



## THE MARKET

The United States is home to over 134 million dogs and cats. Six out of 10 households in the United States own a pet, and 90 percent of those pets are dogs or cats. Since 1990, the cat population has risen 25 percent. The average cat owner has 2.1 cats, and cat ownership is expected to increase 6 percent between 2000 and 2005, keeping pace with U.S. household growth. Lifestyle and demographic shifts favor pets such as cats, because of both their ease of care and busier consumer lifestyles.

Research shows that pet owners are in stores more often and spend more money per trip than do non-pet owners. Expenditures for pet care are growing at more than 7 percent each year. In terms of total grocery/mass dollar sales, the pet aisle ranks number three in the store.

Cat owners themselves are a special breed. An oft-heard homily is that “For cat owners who think they own their cats, in a cat’s mind, the reverse is quite true.” Whether a family lives with one of the ubiquitous American Shorthairs or a more exotic Abyssinian, people view their cats as part of the family — unique individuals to be nurtured and appreciated as much as any family member. Meow Mix is a perfect fit for this type of cat family.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Meow Mix is the number-one brand of dry cat food in the United States, which is no small feat. With the battle for grocery-store shelf space



always intense, and when so many companies offer seemingly endless varieties of their product, Meow Mix makes cat owners this simple offer: Buy this product and you can be assured that your cat is eating a tasty blend of food that will keep him or her healthy at all stages of life.

The Meow Mix brand has developed significant equity with its signature yellow packaging and tagline, “Tastes so good cats ask for it by name!”

The Meow Mix jingle has been an integral part of all marketing efforts since its introduction in 1974.

## HISTORY

Ralston Purina first introduced Meow Mix in 1974. Nestlé later purchased Ralston Purina but needed to divest its Meow Mix and Alley Cat brands based on FTC concerns, at which point in time The Meow Mix Company was formed. The Meow Mix Company is now a privately held and completely cat-focused company based in Secaucus, New Jersey.

## THE PRODUCT

The Meow Mix Company offers customers two brands of cat food: Meow Mix and Alley Cat.

Meow Mix is a 100 percent nutritionally complete and tasty diet for cats in all life stages. Two delicious flavors are available for cats to enjoy: Original and Seafood Middles. Original Meow Mix is a tantalizing mixture of flavors and shapes (chicken, turkey, salmon, and oceanfish). Meow Mix Seafood Middles offer scrumptious mackerel and tuna flavors with crunchy, seafood-flavored middles.

Pleasing to the cats are the tempting taste and variety of the Meow Mix blends. Of greater importance to cat owners are the healthful aspects of Meow Mix. The brand offers complete and balanced nutrition for cats, com-

ing packed with wholesome grains, proteins, and other high-quality ingredients. Meow Mix gives cats everything they need for strong bones, healthy teeth, shiny coat, and lots of energy.

Alley Cat is America’s number-one selling value brand of cat food. Alley Cat provides 100 percent complete and balanced nutrition at a great price and is



available in two delicious flavors that cats love: poultry and seafood, and oceanfish and tuna. And just because Alley Cat is a value-focused brand doesn't mean that cat owners are holding back on providing their cats the nutrition they need. Alley Cat is enriched with essential vitamins to keep cats healthy, while the cats enjoy the great taste and fun shapes. The crunchy morsels of Alley Cat also ensure healthy teeth.

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Meow Mix Company remains focused on building the brand's equity while raising brand awareness to all-new levels. During 2002, the company brought back its 1974 commercial by refreshing the way that the jingle has been used over the past 30 years.

Meow Mix is also making available a full new line of toys and accessories designed to entertain and stimulate cats and to allow owners to spend more quality time with them. Such items include the Meow Dangler, the Meow Puff Ball, the Meow Mouth Treater, and accessories including food and water bowls, pet blankets, and pet pillows.



On September 16, 2002, The Meow Mix Company opened its wholly owned plant in Decatur, Alabama. The new plant will be the only pet food plant in the United States that is 100 percent dedicated to producing dry cat food, affirming the company's commitment to make the best cat food in America.



### PROMOTION

With a cultural icon like the Meow Mix jingle, the challenge becomes keeping such a creative concept top of mind while not wearing it out in the minds of consumers, or in Meow Mix's case, purchasers. To that end, Meow Mix is constantly developing different ways to enhance and freshen the jingle. One way the company accomplished this feat in 2002 was to add VH-1-style "pop-ups" to its commercials. The jingle's presence in *Austin Powers* certainly didn't hurt either. In September 2002, Meow Mix introduced its new "Catchy Tune" commercial.

Meow TV — a new creative element in the Meow Mix mix — is the first television programming created for cats and their owners. The purpose of this ongoing show will be not only to raise brand awareness for cat food purchasers, but also to offer entertainment for the cats

themselves, with squirrels, birds, bouncing balls, and other cat-pleasing visuals dancing across the screen.

And, Meow TV isn't the only form of entertainment that Meow Mix has to offer. Don't be surprised if you see an 18-foot-long calico cat heading your way. That's just one of the company's famous Meow Mix Mobiles making its way across the country to further entertain and educate consumers. The Meow Mix Mobile Tour is scheduled to cross the United States throughout 2003, inviting cat owners to sing the Meow Mix jingle when they see the vehicle. Meow Mix is also using the Mobile Tour to build relationships with retailers.

*Meowmix.com* is a Web site with the theme of "Keeping Cats Happy" and offers a fun place for cat owners to show off their cats and find product information. On the Web site, cats and their owners can find fun and games, product news, sweepstakes, loyalty programs, and photo contests.



### BRAND VALUES

From advertising to sales, the central focus of the Meow Mix Company is keeping cats happy. What else is there to say?

### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT MEOW MIX

- The Meow Mix Mobile is an 18-foot-long calico cat licking its chops, weighing 9,850 pounds and with a motorized tongue that does 20 whisker-to-whisker licks per minute.
- On *meowmix.com*, visitors can vote for their favorite photo of a cat owner with a bag of Meow Mix. At press time, posted pictures included Meow Mix at the Eiffel Tower and the Gateway Arch, and a smiling couple holding a bag of Meow Mix and magnum of champagne. The person who submitted the favored photo in the contest won \$500 and a year's supply of Meow Mix.
- Studies have shown that Meow Mix tastes better to cats than other cat food brands.
- Among cat owners in the United States, Meow Mix has a 93 percent brand awareness, the highest of any dry cat food brand.
- Meow Mix has some unique customer testimonials in its files: According to one Meow Mix fan, not only do his four cats love Meow Mix, but his pit bull loves it, too. Meow Mix also has received reports from happy turkey and iguana owners who say that their animals enjoy a Meow Mix meal.