



18 March 2020

## **AN OPEN STATEMENT FROM GAPFA REGARDING PETS AND PET FOOD DURING COVID -19 PRECAUTIONS**

The members of the global pet food industry and pet food companies are very concerned by the threat to human health posed by the rapidly evolving coronavirus pandemic, and commend the swift actions taken by authorities at the national, regional, and local level around the world to help control the spread of COVID-19. We note that experts including WSAVA, OIE and WHO all cite scientific evidence that pets such as dogs and cats have not been shown to transmit the virus to humans and are not a source of infection.

**The pet food industry urges the public and policymakers to also consider the well-being of the pets loved by millions of citizens throughout the globe, and calls for ensuring that pet food retailers and pet services are deemed “essential” and are exempt from any mandatory closures during the crisis.**

There are more than 470 million dogs and more than 370 million cats plus hundreds of millions of other companion animals, and over half of the people around the globe have a pet living with them at home.

Pet owners consider their pets to be part of the family and they play a very important role for individuals and the society as a whole. It is therefore vital that businesses that provide products or services for the care of pets are included among the essential infrastructure that is allowed to remain open throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

**Just as food stores/supermarkets provide necessary supplies to humans, pet businesses must remain operational to ensure the continued care for millions of pet animals.**

Specialised pet food, supplements and even medication that are required to maintain the health of millions of pets are purchased primarily through specialised pet stores and veterinary clinics, not in standard food stores/supermarkets for humans. Keeping these specialised pet outlets open in many cases will therefore provide access of pet owners to vital supplies and protect pets from suffering.

The pet food industry therefore asks authorities to ensure that pet owners have the ability to provide appropriate care for their beloved pets, and list pet food as essential products as well as list pet stores and veterinary clinics as essential outlets that are exempt from any mandatory closures.

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**The Global Alliance of Pet Food Associations (GAPFA)** is a non-profit association, established in Belgium in 2014, representing national and regional pet food industry associations and companies of pet food manufacturers across the globe (13 Member Associations and 3 Corporate Members). GAPFA's mission is to support the health and wellbeing of dogs and cats and to promote the benefits of living with them, by providing a forum to address industry consensus on key issues of mutual interest. The Alliance works to promote adherence to food safety and nutritional standards enabling manufacturers to deliver wholesome, healthy and nutritious prepared pet foods; to promote the feeding of prepared pet food to support the health and wellbeing of pets; and to develop and disseminate educational resources which highlight and enhance the benefits of human pet interaction. For further information, please visit [www.gapfa.org](http://www.gapfa.org).