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## N E W S     R E L E A S E

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### **PET CLONING UNDER SCRUTINY**

#### **New Report Questions the Science, Animal Welfare, Lack of Oversight, Ethics and Consumer Fraud of the Pet Cloning Industry**

(USNEWSWIRE) Jenkintown, PA— A new report, *Pet Cloning: Separating Fact from Fluff*, highlighting the dangers of pet cloning was released today by the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS). This report comes on the heels of a legal petition filed with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on February 15, 2005 asking the government agency to regulate companies which are cloning and genetically modifying pet animals; and a bill announced on February 9, 2005, in the California state legislature asking the state to ban the transfer and sale of cloned and genetically modified pets.

Based on two years of investigation, the newly released report contains published statements and evidence from mainstream scientific literature illustrating the challenges to this new industry. The report is designed to educate the public about the dangers and concerns surrounding pet cloning which include animal welfare, questionable science, lack of oversight, consumer deception, and ethics, so they can make an informed decision about the acceptability of cloning cats and dogs.

There is some existing data on current public opinion. In 2004, AAVS commissioned a national survey that indicated 80 percent of the respondents were opposed to cloning cats and dogs for pets, and 84 percent feel that companies should not be allowed to sell genetically engineered animals as pets. These results echo those of other national surveys, and reflect the concerns expressed by leading bioethicists and scientists.

“The irony is that if pet lovers knew the dangers to cats and dogs caused by pet cloning—currently a completely unregulated industry employing inefficient technology—they would be appalled,” said Tina Nelson, Executive Director of AAVS. “Our report is designed to educate the vast majority of Americans who love their pets and wouldn’t dream of cloning them if they knew the facts.”

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Here are some of the key facts detailed in the new report:

- Cloned animals suffer serious health problems and often die. Published scientific studies indicate that, of the animals that survive gestation and birth, many die within the first few days, suffer from physical deformities and other medical conditions, and/or die prematurely.
- Pet cloning involves the invasive use of other animals as 'surrogate mothers.' Cats and dogs are used in cloning experiments that involve injecting them with hormones, surgically implanting cloned embryos, and removing the cloned offspring via Caesarian section. Miscarriage also is common.
- Cloning cats and dogs will exacerbate the U.S. pet overpopulation problem. Millions of healthy animals are euthanized each year, because there are not enough adopting homes for them. Individuals who seek an animal resembling their own companion animal can visit a local shelter or search a website such as PetFinder.org.
- The pet cloning industry is currently operating without federal regulatory oversight in violation of the law. Pet cloning companies are essentially conducting animal experiments, but have had no accountability to regulatory agencies charged with enforcing animal welfare laws. Therefore, there are no inspections and no authenticated public record of how many animals are used in experiments or their fate.
- Consumers are being misled. Cloning companies are exploiting the emotions associated with pet loss. The cloned animal might not resemble the original, and the cloned animal will likely have unpredictable health conditions as a result of cloning. Although breed traits may express themselves in some cloned animals, it is almost certain that they will have different personalities from the original animals.
- Veterinarians may be unprepared to treat ill cloned pets. General veterinary practitioners have no training with regard to the caring for genetically-altered animals.
- The ethical implications of cloning are controversial. There has been little public debate regarding the genetic manipulation of animals. Many people are opposed to pet cloning because it is unnatural and does not benefit society.
- The public is opposed to the cloning or genetic engineering of companion animals. Several national polls conducted independently indicated that U.S. citizens overwhelmingly oppose pet cloning. One survey shows that 84 percent oppose companies selling genetically modified pets.

For more information, or a copy of the report, contact the American Anti-Vivisection Society or log onto [www.NoPetCloning.org](http://www.NoPetCloning.org).

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