



Michael Vick Appearance Protested

A Facebook page calling for a protest of the event had over 1,500 people listed as planning to attend.

The Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce was aware that some would disagree when the group decided to host Michael Vick as a guest speaker at their 2014 "Evening of Champions." More than 64,000 people apparently think the free agent quarterback -- who got out of jail in 2009 after serving 19 months for activities related to a brutal dogfighting ring and complicity in the killing of dogs -- hasn't reached his redemption stage quite yet.

The petition for Vick to be uninvited from the event stated, "Animal welfare advocates are more than disappointed...they're downright outraged that the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce has chosen a convicted felon who tortured, abused and killed countless innocent dogs through his Bad Newz Kennels compound to speak at an event that celebrates and honors local star athletes. Having Michael Vick featured as a role model at a chamber event that was conceived years ago to showcase sportsmanship and integrity is completely unacceptable and reprehensible, and shows that the chamber is out of touch with Wake County's citizens, who are compassionate people and want the best for our animals."

The chamber said that it did not plan the event as an honor for Vick, who partnered with The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) after his imprisonment to speak out against dog-fighting. "We're not celebrating Mr. Vick. He's here to tell a story, an interesting story, about the excesses of sports and celebrity and what it takes to become a better person," chamber President Harvey Schmitt said in an earlier interview. "Sometimes, it's good to hear from the dark side of celebrity."

When representatives of The Positive Pit Bull delivered the petition Monday morning, the chamber replied with a letter stating its respectful disagreement and plans to continue with the event, according to The Positive Pit Bull.

However, the impending winter storm forced the event to be postponed until Feb. 27. Vick was unavailable for the rescheduled event on Feb. 27 because he would be appearing at a charity event in Florida that day.

Sources: *Huffington Post*: <http://tinyurl.com/pq6hh6b> ; *News & Observer*: <http://tinyurl.com/m7svdbs>

Mixed Breeds Not Necessarily Healthier

Purebred dogs not always at higher risk for genetic disorders, study finds

If you think your mixed-breed pup is naturally hardier than the neighbor's purebred, you may want to think again. A new study by researchers at the University of California, Davis, indicates that mixed breeds don't necessarily have an advantage when it comes to inherited canine disorders.

Findings of the new study, available online in the June issue of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, are of particular interest because dogs are second only to humans in the number of identified genetic disorders that affect them.

The results provide a better understanding of the prevalence and source of such disorders, and could advance efforts to prevent and treat genetic ailments in both dogs and humans.

"Overall, the study showed that the prevalence of these genetic disorders among purebred and mixed-breed dogs depends on the specific condition," said animal physiologist Anita Oberbauer, professor and chair of the Department of Animal Science at UC Davis and lead author of the study.

She noted, for example, that elbow dysplasia and dilated cardiomyopathy, a heart condition, appeared more frequently among purebred dogs. But rupture of the cranial cruciate ligament in the knee was more common in mixed breeds.

"Results from this study give us insight into how dog breeding practices might be modified to reduce the prevalence of certain genetic disorders," Oberbauer said.

The researchers evaluated records for more than 90,000 purebred and mixed-breed dogs that were examined at UC Davis' veterinary medical teaching hospital between 1995 and 2010.

From this group, 27,254 dogs were identified as having one or more of 24 genetic disorders, including various types of cancers, heart diseases, endocrine-system ailments and orthopedic problems, as well as allergies, bloat, cataracts, epilepsy, an eye lens problem and a liver condition.

The 24 disorders were selected for the study because they can be diagnosed accurately, are highly prevalent in the overall dog population and are debilitating to the extent that owners would seek veterinary care for the animal. In addition, the selected disorders represent a variety of different locations and physiologic systems in the dog's body.

The researchers found that the prevalence of 13 of the 24 genetic disorders was approximately the same in purebred dogs as in their mixed-breed counterparts. Ten were found more frequently among purebred dogs, and one such disorder was more common in mixed-breeds.

