



Three Wise Kangaroos

Commercial pet cloning – would you get a genetic replica of your animal companion?

Lead-in

1. Do you have a pet? If so, what was your reason for getting one?
2. Do you treat your pet as a family member?

Video

Watch the video and answer the questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK0L2zgXczE>



1. What are Dodo and Coco?
2. What do animal rights campaigners think of commercial cloning?
3. Who are most of the customers at SinoGene?
4. How much does it cost to have your pet cloned?
5. Are the cloned copies identical in both looks and character?
6. What is Jucy?
7. Which animals will be cloned next?

Over to you

1. What is your opinion of commercial cloning?
2. Why do you think some people decide to spend lots of money to have their pets cloned instead of buying or adopting one?
3. If money was no object, would you consider having your dog cloned? If not, would you rather get one from a breeder or from an animal shelter?
4. What do you think of the idea of cloning horses?
5. Here are a few more facts concerning commercial cloning:

„Animal welfare organisations have significant concerns about the sector. For example, a number of scientific studies have suggested that cloned animals are more prone to disease. Other critics point to the industry's high failure rate - the large number of clones that are not born fit and healthy. One 2018 report by Columbia University in New York put the average success rate at just 20%. This means that you need numerous surrogate mums to allow for multiple attempts.

Penny Hawkins, an animal welfare expert at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, says it can be painful and distressing for the female animals that have their eggs removed for donation, and for those that are prepared for surrogate pregnancy.



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Additionally, a cloned animal is never going to be an exact copy of the original pet, predominantly when it comes to behaviour, she says. "There is so much more to an animal than their DNA, and cloned animals will inevitably have different life experiences, resulting in animals with different personalities."

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-60924936>

Do the facts presented above make you think differently about animal cloning now?

6. PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) calls commercial cloning 'a cruel money-making fad'. Do you think this practice should be banned?
7. Some celebrities, notably Barbara Streisand, admitted to having their pets clones. Do you think this helps promote the practice?
8. Animal welfare organisations agree that anyone looking for an animal companion should look at adopting one. What are the advantages of adopting an animal rather than having one cloned?

Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with the correct words from the box.

campaigners, differ, tinker, double-edged sword, grieving

1. If you _____ with sth, you make small changes to something, especially in an attempt to repair or improve it.
2. A _____ is something that can have both positive and negative consequences.
3. Animal rights _____ are people who advocate for animal welfare.
4. _____ cat and dog owners are people who feel a sense of loss and sorrow after their pets have died.
5. If personalities _____, they are not the same.

Over to you

1. What are the risks connected with tinkering with genetic material?
2. Do you believe animal rights campaigners can put enough pressure on governments to change the law concerning animals?
3. Have you ever owned two pets of the same breed? How did their personalities differ?
4. In what way is commercial cloning a double-edged sword?
5. Where do most people in your country get their pets from? If commercial cloning was available in your country and offered at an affordable rate, do you think grieving pet owners would be open to the idea?



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Challenge

Read the article on the BBC website entitled 'Pet cloning is getting more popular despite the cost' <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-60924936> and look at the pictures from The Guardian article entitled 'Copy cats: pet-cloning in China – in pictures' <https://www.theguardian.com/science/gallery/2019/sep/06/copy-cats-pet-cloning-in-china-in-pictures>

Note down the most important information and create an infographic about commercial pet cloning.

OR

Write a letter to the editor expressing your opinion on commercial pet cloning. Make sure you refer to the facts presented in the articles.

