HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED UK PUPPY BUYING?

• The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic led to a worldwide increase in puppy buying, the so-called ‘Pandemic Puppy’ phenomenon.
• The RVC launched the Pandemic Puppies study in November 2020 to characterise and understand this phenomenon in the UK.
• Motivations and behaviours of UK owners who purchased puppies during the 2020 pandemic were compared to those of owners who purchased puppies during 2019.

BACKGROUND

KEY FINDINGS

Number of puppies in study
5,517

Average cost of a puppy
2019 - £995
2020 - £1550
= 55.8% increase

Compared to 2019 owners, Pandemic Puppy owners were more likely to:
- Be first time dog owners.
- Have children in their household.
- Pay a deposit before seeing your puppy.
- Meet your puppy without their littermates.

1 in 10 Pandemic Puppy owners had not considered buying a dog before the pandemic.

2 in 5 Pandemic Puppy owners felt the pandemic influenced their decision to buy a puppy.

Compared to 2019 owners, Pandemic Puppy owners were less likely to:
- Look for a breeder who performed health tests.
- View their puppy in person before buying them.
- See the environment their puppy was raised in.

REFERENCES


PUPPY BUYING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Visit your puppy in their home environment before you buy them
2. Make sure you meet your puppy with their mother and other littermates
3. Don’t feel pressured into buying any puppy and don’t pay a deposit before seeing your puppy in person
4. Make sure your puppy is over 8 weeks old when you bring them home
5. Ask for a copy of the health records of your puppy’s parents

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PANDEMIC PUPPY OWNERS

Many standard recommended puppy buying practices could not be followed in a COVID-19 safe manner, leading to higher risks of puppies coming from poor welfare sources. Contact your veterinarian if you have any concerns about your dog’s health.

As restrictions ease in the UK, owners of Pandemic Puppies can take steps to support their dogs with changes to their routine. Dogs Trust have a useful resource, covering topics such as introducing your dog to other dogs.

If you have more serious concerns about your dog’s behaviour, contact your veterinarian to discuss referral to an ABTC accredited animal or veterinary behaviourist.

For more information visit https://www.rvc.ac.uk/vetcompass/research-projects-and-opportunities/projects/rvc-pandemic-puppies-survey

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