or not with the following statement:

*When evacuated, I would like to be involved in the ongoing care of my pets*

- **Strongly Agree**: 65%
- **Agree**: 26%
- **Unsure**: 7%
- **Disagree**: 0%
- **Strongly Disagree**: 2%
coping mechanism

If there was an emergency (such as a flood, chemical spill etc) and you were asked to evacuate, indicate whether you agree or not with the following statement:

*My pets are an important coping mechanism for me (i.e. I talk to them when stressed)*

- **Strongly Agree**: 37%
- **Agree**: 26%
- **Unsure**: 10%
- **Disagree**: 22%
- **Strongly Disagree**: 5%
return to retrieve pets

If there was an emergency (such as a flood, chemical spill etc) and you were asked to evacuate, indicate whether you agree or not with the following statement:

*I am likely to return for my pets if evacuated without them despite official directions*

- **Strongly Agree**: 38%
- **Agree**: 20%
- **Unsure**: 14%
- **Disagree**: 26%
- **Strongly Disagree**: 2%
pet friendly shelters

If there was an emergency (such as a flood, chemical spill etc) and you were asked to evacuate, indicate whether you agree or not with the following statement:

I am more likely to comply with evacuation if there are civil defence centres/welfare centres that cater for pets too

- Strongly Agree: 57%
- Agree: 24%
- Unsure: 7%
- Disagree: 7%
- Strongly Disagree: 5%
cost of emergency accommodation

If your pets were relocated to a boarding establishment away from where you are being sheltered for three days, would you be able to pay for their accommodation.

Based on the following typical rates:

*Cats*: $12 per day, per cat.
*Dogs*: $20-35 per day, per dog
*Rabbits and other small animals*: $12 per animal pet day.

Graph showing:
- 76% Yes
- 21% Unsure
- 3% No
pet specific emergency preparedness

What extra steps have you taken (if any) to include your pets in your emergency survival preparations?

1. Pets are listed as family members in your emergency plan
2. Extra water in survival kit
3. Pet food in survival kit
4. Alternative place for the pets to stay is identified
5. Arrangements for someone to evacuate pets if you are unable
6. Arrangements for someone to feed pets if you are unable
7. Pet carrier/cage with pet details on it available
8. Microchipped all pets
9. Microchipped some pets
10. Pet photographs are part of the get-away kit
11. Pet Vaccination cards are part of the get-away kit
12. Leash and muzzle available for dogs
13. Pet identification discs (on collars) have a second phone number of someone outside your area

- 1. 9%
- 2. 13%
- 3. 16%
- 4. 6%
- 5. 8%
- 6. 8%
- 7. 7%
- 8. 8%
- 9. 8%
- 10. 3%
acknowledgements

Mercalli Disaster Management Consulting would like to acknowledge the support from the following organisations and individuals who contributed to this survey project:

- Ritchie Dawson, Chief Animal Welfare Inspector, Wellington SPCA
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- Blair Hillyard, Rescue Officer, Animal Rescue Unit, Wellington SPCA
- The Barry family of Bell Block, New Plymouth.

contact

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“Pets are one of the family and it is not okay to leave them behind when evacuating”
annex 1: survey flyer

WANTED: PET OWNERS

Pet owner emergency preparedness survey

Mercalli Disaster Management Consulting is currently conducting an online survey on pet owner emergency preparedness.

The survey is supported by the Taranaki Regional Council for the purpose and benefit of its emergency management functions, and by the Wellington SPCA.

The results of the survey will be used to help develop Civil Defence training programmes and resources to help with the protection of pets during emergencies.

If you are a pet owner in either Taranaki or Wellington, we ask you to help by completing this online survey (it is anonymous and confidential). Visit:

http://tiny.cc/4LKiY

For further information please contact info@mercalli.co.nz

For information on how you can prepare for an emergency visit:

www.getthru.govt.nz