

MICHELSON PRIZE & GRANTS IN REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY: THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

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The **Found Animals Foundation** is a private, non-profit 501(c)3 operating foundation established in Los Angeles by philanthropic orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Gary Michelson. The mission of the foundation is to reduce shelter euthanasia of dogs and cats. It is estimated that 3 to 5 million healthy animals die in U.S. shelters every year due to lack of adoptive homes. Found Animals Foundation programs include support of low cost spay neuter facilities, establishment of a state-of-the-art microchip program to enhance return of lost pets, use of innovative business management and marketing techniques to increase pet adoption from shelters, and owner support systems to improve the pet ownership experience.

The **Michelson Prize and Grants (MPG) in Reproductive Biology program** is a Found Animals program established in 2008. It offers a \$25 million prize and \$50 million in competitive research funding toward development of a single dose, nonsurgical sterilant for cats and dogs. Required criteria for an MPG prize-worthy product include that it be:

- a single dose sterilant (injectable preferred) that confers permanent lifetime sterility;
- effective and safe in male and female dogs and cats;
- effective in ablating presence or action of sex steroids;
- of reasonable cost and manufacturing process;
- suitable for administration in a field setting; and
- suitable for appropriate regulatory approval.

In its first five years, the MPG program received 234 Letters of Intent for research funding and 83 full proposals; 25 proposals were approved for funding, committing about \$ 11.3 million of the \$50 million available. Thirteen of the funded proposals are to ablate gonadotropin releasing hormone (GnRH), 3 are to ablate pituitary gonadotrophs, and 9 are to ablate primordial gonadal stem cells. Approaches to date include gene silencing, gene therapy, immunocontraception and targeted delivery of cytotoxins. No applications for the Michelson Prize have been received.

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