

The Truth About Pet Cloning

Cloning Cloning

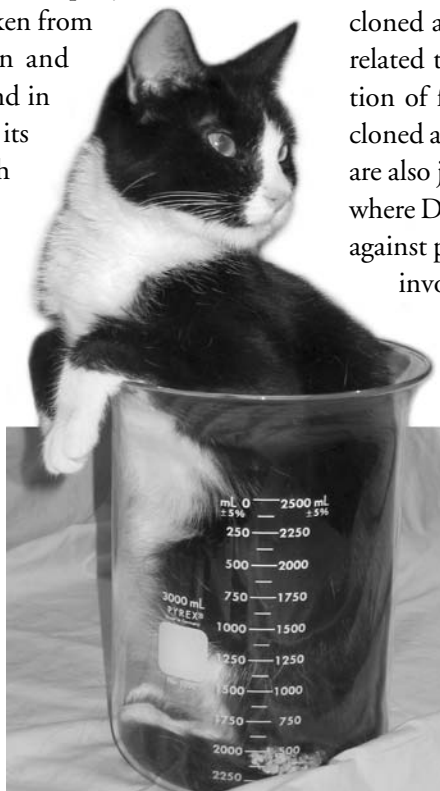
***It only guarantees animal suffering
and consumer fraud***

*Crystal Miller-Spiegel
American Anti-Vivisection Society*

The saga began when, on a whim in 1997, an eccentric billionaire decided that he wanted to have his dog Missy cloned. He poured millions of dollars into a dog cloning project at Texas A&M University that never resulted in a live cloned dog but did result in the first successful birth of a cloned cat in 2001. Frustrated that A&M was unable to clone a dog, he started a company solely to experiment with dog and cat cloning and develop a market in cloned pets. This company, and a few others in the U.S., soon began offering a dog and cat genetic banking service for people who wished to clone a companion animal.

Last year, the billionaire's company launched a "Nine Lives Extravaganza" and offered to take six orders from people who wished to have a cloned version of their feline companion for \$50,000. It also planned to clone three kittens using DNA from company employees' cats. The company reported that only five orders were taken from the public. Three kittens were born and given to the company's employees, and in December 2004, the company made its first-ever sale of a cloned cat—a fourth kitten—named Little Nicky. Despite its promise to fulfill all five orders from the public by December, the company has not presented the other four kittens.

News about the sale of Little Nicky spread around the world, from small-town U.S. newspapers to Aljazeera in the Middle East. While many people were shocked by the amount of money paid to clone the kitten, the animal welfare and consumer fraud issues involved in pet cloning are even more deplorable.



Cloned animals and their "surrogates" suffer

Animal cloning studies published in science journals consistently show that cloned cats and other animals of various species rarely survive through pregnancy and birth. Cloning experts stress that, of the tiny percentage who do survive, many suffer serious health problems (such as kidney failure and breathing complications) and deformities and often die at a young age. Because so few cloned cats have survived cloning, and because cats usually live 12 years or more, no long-term studies demonstrate that cloned pets will live relatively normal, healthy lives. Yet, pet cloning companies are forging ahead to market cloned pets—forecasting multi-billion dollar profits—with scarce support from the scientific community.

Other animals are used as "surrogates" to give birth to cloned animals. They undergo repeated invasive procedures related to the surgical implantation of embryos and extraction of fetuses. Given the high incidence of miscarriage of cloned animals, the surrogate mothers' health and well-being are also jeopardized. In fact, scientists at the Roslin Institute, where Dolly the sheep was cloned, issued a position statement against pet cloning primarily because of the animal suffering involved in the cloning process.

Pet cloning companies also operate without any government oversight requiring basic standards of animal care and use. The public has no way of knowing if the animals used to produce cloned pets are treated humanely, how many are used, or their fate.

False promises mislead the public

Despite these significant shortcomings, pet cloning companies encourage veterinarians to promote DNA banking to their grieving clients as a way to preserve the qualities of a terminally



*While companies are
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ill or recently deceased cat or dog. The reality is, while a cloned animal might be genetically identical to the original cat or dog, she will not look or behave the same. Pet cloning companies continue to dupe the public and profit from DNA banking services, even though very few cats have been cloned and no dog has ever been cloned successfully anywhere in the world. Meanwhile, millions of healthy cats and dogs are euthanized in shelters across the country each year simply because there aren't enough homes for them.

Though there has been little public debate over the ethics of pet cloning, surveys show that the majority of Americans are opposed to cloning cats and dogs for pets. Bioethicists and scientists from many prestigious universities, such as Stanford, Johns Hopkins and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have also voiced concern over the pet cloning industry's exploitation of animals and its deceptive advertising tactics. Many people view pet cloning as an unnecessary venture that is unnatural and offers no overall benefit to society.

The human-animal bond is strong. Pet cloning companies are exploiting this relationship by offering false hope and, in the process, harming animals by treating them as mere producers and products. While on the surface it might seem

that people seeking to clone a companion animal are among the greatest of animal lovers, an examination of the serious consequences to the animals involved reveals that they really would be doing more harm than good.

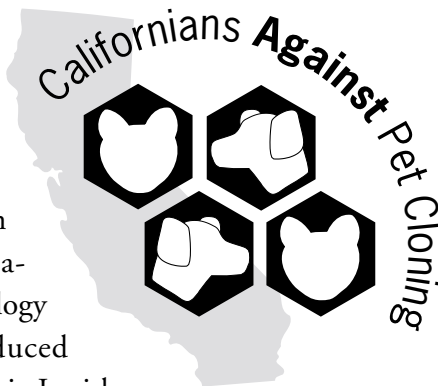
The American Anti-Vivisection Society has launched a campaign to alert the public about this exploitation of animals and the public. For more information, please visit www.NoPetCloning.org.

Crystal Miller-Spiegel is a senior policy analyst with the American Anti-Vivisection Society, an organization dedicated to ending experimentation on animals in research, testing and education. Pictured here are Crystal and Pixie, a cat that is available for adoption at City of Sacramento Animal Care Services as of January 29, 2005.



HOW IS UAN FIGHTING PET CLONING?

Californians Against Pet Cloning, a coalition effort led by United Animal Nations, the American Anti-Vivisection Society and the International Center for Technology Assessment, just introduced legislation in the California Legislature to ban the sale of cloned and genetically engineered companion animals in California. The bill, sponsored by Assemblyman Lloyd Levine (D-Van Nuys), is expected to garner support from dozens of animal protection, consumer protection and ethical science organizations.



GET INVOLVED!

UAN will need your help passing this important legislation! Whether you live in California or not, please visit www.uan.org and join our email newsletter "Action Alert" team so that we can keep you updated on our progress.

Why California?

"Hot" of Pet Cloning

Two of the three companies selling cloned and genetically engineered companion animals are based in California (Genetic Savings & Clone in Sausalito and Geneticas in Los Angeles).

Pet-Friendly Citizenry

Two-thirds of California households include companion animals and spend billions of dollars annually on veterinary services and pet-related products.

Pet Overpopulation Concerns

Nearly one million dogs and cats are killed each year in more than 200 animal shelters.

Progressive Consumer Protection Laws

California is a national leader in protecting consumers from fraud and harmful products.