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The American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB) promotes the welfare of animals and the human-animal bond using positive, evidence-based methods. ACVB Diplomates are disappointed that the veterinary pharmaceutical firm Merial has recently entered into a marketing agreement with a specific dog trainer and TV personality to promote their products Heartgard and Frontline, as well as this individual's products.

This association is extremely disturbing since it implies an endorsement by Merial of this trainer's methods. This charismatic individual employs techniques which are not scientifically sound, and utilizes fear and intimidation to manage behavior. Studies in peer-reviewed publications<sup>a,b</sup> and the clinical experience of ACVB Diplomates confirm that such techniques can actually worsen existing behavior problems, including aggression, and erode the human animal bond.

Merial's support of the veterinary profession over the years has been very much appreciated. However, employing a dog trainer who utilizes scientifically incorrect techniques to promote veterinarian-prescribed products is inappropriate. Further, veterinarians have an implied liability when they refer clients to others for services, and the promotion of these methods to our veterinary colleagues and their clients as the way to prevent or manage behavior problems is misleading. Merial's association with this trainer and his methods does a disservice to our profession, our clients, and our patients. ACVB strongly opposes this action by Merial.

<sup>a</sup> Herron ME, Shofer FS, Reisner IR. Survey of the use and outcome of confrontational and nonconfrontational training methods in client-owned dogs showing undesired behaviors. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 2009;117:47–54. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2008.12.011>

<sup>b</sup> Blackwell EJ, Twells C, Seawright A, Casey RA. The relationship between training methods and the occurrence of behavior problems, as reported by owners, in a population of domestic dogs. *Journal of Veterinary Behavior: Clinical Application and Research* 2008;3:207-217. [http://www.journalvetbehavior.com/article/S1558-7878\(07\)00276-6/abstract](http://www.journalvetbehavior.com/article/S1558-7878(07)00276-6/abstract)