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NATIONAL PET WEEK® REMINDER: PETS ARE A LIFETIME COMMITMENT

Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council stresses both benefits and obligations of pet ownership

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – May 1, 2019 – During National Pet Week®, May 6-12, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), along with the entire responsible pet care community, wants to remind current and future pet owners that pet ownership is a responsibility that lasts the pet's lifetime. This is reflected in this year's Pet Week theme, "Lifetime of Love."

"Owning a pet provides enormous rewards, but also carries significant responsibilities," said PIJAC President and CEO Mike Bober. "Before you bring a new pet home, it's essential to consult with pet care professionals such as veterinarians and pet store employees and fully understand the time, expense and equipment involved in properly caring for that pet on an everyday basis for its entire life."

The lifespan of many common pets isn't often well-known, and owners need to be prepared for the length of time they will need to commit to owning that animal. For example, with proper care and environment, guinea pigs can live five to seven years, hermit crabs up to 10 years, and many reptiles can live well into their teens.

In addition to the length of time a well-cared for pet will live, it's important to also consider these factors before acquiring a new pet:

- **Do you have the time?** Make sure your day-to-day schedule allows for the feeding, exercise and playtime needs of your pet.
- **Do you have the money?** Plan for food, toys, training, enclosures, licensing fees, regular veterinary care, and the many other expected—and unplanned—expenses you'll have.
- **Do you have the space?** Whether it be room for a fish tank, birdcage or dog bed, make sure your home is suitable for your pet to live cleanly and comfortably.
- **Do you have permission and support?** Is that pet legal to own in your community, has your landlord given permission if you rent, is your family on board with the new pet, and have you picked out a veterinarian?

"No matter the size or type of pet, the emotional and physical benefits of pet ownership are scientifically proven," said Bober. "With the right information, time and resources, owning a pet can be one of the best decisions a person can make."

National Pet Week was created in 1981 by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Auxiliary to the AVMA.

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Since 1970, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) has protected pets, pet owners and the pet industry – promoting responsible pet ownership and animal welfare, fostering environmental stewardship, and ensuring the availability of pets. PIJAC members include retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, wholesale distributors, manufacturers' representatives, pet hobbyists, and other trade organizations.