

June 9, 2009

Dr. James O. Cook  
President  
American Veterinary Medical Association

**1 page via fax: 847-925-1329**

Dear Dr. Cook:

Do not underestimate how many of our more than 2 million members and supporters use a veterinarian. Indeed, some of them are veterinarians. We are sorry to hear that you have not canceled your plan to have representatives from Pike Place Fish Market throw dead fish around with conference participants during the upcoming AVMA Convention. You should know that people who care about animals are appalled that a veterinary organization, whose purpose is to represent the interests of those whose jobs involve protecting the well-being of animals, would promote an event in which animals are treated so disrespectfully and are handled as if they were toys.

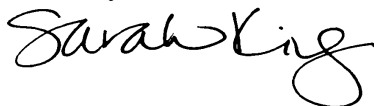
As we wrote earlier, there is more than enough scientific evidence to prove that fish feel pain and that they do not die well at the hands of the fishing industry. As inconvenient as it might be to face these facts, a recent edition of the journal *Fish and Fisheries* cited more than 500 research papers on fish intelligence proving that fish are smart, 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 the fish used in these "tosses" are pulled up from the depths of the ocean, they undergo the excruciating pain of decompression. The intense pressure often ruptures their swim bladders and damages other internal organs. Then the fish slowly suffocate or are bludgeoned to death. Others are still alive when they are cut open. 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 lambs, hamsters, or cats. We urge you to cancel this event—but, if you are hellbent on tossing fish, PETA will gladly pay for rubber fish to replace the real ones.

Please contact me at 757-962-8201 or [SarahK@peta.org](mailto:SarahK@peta.org) so that we can notify our membership of your decision.

Sincerely,



Sarah King  
Director



**PETA**

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL  
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