

Dog DNA Offers I.D. to Un-scooped Poop

BioPet Vet Lab's PooPrints program points out an unhealthy problem that's piling up.

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A company in Knoxville, Tenn., has put a twist on the Neighborhood Watch Program by starting a new neighborhood DNA program for dog owners: PooPrints.

The PooPrints program was born in response to the potential health hazards caused by un-scooped dog waste, according to the company. While the majority of dog owners are responsible, there are people who don't pick up after their pets and leave an unsightly mess behind, said Meg Retinger, chief administrative officer of BioPet Vet Lab, the DNA laboratory behind the program.

"It really is a serious problem," she said. The PooPrints program is ideal for neighborhoods, but could also work in any municipality that wants to clean up its public areas, she added.

To get started with the program, a homeowner association or apartment complex would get its group registered and require all dog owners in the community to have their pets' DNA analyzed and filed with BioPet's DNA World Pet Registry. Once on record, any dropping found in the common areas of the neighborhood can be sent to be analyzed and matched with the DNA on file.

If a DNA match is found, the association or landlord is notified and can decide whether to impose a fine on the offending dog owner. Not only does the program serve to bust the offenders, Retinger said, it also provides several benefits to dog owners.

In addition to a cleaner neighborhood, they get a lifetime membership in the DNA World Pet Registry, which allows them a place to store and manage their dog's health records, upload images of their dog and they also receive an ID tag printed with "DNA Pet ID."

With an estimated 75 million dogs in the U.S. and 3.6 billion pounds of dog waste produced per year, the goal of the PooPrints program is to do away with the problem of poop litter, according to the company.