

# Should You Be Able to Clone Your Pet?

**T**hanks to advances in technology, scientists can extract cells from an animal and implant them into a surrogate mother. If all goes well, an animal with the same genes as the original—an identical twin—will be born. In the past 15 years, sheep, dogs, and cats have been successfully cloned. Some companies now offer pet-cloning services.

**YES** Have you ever owned a really special dog, cat, or other pet? Its personality, size, color, and athleticism come from its genetics.

Cloning now allows us to replicate the genetics of a beloved pet in the form of an “identical twin.” It isn’t exactly the same animal because we’re all products of our genes *and* our environment. But the similarities are striking.

The procedure is safe and has proved to be successful. CC, the first cloned cat in the U.S., turned 10 last year. She has even given birth to kittens!

Some people fear that cloning animals will lead to cloning humans. However, humans have made breeding decisions about animals—including pets and livestock—for centuries, and cloning is just another tool for that. There’s also concern that cloning leaves shelter animals without a home. But since the practice is used so rarely, it has no effect on the number of shelter animals that are adopted as pets.

Cloning isn’t for everyone or every pet. Yet surely there are some pets that owners would like to enjoy again—and again.

—BLAKE RUSSELL, CEO  
VIAGEN, INC. (A LIVESTOCK-CLONING COMPANY)  
AUSTIN, TEXAS

**NO** Pet cloning is a cruel deception. Most clones develop abnormally, and some grow so large before birth that both they and their surrogate

mothers die. The few that are born alive are often sick or deformed; about a third die within 30 days. Even in the best cases, the cloned animal is only a reminder of a beloved pet—it’s a different creature.

The only U.S. company to offer dog cloning abandoned it because the results were unpredictable. It couldn’t guarantee the welfare of the dozen or so dogs often needed to

produce a single puppy. Two companies in South Korea offer dog cloning, but mostly as a publicity stunt. The scientific community has accused both companies of unethical behavior.

Pets give us great comfort and thrive on our love. We do them no service—and plenty of harm—by treating them as replaceable toys. And is it right to spend \$100,000 on a clone when there are thousands of animals stuck in shelters? As the Humane Society says, “Pet cloning is *not* for pet lovers.”

—PETE SHANKS, AUTHOR  
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