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For Immediate Release:

Contact: Catherine Doyle
PAWS Director of Science, Research & Advocacy
(323) 301-5730
cdoyle@pawsweb.org

What Price A Baby Elephant?

**The Performing Animal Welfare Society
Provides Glimpse Into Captive Elephant Trade
With Yet Another Zoo Breeding Loan Agreement**

(San Andreas, CA) – The Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), which established the first natural-habitat elephant sanctuary in the United States, has released a copy of an [August 2008 breeding loan and purchase agreement](#) between Have Trunk Will Travel, the controversial entertainment company that may own the Oregon Zoo's newborn female calf, and the Houston Zoo.

The contract with the Houston Zoo provides a troubling look at what the Oregon Zoo can expect in its own negotiations with Have Trunk Will Travel if it wishes to keep its new calf.

In 2008 Have Trunk Will Travel sent two Asian elephants to Houston, 27-year-old Tess and her male offspring, three-year-old Tucker. The "cash price" to purchase Tess was \$500,000. Tucker was to be "donated." (Bull elephants are not highly valued in zoos, most of which do not have the facilities to hold these larger and more powerful and dangerous elephants.) An additional \$100,000 would have to be paid to Have Trunk Will Travel for Tess' first female offspring.

The breeding loan between Have Trunk Will Travel and Houston also raises questions because the Houston Zoo would have retained ownership of any viable offspring, unlike the deal made by the Oregon Zoo.

"The sad truth is that the Oregon Zoo's new calf could be sent to a life of servitude with a company that uses elephants for circus acts and rides and at which there is documented abuse, unless the Oregon Zoo can negotiate what will likely be a very steep purchase price," said PAWS' co-founder and President, Pat Derby.

“This deal exposes the dark side of zoos,” Derby continued, “and their desperation to breed more crowd-attracting babies at any cost because elephants simply are not thriving in zoos.”

Having worked inside the performing animal industry, and now specializing in the care of abused, abandoned or retired performing animals, PAWS' founders, Pat Derby and Ed Stewart, are world-renowned experts on the impact that traveling life has on these animals and the suffering they endure in the name of entertainment.

“Working with circuses and with companies like Have Trunk Will Travel undermines zoos' claims to be putting the best interests of elephants first,” concluded Derby. “If zoos are serious about elephant welfare, they must sever all ties with circuses and companies that use elephants purely for entertainment. Elephants are not a commodity to be traded and sold for profit.”

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Performing Animal Welfare Society: www.pawsweb.org

PAWS operate three captive wildlife sanctuaries in Northern California, providing lifetime care for hundreds of exotic animals. Having worked inside the performing animal industry, and now specializing in the care of abused, abandoned or retired performing animals, PAWS founders, Pat Derby and Ed Stewart, are acknowledged experts on the impact travelling life has on these animals and the suffering they endure in the name of entertainment. Pat and Ed provide expert testimony in criminal and agency investigations and also provide expertise to wildlife agencies, Congress, State Legislatures, and city and county hearings across the United States.



PERFORMING ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 849 | GALT, CA 95632
www.pawsweb.org