The data also indicated that the more recently derived breeds or those breeds that shared a similar lineage were more susceptible to certain inherited disorders. For example, four of the top five breeds affected with elbow dysplasia were the Bernese mountain dog, Newfoundland, mastiff and Rottweiler — all from the mastiff-like lineage. This suggests that these breeds share gene mutations for elbow dysplasia because they were descended from a common ancestor.

In contrast, disorders that occurred equally among purebred and mixed-breed dogs appeared to represent ancient gene mutations that had become widely spread throughout the dog population. Such disorders included hip dysplasia, all of the tumor-causing cancers and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, a heart condition.

The study was supported by the Department of Animal Science, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and the California Agricultural Experiment Station at UC Davis.

Other members of the research team: Graduate student Thomas Bellumori, Professor Thomas Famula, and staff research assistant Janelle Belanger, all of the Department of Animal Science in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences; and Professor Danika Bannasch of the Department of Population, Health and Reproduction in the School of Veterinary Medicine.

About UC Davis

For more than 100 years, UC Davis has been one place where people are bettering humanity and our natural world while seeking solutions to some of our most pressing challenges. Located near the state capital, UC Davis has more than 33,000 students, over 2,500 faculty and more than 21,000 staff, an annual research budget of over \$750 million, a comprehensive health system and 13 specialized research centers. The university offers interdisciplinary graduate study and more than 100 undergraduate majors in four colleges — Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Biological Sciences, Engineering, and Letters and Science. It also houses six professional schools — Education, Law, Management, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing. *Source:* <http://tinyurl.com/qagho7s>

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New Burlington Animal Services Director

Before being named Burlington Animal Services director last month, Jessica Arias worked nine years as the shelter director in Orange County. Arias comes to Burlington with big ideas and hopes to improve the lives of animals here. She replaces Greg Seel, retired assistant Burlington Police Chief, who left the part-time position late last year. Arias was hired full-time.

On her agenda are increasing public-private partnerships with the animal shelter, working more closely with rescue groups to place more dogs and cats in permanent homes, and decreasing the number of animals taken in and euthanized in Burlington.

“It’s a challenge everywhere, but while I was at Orange County, we were very successful in increasing our adoption numbers,” Arias said. “You have to find a few things to focus on that really have an impact, and do those well.”

Social media, more volunteer opportunities and a more user-friendly website are places to start. All the animals available for adoption at the Burlington Pet Adoption Center can already be viewed at www.PetHarbor.com, but finding them involves ticking the right boxes and finding the right buttons. A better-organized website would make it a “one-click” process, Arias said.

Her biggest plans involve pointing the city toward building a new animal shelter. The current shelter, on Stone Quarry Road, was built in the late 1960s or early 1970s. It wasn’t built with animals’ long-term health in mind, but with the idea of containing animals that were public health risks.

A new animal shelter would be more sanitary, have more room for dogs and cats to recreate, and provide better living quarters.

More at link: <http://tinyurl.com/n2zxe3g>

Health Implications of Early Spay and Neuter in Dogs

AKC Canine Health Foundation Announces Continued Funding for Research into Health Implications of Early Spay and Neuter in Dogs

01/30/2014. The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) is pleased to announce additional funding for continuing research on the health implications of early spay and neuter in dogs. The funding was awarded to Dr. Benjamin L. Hart of the University of California, Davis to expand his earlier work and consider breed differences in vulnerability to joint disorders and risks of various cancers after early or late spay/neuter.

Last year, Dr. Hart and a team of researchers published their phase one findings, “Neutering Dogs: Effects on Joint Disorders and Cancers in Golden Retrievers,” also funded by CHF, in the prominent, open access journal PLOS One, suggesting that veterinarians should be more cautious about the age at which they spay and neuter in order to protect the overall health of dogs. Currently, most dogs in the United States are spayed or neutered prior to maturity. Dr. Hart’s first phase of research looked at incidence of cancer diagnoses and joint problems in one breed -- Golden Retrievers -- by neuter status: early (before 12 months old), late (12 months or older), and intact. Consistent with previous studies on the topic, the results showed increased likelihood of hemangiosarcoma, lymphoma, mast cell tumors, and canine cruciate ligament (CCL) rupture in neutered dogs.



