



NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION
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NEWS RELEASE

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Continental Kennel Club Hosts Canine Workshop for Teachers

By Carla Saunders

INDIANAPOLIS – “Click-it, click-it, click-it.” This is the sound heard in a workshop located in a medium glass booth toward the rear of the 42nd Annual FFA National Agricultural Career Show. This peculiar sound came from agriculture teachers from across the nation indulging themselves in dog clicker training, a portion of one of the teacher professional development workshops offered during the 81st National FFA Convention.

The Continental Kennel Club (CKC), an international dog registry located in Livingstone, La., hosted the workshop to inform teachers of the Canine Care and Training (CCT) Program. The CCT program—the first course of its kind—has been added to the curriculum for Agriculture Sciences in the state of Louisiana. The main purpose of the program is to enhance the relationship between man and dog. It combines information from all aspects of the dog world, including history of the domestic dog, safety, grooming, kennel maintenance, general health, canine nutrition, breeding stock selection, and training to name a few. Course students learn through research, essay, observation and plenty of hands-on fun.

The entire workshop stressed the benefits received from the CCT Program. According to CKC, many students who complete the course not only finish with a better

knowledge of canines, but they serve their communities through sharing the proper ways of dealing with dogs on a daily basis. CKC personnel manager Rachel Gallman shared a success story with the teachers of students who have completed the course. “One student was on site when a dog had been hit by a car. He immediately turned into a community hero because he was the only person there who had the confidence and knowledge to do what was needed until the dog got to the vet.”

Michael Roy, president of CKC, closed the workshop with a game promoting positive reinforcement as opposed to negative . . .hence those dog clickers handed out at the beginning. The game consisted of two volunteer teachers waiting outside the glass room while the remaining participants were given instructions by CKC personnel manager Rachel Gallman. First, Gallman placed a clicker on the corner of a table. Then, she informed her participating audience to clap when the first volunteer came closer to the clicker and become silent as she moved further away. The first volunteer entered, oblivious to the previous instructions. She was instructed to do whatever she felt. As she began to move, the audience clapped. When she walked in the opposite direction of the clicker, the audience became silent. It took no more than one minute for the first volunteer to find out she was supposed to pick up the clicker. After she took a seat, Gallman gave new instructions to the audience. They were now to “boo” when the second volunteer walked further away from the clicker and become silent when he came closer. The second volunteer entered and took about three minutes to complete the task.

The purpose of this exercise was to emphasize why positive reinforcement clickers should be used for dogs as opposed to negative reinforcement. The teachers were advised not only to take the CCT program ideas back to their schools, but also to use positive reinforcement in their daily lives at home and in the classroom.

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, is a national youth organization of 507,763 student members – all preparing for leadership

and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture – as part of 7,439 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The National FFA Organization changed to its present name in 1988, in recognition of the growth and diversity of agriculture and agricultural education. The FFA mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. Visit www.ffa.org for more information.

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