



Pet Cloning: Background

The History of Commercial Pet Cloning

Historically, pet cloning began in 1997, when an Arizona billionaire asked his entrepreneurial friend to help him find a team of scientists who could clone his dog Missy. He poured millions of dollars into what became both the “Missypublicity Project” and a Sausalito, California-based, for-profit company called Genetic Savings & Clone, Inc. (GSC, Inc.) and funded cat and dog cloning experiments at Texas A&M University.



Ironically, despite several attempts, no dog has been cloned successfully. According to the firm, at least 245 dogs and cats were part of the original group used in the failed cloning experiments. The first successful effort to clone a cat happened at Texas A&M in December 2001 and resulted in the birth of a kitten named CC. GSC, Inc. and the veterinary scientists at Texas A&M have since parted ways over differing scientific opinions, but GSC, Inc. has kept its own private laboratory in Texas dedicated solely to cloning pets. It also announced plans to open a new laboratory outside Madison, Wisconsin in 2005.



In 2004, GSC, Inc. began advertising the first-ever public sale of cloned cats. Billed as the “Nine Lives Extravaganza,” GSC, Inc. publicized its plan to clone six cats at a cost of \$50,000 each and three cats who would be used for exhibits. The company reported that five orders were taken from the public and promised to fulfill them by November 2004. In August 2004, GSC, Inc. announced the June births of two cats, Baba Ganoush and Tabouli, and a third kitten named Peaches was later born. Baba Ganoush, Peaches, and Tabouli have been exhibited at cat shows around the country. In an October 2004 *New York Times* article, the company’s CEO stated that the company had “[several cat] pregnancies in progress.” In December 2004, the company made its first sale of a cloned animal, a kitten named Little Nicky, and in February 2005, another kitten (named Little Gizmo) was sold. As of mid-April 2005, GSC, Inc. has not reported the status of the orders for the other three cloned cats who originally were promised to be delivered to clients in November 2004.



In addition to actual pet cloning, the corporation also advertises itself as a DNA ‘bank.’ This allows people to save or ‘bank’ a pet’s DNA so they can clone them later. The cost for this varies from \$295 to \$1,395 plus \$100-\$150 annually for storage fees. The company also announced plans to offer dog cloning in 2005, despite the fact that no canine has ever been cloned successfully. The company’s CEO forecasts, “It’s a multibillion-dollar business waiting to happen.”

GSC, Inc. is the only firm presently selling cloned companion animals. Other companies that have purported to engage in pet cloning in the U.S. are Lazon Biotechnologies (now defunct), ForeverPet, and PerPETuate, Inc., although their activities are not as well documented. PerPETuate’s emphasis is currently on ‘banking’ of animal tissues, and ForeverPet claims that it can clone a cat, though there is no evidence that this has been accomplished by this company. ForeverPet lists the cost to clone a cat at \$19,995 and DNA banking for \$2,995. ForeverPet is operated by Geneticas, a company that claims it soon will sell genetically modified ‘hypoallergenic’ cats (though none are known to exist).

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WHY OPPOSE PET CLONING?

- **Cloned animals suffer serious health problems and often die.** Several published scientific studies indicate that, of the animals who survive gestation and birth, many die within the first few days of life, suffer from physical deformities and other medical conditions, and/or die prematurely.
- **Pet cloning also involves the invasive use of other animals who are purchased from animal dealers and used as 'surrogate mothers.'** Cats and dogs are repeatedly used in cloning experiments that involve injecting them with hormones, surgically implanting cloned embryos, and removing the cloned offspring via Caesarian section. Miscarriage is also common.
- **Cloning cats and dogs will exacerbate the already severe and costly animal overpopulation problem in the United States.** Millions of animals are euthanized each year, because there are not enough adopting homes for them. Cloned pets who are sold are not required to be spayed or neutered. Pet cloning companies forecast sales of thousands of animals, and people who pay tens of thousands of dollars for animals likely will want to breed the animals.
- **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 not be prepared to treat ailing animals who were born through cloning.** General veterinary practitioners have no training with regard to 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 in any way.
- **The American public is largely opposed to the cloning or genetic engineering of companion animals.** Several national polls conducted independently indicated that U.S. citizens overwhelmingly oppose pet cloning. A survey commissioned by AAVS also shows that the public largely opposes companies selling genetically modified pets.

To learn more or for references, please see the AAVS report
Pet Cloning: Separating Facts from Fluff.
Available at www.NoPetCloning.org



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