

Vets Mull Microchip Privacy Issues

Veterinary association will consider resolution on whether to oppose marketing uses of cat and dog microchip databases.

Posted: July 14, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

The American Veterinary Medical Association's House of Delegates, the professional organization's legislative body, will decide on Saturday July 14, 2007, whether the group should formally oppose the use of microchip registration databases for marketing purposes while endorsing their use strictly for reuniting animals and their owners.

Veterinarians favoring such a statement are concerned that if companies mined the databases for marketing purposes, dog owners would be less likely to register microchips and decrease their effectiveness in reuniting dogs and their owners. The veterinarians expect registrations would decline even if dog owners were given the opportunity to opt in — or out — of possible marketing efforts.

Another concern is that microchip database information could give an unfair advantage to companies with access to those databases.

On the other hand, database-based marketing and advertising campaigns could help offset costs of maintaining such databases, potentially reducing fees for pet owners.

At issue is not the use of microchips for dog identification purposes, but strictly the use of databases for other purposes.

If adopted, the resolution would be symbolic only.

The House of Delegates meets annually in conjunction with the AVMA's annual convention. This year's convention is in Washington, D.C.