

## Cat Health Education Campaign Launched

### **A decline in feline veterinary visits spurred.**

A report by the National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues indicates feline veterinary visits declined from 2001 to 2004, and some veterinarians fear cats are not receiving the amount of veterinary care needed.

To ensure cats are getting good health care, the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) and Fort Dodge Animal Health have teamed up to create an educational campaign.

Healthy Cats for Life focuses on helping cat owners understand the importance of twice-a-year wellness visits and recognizing the subtle signs of sickness.

Considering there are millions more cats than dogs in the United States, this decrease is cause for concern for feline health. It may mean many illnesses and diseases possibly go undetected until its too late, said Ilona Rodan, DVM, Diplomate of the AAFP, certified in Feline Practice and Co-Chair of the AAFP Feline Behavior Guidelines.

The program is an extension of a campaign launched in 2005, The Great Cat Watch, for Wellness Sake! It includes a clinic education kit for veterinarians and, to raise awareness among the cat-owning public, the campaign is supported by a website, [www.catwellness.org](http://www.catwellness.org).

We feel this campaign addresses issues faced by cats and their owners, such as getting the cat to the clinic, the misunderstanding of feline behavior and the fact that cats are masters at hiding illness, said James R. Richards, DVM, Director of the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and a past president of the AAFP. Based on the AAFP Feline Behavior Guidelines report, the campaign contains up-to-date information vital to cat owners. For example, many cat owners may not realize that specific behaviors may be signs of underlying illnesses. Posted: June 6, 2006, 5:00 a.m. EST