Access to social networks is a valuable tool for sharing experience and advice among animal breeders. However, dog breeders and others who own and interact with animals, are at risk of being targeted on social media by animal rights (AR) activists. AR activists typically oppose the breeding or use of animals. Some activists equate animal ownership to slavery. Their long-term goal is seeking an end to animal ownership and breeding.

What is Cyberbullying?

Bullying is not limited to school yards. Anonymous freedom of expression on social media can result in the use of digital technology to harass, threaten, or humiliate. Cyberbullying does not require face-to-face contact, physical power, or strength. When made online and in view of hundreds, attempts to humiliate, harass, or threaten a person with false accusations can happen anytime and follow you anywhere so that no place feels safe, not even your home.
How to Prevent Cyberbullying

People concerned about their privacy can consider the following:

- Using your name, search the internet for what public information exists about you. You may want to use a P.O. Box if your contact information is publicly available.
- Set your profile settings to private and omit personal information like your phone numbers, physical address, and email addresses.
- Check the privacy properties of the groups you join because links to other people and affiliations with public groups pose a threat to privacy.
- Do not attack or insult anyone while participating in discussion groups - state your position objectively and factually.
- Protect your accounts by not sharing passwords.
- Block others from directly posting to your page, until you review and allow the content.
- Avoid sharing sensitive information online, such as health status and vacation plans.
- Watch for “red-flags” -- for example, someone inquiring where you live or work.

Taking Action

If you become the target of cyberbullying, some suggested actions include:

- If the harasser is known to you, request removal of the post and make it clear that you do not want contact.
- Do not respond or retaliate - a reaction is what aggressors are looking for.
- Save the evidence by taking a screen shot from your phone or printing it out without making any changes to it.
- Keep a log of any harassing activity.
- Block and report features are available on all social media platforms. Make sure to use them if you are worried about an individual.
- If you’re getting threats of physical harm, contact your local police right away.
- Consult an attorney on available legal remedies; such as an injunction to stop the conduct or claims of defamation and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

For more information or to report harassment, please contact:
www.akcgr.org/harassment | reportharassment@akc.org | 919-816-3720