



media *release*

Friday 14 August 2015

FERGUS THE DOG WALKS HIS OWNERS NEARLY 200 MILES COAST-TO-COAST TO RAISE VITAL FUNDS FOR ANIMAL CHARITY

Fergus, the eight-year-old Welsh Springer Spaniel, is resting his paws after participating in a 192 mile quest to raise money for the Animal Health Trust.

Along with his dedicated owners, Debbie and Dave Yates, from Coningsby in Lincolnshire, Fergus has successfully completed Wainwright's Coast to Coast Walk; from St Bees on the Cumbria Coast to Robin Hoods Bay on the North Yorkshire Coast. The walk covers a wide range of adverse terrain, through the Lake District, across the Yorkshire Dales and, finally, through the North Yorkshire Moors, and is not for the faint-hearted.

Totalling 18 days of solid walking through wind, rain and sun!, the challenge was completed in two halves, initially covering the first 82 miles of the journey and then the remaining 108 miles to the North Yorkshire Coast. The team have so far raised over £1,000 for the Animal Health Trust and the sponsorship money is still being collected.

A great deal of training was required to make sure all of the team were fit enough to complete the walk – especially Fergus. Some dogs become too tired or develop sore paws during the walk, but Fergus seemed to enjoy every minute of the adventure!

Five years ago, Fergus was struck down with Seasonal Canine Illness (SCI). Debbie and Dave were very close to losing their treasured friend. Luckily, Fergus received treatment in time and was saved.

The cause of SCI is not known but it can strike over the summer months and into early autumn and can make dogs incredibly sick and lethargic shortly after having been walked in woodland. With quick action, most dogs can pull through if they are seen by a vet in time.

To thank the animal charity AHT for raising awareness of SCI, Fergus and his owners decided to take on this incredible challenge to raise funds for the charity, which fights disease and injury in animals through treatment and research.

Debbie said: "The Coast to Coast Walk is something I've always wanted to do so I'm really pleased that we were able to complete the challenge, with Fergus in tow! We weren't always blessed with the weather, and it was incredibly hard-going at times, but the views were amazing and it was worth all the hard work in the end.

"We've been blown away by people's generosity so far and have exceeded our target for the Animal Health Trust. It's thanks to their expertise that Fergus, and many other dogs, are surviving the mystery seasonal illness, known as SCI. Although the cause of SCI was never found I'm sure increased awareness and knowing what to look out for has made a huge difference to so many dogs' lives, including our Fergus, and for that we're really grateful."

To donate towards Fergus' adventure walk go to:

www.virginmoneygiving.com/FergusTheDog

Ends

For further information, please contact:

Katherine Lawson, AHT press office, 01638 751000 ext 1511

Photographs:

A photo of Fergus at the end of the Coast to Coast Walk is attached with this press release.

Additional notes:

- The Animal Health Trust (AHT) is an independent 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 the website at www.aht.org.uk