

May 7, 2009

Dr. James O. Cook, President
American Veterinary Medical Association

One page via fax: 847-925-1329

Dear Dr. Cook:

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and its more than 2 million members and supporters, some of whom are veterinarians and almost all of whom have a veterinarian. We were shocked to learn that representatives from Pike's Peak Fish Market are scheduled to throw dead fish during the upcoming AVMA Convention as part of an audience participation event. It is appalling that a veterinary organization, whose purpose is to relieve animal suffering, would promote an event in which dead animals are tossed around as a gimmick.

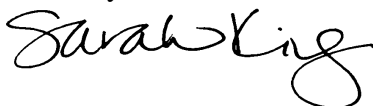
There is now ample scientific evidence that fish feel pain. A recent edition of the journal *Fish and Fisheries* cited more than 500 research papers on fish intelligence proving that fish are intelligent animals, can use tools, and have impressive long-term memories and sophisticated social structures. Dr. Donald Broom, scientific advisor to the British government, has said, "The scientific literature is quite clear. Anatomically, physiologically, and biologically, the pain system in fish is virtually the same as in birds and mammals."

When fish such as those used in these "tosses" are pulled up from the depths of the ocean, they undergo an excruciatingly painful decompression process. Often the intense pressure ruptures their swim bladders and damages other internal organs. Then they're tossed onboard to slowly suffocate or to be bludgeoned to death. Others are still alive when they are cut open. That is what the fish toss celebrates: cruelty to marine animals.

Surely the AVMA would not describe an event as "fun, educational and inspiring" if the animals being tossed around were dead lambs, hamsters, or cats.

Please contact me at 757-962-8201 or SarahK@peta.org to let me know immediately that this disgusting event will be canceled.

Sincerely,



Sarah King
Director



PETA

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
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