



(Written by RICH SMITH)

## **Recession Anxiety Believed Spreading to Dogs and Cats; Owners' Glum Faces Blamed; Here's How to Calm Your Pet**

*There's no need for your four-legged friend to feel as insecure as you do about the recession. Among the expert suggestions for keeping your dog or cat on the emotionally sunny side despite your recession gloominess: maintain his or her accustomed routines, don't neglect health checkups and preventive care, and - on the offbeat side - buy your pet some flowers, those with anxiety-relieving properties.*

Langhorne, PA ([PRWeb](#)) December 30, 2008 – You're not the only one frightened by news of the deepening recession.

Also trembling in fear: your pet.

No, your dog or cat isn't reading the Wall Street Journal behind your back or channel-surfing to CNN's "Moneyline" after you leave the house.

But he or she may be picking up on the recession anxiety you experience as stock prices tumble and unemployment figures soar, recent animal-behavior research seems to suggest.

For example, a [University of Florida study](#) which received considerable attention earlier this month offered evidence that dogs are more perceptive of human conduct than previously understood.

Other research over the years has described humanlike cognitive and emotional characteristics in pets, such as an ability of dogs to read body language and sense fear in humans.

All of which suggests that your head-in-hands, slump-shouldered, glum-faced dejectedness over the tanking economy and the recession it portends can be telegraphed to your pet who might perhaps start fretting - and grieving – about it along with you.

Dr. Katarina Reilly at the [Veterinary Center of Greater Newburyport](#) in Salisbury, Mass., doubts whether dogs and cats are able to interpret downcast moods and pit-of-despair gestures in quite so sophisticated a manner.

However, she allows that owners do give their pets worry-inducing clues when big changes are coming.

"Your pet," she says, "may get anxious if your routine varies," as could be the case were you to lose your job because of the recession and start packing a suitcase in preparation for a trip to another city in search of employment.

Some veterinarians specialized in animal behavior advise against causing your pet emotional stress because that can trigger physical health problems.

Of course, it's not possible to engage your dog or cat in reasoned discourse, rationally spelling out that there's nothing to fear but fear itself. Still, there are ways to help your pet avoid sharing your recession-induced funk.

For starters, maintain your pet's accustomed routines. Walks in the park, having him or her sit in your lap while you watch a favorite television show, even visiting the vet for periodic checkups and shots should be continued in order to provide a reassuring sense of stability despite the instability of your recession-plagued finances just now, experts recommend.

Speaking of vet visits, protecting the health of your pet becomes even more important than usual during stressful, recessionary times like these, warns Dr. Jennifer Adler, internal medicine specialist at the [Center for Animal Referral and Emergency Services \(CARES\)](#) in Langhorne, Pa.

"Neglecting checkups can lead to big health problems, which are often difficult and expensive to treat," says Adler, who hints that some pet owners, in a misguided attempt to save money during a recession, skip vet checkups. "Preventative medicine is an excellent idea. For pet parents wanting to save money in the long run, wellness visits should be made a priority."

Reilly agrees. "It is very important pets routinely see a veterinarian to evaluate any changes in their health and catch any problems early," she says. "Blood work is important as well, since it uncovers things that cannot be seen by the eye. Catching problems early is important for your pet's health, and can avoid costly treatments if illnesses go undetected."

Other advice for keeping your pet from feeling as insecure as you do about the recession:

- **Exercise.** Adler says letting your pet romp more often (and with your boisterous participation, more energetically) can serve as a major stress reliever - for the both of you.
- **Don't let your treat cupboard go bare.** Make sure you keep on hand a supply of wholesome comfort-foods. For dogs, these might include all-natural biscuits and pesticide-free carrots. For cats, consider organic cheese treats and purest high-altitude-grown catnip leaves.
- **Moderate your voice.** It's easy to come across as a basket case practically every time you open your mouth to lament the banking crisis or some other aspect of the recession. Use care in the tone and tenor you take during such conversations while your pet is within earshot.
- **Give flowers.** Some naturopaths assert that aromatic exposure to certain fragrant blooms, such as olive blossom and the Star of Bethlehem flower, can sooth a traumatized canine. Obtain these from a local florist or nursery.