

MEDIA RELEASE

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Canine colleagues can create happy human co-workers

Employers who allow their workers to bring their pet to the office now and then will benefit from having happier, healthier employees, says New Zealand's leading pet care company.

The advice from Nestle Purina PetCare comes as the company looks ahead to celebrating the 10th annual international Take Your Dog to Work Day on 26 June. (www.takeyourdog.com)

Purina New Zealand staff already bring pets to their Mt Wellington head office daily, and encourage other New Zealand businesses to seriously consider participating in the international event to promote better health in their employees.

"At Purina, we love bringing our pets to the office and they love being here," says Shivaun Statham, a dog behaviour expert and pet care advisor for Purina: "We can personally testify to the calming influence they can have on the workplace."

Ms Statham says that scientific research shows that having pets in the workplace can lower stress levels and create more relaxed, productive workers.

Ms Statham's own dog Basil – a Sheltie cross – is a regular companion by her desk. She says having pets in the office encourages owners and their co-workers to interact in a positive manner, which is beneficial for office culture.

"Simply put, it's hard to stay stressed or angry at someone when there is a dog smiling up at you and wagging its tail," she says.

Ms Statham recommends the following guidelines for creating a successful Take Your Dog to Work Day in your office:

- Firstly, make sure that your employees are comfortable with having Take Your Dog To Work Day and appoint someone to keep a record of all animals attending
- Any dog that comes to an office must be well-behaved, house-trained, desexed and up-to-date with vaccinations

- Dogs attending the office must be recently bathed and groomed, and be able to meet preset guidelines for acceptable behaviour
- Dogs' feeding, walking and toileting schedule must be strictly attended to by their owners throughout the day
- Dogs should have a rug to lie on and toys on hand to occupy them, and loose office supplies should be kept out of reach of the dog
- At the beginning of the day, make sure that pets are introduced and familiarised with those who will be in their immediate surrounds, but don't force anyone to interact with a dog if they don't want to
- Ensure there is a 'pet free zone' for staff who may have allergies or fears of dogs

Ms Statham says that with care and consideration, TYDTWD can be an enjoyable and positive experience for all office workers.

"It is a well established fact that pets are beneficial for a person's overall mental and physical wellbeing. Studies have shown that having pets around decreases the likelihood of depression and can provide protection against anxiety-related illnesses," she says.

Ms Statham says owning a pet has also been shown to significantly lower human stress levels, help control blood pressure and even reduce the risk of a heart attack.

"All these benefits of pets are translatable to the workplace. Employers who allow dogs in the office for this one day at least, will be contributing to the health of their employees."

For more information on Take Your Dog to Work Day, visit www.takeyourdog.com.

For in-depth information about maintaining optimal nutrition and care for dogs, visit the Purina web site at www.purina.co.nz

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About Nestle Purina New Zealand

- For over eighty years Purina has been a leader in the advancement of pet care and pet nutrition.
- Purina's expert nutritionists, food scientists, vets, and animal behaviorists are constantly discovering new ways to help pets lead healthier, happier, longer lives.
- No one invests more in research and development, and as a result Purina has made more breakthroughs in the field than any other company.

- Today Purina is one of the world's leading pet care companies, producing some of the best known pet food brands; many of which have served pet owners for generations. Each is the result of the very latest advances in quality, taste and nutrition.
- Purina products are designed to give pets and their owners the best possible choice of recipes and formats, for every life stage and lifestyle.
- Purina is also a committed member of the wider pet care community, supporting charitable organisations, working closely with the communities in which we work and operate, and promoting responsible pet ownership in New Zealand and worldwide.
- With over seventy per cent of New Zealand households owning pets, Nestlé Purina is servicing a growing market.
- Throughout the company's long history in the pet care business, it has built strong brands such as TUX, FRISKIES and FANCY FEAST.
- In 2002 the company acquired Ralston Purina, which saw the introduction of brands such as Purina ONE, BENEFUL and PRO PLAN.