



Animal *Health* Trust

## **PRESS RELEASE**

To: DRAFT

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By: Nicola Markwell, Redwings Horse Sanctuary

### **Charities work together to save pony's injured eye**

A team of vets from Redwings Horse Sanctuary and the Animal Health Trust have worked together to save a pony's eye after it sustained a horrific injury.

Blaze, a 12.3hh black filly, had suffered a full penetrating injury to her cornea and her owner contacted Redwings in desperation to ask if the charity could help save her.

Blaze's injury was so severe that her iris had prolapsed through her cornea, and when Redwings vet Roxane Kirton contacted the Animal Health Trust for their expert advice, it was so concerned by the severity of the pony's injury, it sent a team of ophthalmologists and an anaesthetist to assist with her surgery.

The incredibly delicate operation, which was carried out at Redwings' specialist horse hospital in Norfolk, involved suturing two layers of amniotic membrane over the site of the injury to assist with the healing process.

Roxane says: "It's not an understatement to say this pony could have lost her eye, which at such a young age would have been incredibly sad. But the surgery went well and although it may never be fully normal, we are confident that Blaze should regain most of her sight. We would like to say a huge thank you to the amazing team at the Animal Health Trust for all their help with this case."

Claudia Hartley, Head of Ophthalmology at the Animal Health Trust, said: "We were so pleased to help Blaze who would otherwise have lost her eye, and had been in pain with this injury. It is lucky for Blaze that Redwings was there in her hour of need, and we were only too happy to help save her eye with them. For us, at the Animal Health Trust, there is nothing better than being able to successfully save the sight of such a young animal."

Redwings provides direct care to over 1200 horses, ponies, donkeys and mules with a further 500 in Guardian ownership. For further information on Redwings' work, please visit [www.redwings.co.uk](http://www.redwings.co.uk).

The Animal Health Trust is a veterinary charity committed to fighting disease and injury in animals through clinical services, research and education. Its Unit of Comparative Ophthalmology is the biggest ophthalmology referral centre in Europe.

## **ENDS**

**Note to editors:** For assistance, please contact Nicola Markwell on 01508 481014/07920 291333.

**More about Redwings:** Redwings Horse Sanctuary was established in 1984 and today has grown to become the largest horse sanctuary in the UK, working to save horses, ponies, donkeys and mules whose future would otherwise be bleak. Its work has three themes: rescue & rehabilitation, specialist sanctuary care and prevention through education. Its horse care & welfare hotline receives typically 3,000 calls per year. In 2009, Redwings celebrated its Silver Jubilee. The sanctuary currently provides more than 1200 horses, ponies, donkeys and mules with specialist sanctuary care and has 500 horses out on loan in Guardian homes.

**More about the Animal Health Trust:** The **Animal Health Trust** is an independent veterinary charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit our website at [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)