



media *release*

Tuesday 26 February 2013

IMPROVING DOG HEALTH IS AHT'S AIM AT CRUFTS **Scientists and clinicians from the animal charity head to Birmingham to answer queries and give advice**

Experts from the Animal Health Trust (AHT) scientific and veterinary teams will be on hand during Crufts 2013 to offer advice and answer queries from dog owners.

Scientists from the charity's inherited disease, cancer and seasonal canine illness (SCI) research groups will be present over all four days, supported by clinicians working in the Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the AHT.

You will find the AHT's research teams on the Kennel Club's 'Breeding for the Future' zone, stand 56 in hall three.

DNA testing

The AHT's genetic services team will be available to discuss canine DNA testing for hereditary diseases, DNA profiling and parentage verification. It will also be giving away vouchers worth 25 per cent off any DNA test available from its webshop at www.ahtdnatesting.co.uk. Simply visit the stand to claim your voucher. There are limited vouchers available each day so make the AHT stand one of your first stops!

Cancer research

Samples, in the forms of DNA cheek swabs, are required to investigate a number of cancers in a number of breeds. Dr Mike Starkey and the AHT cancer research team are keen to speak with owners of Boxers, Bullmastiffs, German Shepherd Dogs, Golden Retrievers, Great Danes, Greyhounds, Irish Wolfhounds, Labrador Retrievers, Leonbergers, Rottweilers, Shar Pei and Weimaraners about how they can help with the research. If you own one of these breeds, please schedule a stop at the AHT

stand during your Crufts visit, to find out how you can help fight cancer in your beloved breed.

Inherited disease research

Dr Cathryn Mellersh, Head of Canine Genetics at the AHT, and members of her team will be available on all four days to meet breed health representatives, breeders and owners to discuss current and upcoming inherited disease research projects. You can find Cathryn and other geneticists from the Kennel Club Genetics Centre on stand 56 in hall three.

Mate Select

Dr Sarah Blott, Dr Tom Lewis and Dr Katy Evans, from the AHT's Quantitative Genetics team, will be demonstrating the online tool, Mate Select. If you wish to view the inbreeding coefficient of individual dogs and of litters of prospective matings, the team can help you do this. You can also view health tests information online.

Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) are a more accurate reflection of the genetic risk of disease for individual dogs than the hip or elbow score, and so improve the accuracy of selection/breeding against hip and elbow dysplasia. Owners of Akitas, Bearded Collies, Border Collies, Bernese Mountain Dogs, English Setters, Flat Coat Retrievers, Gordon Setters, Golden Retrievers, German Shepherd dogs, Labrador Retrievers, Newfoundlands, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Rottweilers, Siberian Huskies and Tibetan Terriers will be able to access EBVs for hip score, and in some of the above breeds, elbow score, from the Mate Select carousel at Crufts.

If you want to understand the science behind the development of EBVs, please drop by and chat to Sarah, Katy or Tom who will be only too happy to help.

Seasonal Canine Illness (SCI)

The AHT's SCI Research Co-ordinator, Charlotte Robin, will be on hand to update worried dog owners with progress into SCI. If you want to know the latest information from the investigation, or would like to sign up to receive SCI updates from the AHT, visit Charlotte and her colleagues on the stand.

Working together for the health of dogs

The Kennel Club (KC) and the AHT has produced a progress update on the joint work being undertaken to fight disease in dogs. The 12-page booklet, entitled 'Working together for the health of dogs' looks back at achievements during 2012, including the opening of the brand new Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the AHT. It also highlights a number of projects the KC and AHT are working together on during 2013. You can pick up a free copy of the update from the AHT on the 'Breeding for the Future' zone (stand 55, Hall three).

Support the fight against cancer!

In addition, on the AHT's fundraising stand (stand 55, hall three), its team will be attempting to cycle 400 miles during Crufts in order to raise money for its cancer research. Please visit the stand to support the brave cyclists by making a donation to inspire them to keep pedalling! You can also find out how you can get involved with the AHT's first Dog Sportive sponsored cycling event on 4 August 2013.

Ends

For further information, please contact:

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Additional notes:

- The Animal Health Trust 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
- The Kennel Club is the largest organisation in the UK devoted to dog health, welfare and training. Its objective is to ensure that dogs live healthy, happy lives with responsible owners.
- The Kennel Club invests in welfare campaigns, dog training and education programmes and the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, which supports research into dog diseases and dog welfare charities, including Kennel Club Breed Rescue organisations that re-home dogs throughout the UK. The Kennel Club jointly runs health screening schemes with the British Veterinary Association and through the Charitable Trust, funds the Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust, which is at the forefront of pioneering research into dog health. The new Kennel Club Cancer Centre at the Animal Health Trust will contribute to the AHT's well-established cancer research programme, helping to further improve dog health.