Phase two of Dr. Hart’s research will include: Labrador Retrievers, German Shepherd Dogs and Dachshunds. Rottweilers, Chihuahuas, Standard Poodles and Miniature Poodles will be included if resources and patient data are available. The expectation is that by the inclusion of multiple breeds in phase two, Dr. Hart will be able to develop a generalized understanding of the impact of early spay and neuter on disease risk in dogs. This in turn will enable veterinarians and breeders to make data-driven recommendations regarding timing of spay/neuter procedures to reduce the risk of development of multiple devastating diseases.

“Dr. Hart’s landmark study was the first to provide evidence for when to spay or neuter dogs,” said Dr. Shila Nordone, Chief Scientific Officer for the AKC Canine Health Foundation. “We are pleased to help fund Dr. Hart’s work and we hope that the additional findings through phase two will assist the veterinary community as they assess recommendations on when to spay or neuter and how the timing of these procedures may impact the health of dogs.”

According to Nordone, “We believe that the impact of Dr. Hart’s research will be immediate and broad. CCL, for example, is a disease that is painful, debilitating, and costs dog owners \$1 billion annually to treat. The AKC Canine Health Foundation is committed to funding research, like Dr. Hart’s study, that can lead to evidence-based health recommendations. Armed with prudent guidelines for when to spay and neuter dogs we will have a significant impact on the quality of life for dogs.”

Source: AKC Canine Health Foundation <http://tinyurl.com/k53vc8t>

Grant for Carolina Animal Rescue and Adoption

Shelter chosen for state's only MuttNation grant

Carolina Animal Rescue and Adoption (CARA), a Sanford shelter, recently received a grant from country star Miranda Lambert's charity, the MuttNation Foundation. Lambert's group gave \$3,000 to 50 animal shelters, one in each state. The foundation deemed CARA the most worthy in North Carolina. MuttNation officials said they went through a detailed checklist for every group, making sure the grant recipients were worthy. Shelters had to have a low kill rate and a high adoption rate (CARA doesn't euthanize any animals), as well as a large pool of active volunteers, low administrative costs, an up-to-date website and other forms of communication, a strong track record of supporting spay and neuter campaigns, and more. *Source: Sanford Herald*
<http://tinyurl.com/my7b93n>

New Tools for Assessing Chronic Pain in Cats

(Winn grant report) Posted: 10 Feb 2014 06:00 AM PST Winn Feline Foundation

W12-027: Development of outcome assessment instruments for chronic pain in cats, \$24,513
Dorothy Cimino Brown, DVM, DACVS; University of Pennsylvania

The goal of this study was to develop two 'tools' that could be used to measure chronic pain in cats and then design appropriate studies that will identify new treatments for pain. The first tool is the Feline Brief Pain Inventory (FBPI), which is an owner completed questionnaire that will identify and report on how the cat behaves at home, focusing on the behaviors that are related to chronic pain. Three focus group sessions were completed as step one of development of the Feline Brief Pain Inventory. We now know which behaviors should be incorporated into a first version of the FBPI to undergo testing for validity and reliability in further studies.

The second tool is a small activity monitor that can easily be worn on the cat's collar during normal activities at home. The investigators have determined that the cat should wear the monitor for seven consecutive days in order to collect a fairly consistent estimate of a cat's routine activity while including the days of highest and most variable activity. Comparing seven-day intervals of activity over time in companion cats could be useful for determining the efficacy of interventions or monitoring the progression of disease. Although further investigation is necessary, this device continues to have potential as an objective tool for measuring activity in companion cats in the setting where they are found most often, at home with their owners. [MK]

See also:

Brown DC, Boston RC, Coyne JC, et al. Ability of the canine brief pain inventory to detect response to treatment in dogs with osteoarthritis. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2008;233:1278-1283. [[Free, full text](#)]

Brown DC, Boston RC, Farrar JT. Use of an activity monitor to detect response to treatment in dogs with osteoarthritis. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2010;237:66-70. [[Free, full text](#)]

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