



**NEWS RELEASE  
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**CORPULENT CANINES CAN VIE FOR \$2,000 TOP PRIZE IN BIG LOSER  
WEIGHT LOSS COMPETITION FOR SARASOTA/MANATEE COUNTIES**

**SARASOTA, Fla.**, Nov. 20, 2006 – In order to raise awareness about the health dangers of excess weight – not just for families, but for the family pet -- Dr. Anne Chauvet, of Veterinary Neuro Services, is organizing a 12-week Big Dog, Big Loser weight loss contest with a top prize of \$2,000.

“As a neurosurgeon, I do enough back surgeries on overweight dogs to see one of the unfortunate consequences of over-feeding our pets and turning them into couch potatoes,” Chauvet said. “Just like us, obesity also can lead to diabetes mellitus, respiratory difficulties, joint problems, inflamed pancreas and many more problems. People are so heartbroken when they hear a bad prognosis about their pets that I want them to know how proper nutrition can help their pets live longer, healthier lives.”

Ten “markedly overweight” dogs that are 40 percent or more above normal body weight will compete in the 12-week contest, which will run from Jan. 18 through April 12. The deadline for entry is Dec. 15. Each dog and its owners will be considered a team, and sponsorships are available if an individual or organization wants to champion an obese rescue dog and help make it more adoptable, according to Chauvet.

Food for the contest is being supplied for free by Royal Canin, a manufacturer of all natural dog and cat food, and Platinum Performance is supplying nutritional supplements. Idexx Laboratories of Clearwater is donating all tests and lab work throughout the contest.

Contestants’ owners or sponsors will be expected to attend weekly educational meetings throughout the competition, as well as behavior training classes donated by Jim

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LaClair of Dog Friendly Dog Training in Sarasota. In addition, dogs will be exercised three times a week in Chauvet's physical rehabilitation center. She is donating the use of her equipment, including an underwater treadmill, and the services of a pet rehabilitation therapist.

During the course of the competition, dogs will be eliminated monthly with three finalists vying for the top prize of \$2,000 in the final month, Chauvet said. The dog that comes the closest to its goal will win the money and a year of free food from Royal Canin. The runner-up will receive \$500.

"We are not promoting Extreme Makeover here and will monitor weight loss very closely," she said. "If a dog continues to lose weight too quickly for the amount of food we are supplying, we will have to eliminate it from the contest in the interests of its continued health. The message here is that weight loss and good weight management are not just a short-term crash program, but are the result of good nutrition and good habits over the long haul."

Chauvet added that she hopes to be able to open the weekly classes for public education if she can find someone who is willing to donate a large enough room.

Additional information about the contest is available at [www.bigdogbigloser.com](http://www.bigdogbigloser.com) and those who would like to participate can call 929-1818 or email [BigDogBigLoser@aol.com](mailto:BigDogBigLoser@aol.com).

### **About Veterinary Neuro Services:**

Dr. Anne Chauvet, one of only 140 veterinary neurologists and neurosurgeons in the United States, has founded two veterinary practices, Veterinary Neuro Services and Pet Rehab & Performance Center in Sarasota, Fla. Veterinary Neuro Services treats brain, spinal cord and neuromuscular conditions in animals and is the only strictly neurology and neurosurgery practice on the Gulf Coast. Pet Rehab & Performance Center treats a wide range of animals, but primarily dogs and cats, for pre- and post-surgical rehabilitation, musculoskeletal conditions, spinal and orthopedic injuries, performance training, weight loss and gait disorders. Both practices are located at 3900 Clark Rd., Building M, Unit 4, Sarasota, Fla. More information is available by calling 941-929-1818 or online at [www.petneuro.com](http://www.petneuro.com).