

## **Commitment towards human-animal bonding**

**Mars Petcare Germany remains focussed on supporting initiatives and projects aimed at improving the coexistence of people and animals – to the well being of both.**

For over 20 years, Mars through its brands Pedigree and Whiskas has been supporting the German Animal Welfare Association (*Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V.*). This is Germany's largest and most important animal protection organisation with its over 800,000 members and 500 participating animal shelters. Numerous animal protection activities are being promoted and carried out together as part of this cooperation.

Volunteers and committed pet owners also provide an essential – and invaluable large – contribution towards creating a liveable society and community that always includes pets. Therefore, an integral aspect of the strong commitment by Mars Germany is promoting the work of deserving initiatives and organisations.

Apart from a comprehensive practice-related engagement, this work also includes progressing research in the human-animal area on a global level since 1970 and communicating the relevant scientific findings.

As different as these supported approaches may be, they all show that animals are an important and indispensable part of our society. Another reason why our commitment is long-term.

## **Cooperation with the German Animal Welfare Association**

### **Animal protection as an expression of a human society**

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### **Support for local animal shelters**

One of the main actions is making contributions towards rescuing, caring for and placing abandoned animals back into families. That is why helping animal shelters at the local level is one important area we strongly support.

Apart from extensive food donations and special production runs for animal shelters, 40 custom vehicles for member clubs of the German Animal Welfare Association have been donated in the last seven years. These vehicles greatly benefit the work of pet shelters and are a big relief in carrying out their everyday activities.

This wide-ranging engagement is supplemented by supporting both national and regional animal shelter communications, providing contributions to shelter events and by remaining vigilant in case of an emergency at a local animal shelter.

### **German Animal Protection Award**

Time and again animal protection needs to be brought to the public's attention. Thus in 2008, the German Animal Protection Award was presented for the third time – an award created by the Whiskas and Pedigree brands, the German Animal Welfare Association, and the magazine "Funk Uhr". By receiving this award animal welfare activists making effective contributions to the well being of animals are recognised for their work.

### **Campaign: "You take my pet, I take yours" (*Nimmst du mein Tier, nehm' ich dein Tier*)**

Since 1994, the German Animal Welfare Association has been helping pet owners ensure their pets are well taken care of while they are on vacation. This program continues to be actively supported by both Pedigree and Whiskas.

In this campaign the animal shelters, together with the German Animal Welfare Association, bring together pet owners willing to take care of another pet while its owner is on vacation and vice versa. Pet owners can now go on vacation without worrying about their animal.

### **Campaign "Adoption Drive" (*Liebevolles Zuhause gesucht!*)**

Started in 2006, the Pedigree brand each year has been supporting placement activities for homeless dogs. This action was initiated by the German Animal Welfare Association as part of their "Adoption Drive" campaign. Altogether, several hundred thousand euro have been donated by Mars for the food, care and placement of dogs currently in re-homing centres.

### **Support for clubs and facilities**

Volunteers and committed pet owners also provide an essential – and invaluable large – contribution towards creating a liveable society and community that always includes pets.

Therefore, an integral aspect of the commitment of Mars in Germany – and in numerous other countries – is promoting the work of deserving initiatives and organisations.

### **Dogs for the Handicapped (*Hunde für Handicaps e.V.*)**

The club “Hunde für Handicaps e.V.” has been training special-assistance dogs for more than ten years as a partner and helper of disabled people. The handicapped dog owners are actively integrated into the training of their dog. In addition, the club is supporting people on handling issues of dog ownership and organising dog sports activities as a meaningful balance between handicapped dog owners and their pets.

Mars Petcare has been successfully working with “Hunde für Handicaps e.V.” for over ten years. The club is receiving support in many dog areas, from buying puppies right on to the completion of their training. Information material is created, and food for the dogs in training is provided by Mars. Moreover, for many years special charity actions such as “Ride for Help”, an initiative organised by Mars associates, are also helping to collect additional donations to benefit the work of the club.

**Animals Helping Humans (*Tiere helfen Menschen e.V.*)**

With nationwide more than 100 regional groups, the club “Tiere helfen Menschen e.V.” is the largest federation in Germany organising a visitor service of volunteers bringing along their pets.

More than 1000 volunteers are regularly visiting nursing homes, hospitals, facilities for children, homes for the handicapped, assisted living quarters, schools, kindergartens, prisons and people with physical or mental impairments. In addition, facilities are advised and supported on issues of pet ownership. The club also promotes further training for both professional and voluntary members through seminars, workshops, conferences, presentations and information.

Mars Petcare has been supporting the club already for 15 years in setting up a nationwide organisation, sponsoring education and training activities for volunteers and providing food for the visitor’s animals. Above that, Mars Petcare and the club are working together on communication material to promote the cause of animals helping people.

**Institute for Social Learning with Animals (*Institut für soziales Lernen mit Tieren*)**

Since 1994, the “Institut für soziales Lernen mit Tieren” has been working with pets and farm animals in educational, social and custodial facilities. The animals are helping to create positive experiences for children, juveniles and adults by giving them the opportunity to build self-confidence and meaningful relationships. The focus is on initiating the relationship between humans and animals that is oriented towards improving senses and perception. Animal-supported therapy for disabled children is also offered as part of this program. Since 2001, the institute is also offering an occupational training program for the areas

of therapy, educational science and social work.

Mars has been working closely with the institute for more than 10 years. The company is creating documents and materials for occupational training and supporting the offer "compact therapy for disabled children". Moreover, funds are collected for the institute's work through special donation campaigns, e.g. as part of the World Animal Week.

### **Promoting worldwide research**

**Since 1970, Mars has been promoting ongoing and new research in the human-animal area and the communication of relevant scientific findings.**

Due to the multifaceted research and support given to the science community, Mars played a significant role in establishing human-animal bonding as part of a scientifically recognised research field that is today deeply seated in numerous facilities and universities.

In 2007, the company was presented with the "IAHAIO Pioneer Award" in recognition of their long-standing commitment to science. The board of the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO) rewarded Mars for the outstanding contributions made in the last 30 years towards a better knowledge and understanding of human-animal bonding.

**Commitment towards the applied science of human-animal bonding in Germany**

For more than 20 years, Mars Petcare Germany has been intensely supporting the work of the Research Group for Pets in Society (*Forschungskreis Heimtiere in der Gesellschaft*), an initiative founded in 1988 by renowned scientists and animal experts. During this time the company has sponsored numerous studies and research into the social, health and psychological aspects of human-animal bonding. The work of this research group, which represents the national IAHAIO organisation, has largely contributed to the fact that this field of research is intensely being studied by an increasing number of scientists with steadily growing areas of application.

The significance of this new inter-disciplinary science field became obvious during conventions held on human-animals bonding in 2007 and 2008, which were substantially supported by Mars and instantly became the largest and most important events on this subject area in the German-speaking countries with a participation of over 400 people at each event.