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Animal Lovers Feel Better and Live Longer!

Seattle, WA, April 2009- Studies show that petting animals promotes greater physical and psychological health for people. Not only that, but the animals can benefit for many of the same reasons. If you have a dog, a cat, or a horse in your life, odds are you will spend less time in hospitals or the doctor's office, and have lower risk of depression.

- "Animal therapy has been identified as promoting shorter hospital stays and dramatically improving the participant's sense of wellbeing. Studies have shown that physical contact with a pet can lower blood pressure, reduce heart rate, and reduce pain." -Carol Kleinman, PhD, RN, Professor at New Jersey City University
- "Research has demonstrated that petting and caring for animals - particularly those with whom a bonded relationship has been established - can... improve survival rates from heart disease. Elderly people who have pets visit physicians 16% less often than do those who do not, and dog owners, in particular, make 21% fewer visits." -Phil Arkow, *Animal-Assisted Therapy: A Premise and a Promise*
- A University of Missouri-Columbia researcher found that petting animals creates a hormonal response in humans that can help fight depression.

And petting animals is mutually beneficial.

- Veterinarians at the Cornell Feline Health Center performed an experiment using a tiny blood pressure cuff attached to a cat's leg. After just five minutes of petting by a person, the cat's blood pressure dropped 25 points.
- Research conducted in 1999 by South African scientists found that 15 minutes of quietly stroking a dog caused hormonal changes that were beneficial to both the dog and the human.

If you're an animal lover, you've experienced physical and psychological health benefits such as these many times in your life. You arrive home, or get to the barn, and as soon as you touch your pet you notice yourself breathe more deeply, smile, feel your nerves calm and muscles relax. And you've witnessed the same effects in animals when they receive positive touch, seeing their eyes soften and posture relax.

More and more animal owners, care-givers and an ever-growing number of professionals are now taking these benefits of petting to a whole new level. Animal massage is a rapidly growing industry. At least twenty states in the U.S. have animal massage schools today, including at least eight in Colorado alone. States like Washington now license animal massage

professionals. Websites like AllAboutAnimalMassage.com, which offers a free e-book, ***Animal Massage: A Consumer Guide***, are springing up to provide consumer education and resources. Yet another phenomena is the evolution of networking between animal owners and animal care professionals through free services such as **The Animal Wellness Network**, where you can find a wide range of services, including animal massage professionals.

If pet ownership alone can reduce your blood pressure, imagine what pet massage can do for you and your animal!

Megan Ayrault, founder of All About Animal Massage, is the author of ***The Dog Lover's Guide to Massage***, ***The Horse Lover's Guide to Massage***, and numerous e-books, including **guided practice journals** for owners just learning how to massage their pets. Ms. Ayrault is available for expert comments and interviews; see **Press Kit** at AllAboutAnimalMassage.com.