



# **media release**

**Monday 15 December 2014**

## **Horse owners needed for pioneering Atypical Myopathy research**

The Animal Health Trust, the UK's leading veterinary charity, is launching the first UK epidemiological study into Atypical Myopathy and is calling for horse owners whose animals have been affected by the disorder to help.

This collaborative research between the University of Liege, the Irish Equine Centre and the Animal Health Trust aims to investigate the geographical distribution and clinical particularities of Atypical Myopathy in the UK and Ireland. In 2014, the UK reported the highest number of Atypical Myopathy cases in Europe with alarming mortality rates, and therefore a UK-based investigation is essential to understand the particularities of the disease in this country.

Atypical Myopathy is a debilitating and fatal disease caused by the ingestion of sycamore seeds, commonly known as "helicopters" as their shape enables them to travel several yards away from where the trees are located. Clinical signs include muscle weakness and stiffness, dark urine, colicky signs, anorexia and recumbence that may lead to death if not treated promptly.

Horse owners whose horses have suffered from Atypical Myopathy are urged to fill in a short questionnaire providing details of the affected horse's management, pasture details and clinical signs. By collecting as much

information on the disease as possible the AHT hopes to accelerate the research into the condition, furthering the understanding of the Atypical Myopathy and improving the poor prognosis the disease currently has in the UK.

The deadline for reporting cases is 15 January 2015. To complete the questionnaire and read further information on the disease, visit [www.aht.org.uk/cms-xmodnewsrss\\_detail/atypicalmyopathyresearch.html](http://www.aht.org.uk/cms-xmodnewsrss_detail/atypicalmyopathyresearch.html) or [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk).

**Ends**

**For further information, please contact:**

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**Additional notes:**

The **Animal Health Trust** is a veterinary charity fighting disease and injury in animals. It employs more than 230 scientists, vets and support workers and 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)**