



Cesar Millan Response

A recent airing of the popular TV show *Cesar 911*, in which a dog being trained by Cesar Millan attacked and injured a pig, has elicited many opinions about dog training methods. The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) would like to broaden the discussion by pointing out important facts about training and about animal welfare during training.

AVSAB is a group of veterinary and research professionals with a special interest in animal behavior. We support the use of scientifically-based methods of training and behavior modification, and we promote interactions with animals based on compassion, respect, and scientific evidence. AVSAB supports the use of evidence-based medicine (using research-supported scientific evidence to make decisions about the care of individual patients) in designing behavior modification and training plans for animals.

Current research in dog training supports changing the dog's environment, and using positive reinforcement, as the most effective method for modifying a dog's behavior.

Punishment-based training methods may be advocated by those without an appreciation of the current status of science in dog training. Although such methods can be effective in the short term, science tells us they are likely to exacerbate an animal's fear and actually increase aggression in the long run. When the problem behavior involves a negative reaction to another animal, attempting to elicit the bad behavior so it can be "corrected" is not only ineffective, it puts the target animal at risk of injury. Such training methods are unacceptable.

Research in canine behavior is continually evolving through lab and field research trials. Behavior professionals continually further their knowledge of behavior in order to offer the best treatment plans to pet owners. AVSAB recommends you choose a trainer who understands and uses reward-based training, and who keeps abreast of developments in the field.

To read the full position statements from AVSAB on dominance and punishment, and for more information on how to choose a trainer, please go to <http://avsabonline.org/resources/position-statements>.

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