



Pet Cloning: Ethics

Ethical justification generally cannot be claimed for doing something simply because 'it might be possible.' Ethics poses the question, just because it *can* be done, *should* it be done?

To date, only one corporation is actively selling cloned cats and other companies that promote pet cloning (but have yet to offer it) exist only because they apparently have sufficient financial backing from individuals who want to create a pet cloning market.

Thus far, the pet cloning industry does not conduct research with the goal of improving human or veterinary medicine; it is strictly an entrepreneurial venture that involves experimenting with cats and dogs in unregulated labs to sell tissue storage and perhaps, cloned pets for up to \$50,000 each.

Bioethics and Philosophy

The leading U.S. bioethics expert, Arthur Caplan, Ph.D., Director of University of Pennsylvania's Center for Bioethics, has stated, "I think pet cloning is closer to a scam than it is a service.... I think from what's been learned so far in animal cloning, it's highly likely to produce stillborn, dying, and sick animals."

Other bioethicists and philosophers have also addressed this issue. Hilary Bok, Ph.D. of The Johns Hopkins University Department of Philosophy wrote an article for a 2002 issue of the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* entitled "Cloning Companion Animals is Wrong." Bok stated, "Cloning causes animals to suffer.... [Cloned animals] are much more likely than other animals to be miscarried, have birth defects, develop serious illnesses, and die prematurely.... One must ask whether enabling humans to clone their pets is important enough to justify the considerable suffering involved in learning how to do so..... If [these and other arguments] are sound, then people who want to clone their pets must be either mistaken about what cloning is or immoral."



David Magnus, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Medicine, and Philosophy at Stanford University and Director of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics, stated "The idea that somebody would spend \$50,000 for a cat when they can go to any shelter and rescue one is absurd. Add to that the fact that spending the \$50,000 puts this new cat at medical risk of dying, and it's not only absurd, it's unethical. That a company would be trying to create a market for this is wrong." "We can produce a genetically identical copy of our pet, but we delude ourselves if we think we have somehow accomplished something by this substitution," wrote Lawrence Hinman, Ph.D., Director of the Values Institute and Professor of Philosophy at the University of San Diego, in a commentary in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Cloning and Religion

Many people are opposed to pet cloning because it is unnatural and does not serve to benefit humankind. In some cases, religious leaders may support certain animal experiments, but pet cloning is seen as a frivolous venture with no societal benefit that results in grave consequences for the animals involved.

The Church of Scotland's Science, Religion, and Technology Project states, "...cloning a pet ranks as an essentially cosmetic application which is not morally justified. Just because someone is rich enough to pay does not make it morally justified, and indeed suggests a trivialisation of embryo science in diverting skills and knowledge away from meeting serious ethical needs on to something that for many would represent an excessive commodification of the animal."

(continued...)

(cont.)

Public Perception: Surveys

At the 2004 annual convention of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Autumn Fiester, Ph.D., a University of Pennsylvania bioethicist, noted, "This odd neglect [of public discussion and consideration] of the ethics of animal cloning may have serious repercussions for animals and human beings alike."

The issue of cloning animals usually arises in the context of the dangers of human cloning. Indeed, there has been little, if any, public debate regarding this new industry and the genetic manipulation of animals. However, when engaged on the issue, the public is largely opposed to pet cloning on ethical grounds.



According to an independent national survey commissioned by the American Anti-Vivisection Society, 80 percent of people in the U.S. are opposed to cloning companion animals such as cats and dogs, and 84 percent feel that companies should not be allowed to sell genetically engineered animals as pets. These results echo those of other na-

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



801 Old York Rd., #204, Jenkintown, PA 19046
www.NoPetCloning.org 800-SAY-AAVS