



# **media release**

**Monday, 18 July 2011**

## **SUFFOLK CRUSADES AGAINST CANCER**

**Veterinary charity creates cancer centre to help animals, and also humans**

The development of a state-of-the-art cancer centre for animals has begun in Suffolk. The brand new facility at the Animal Health Trust (AHT) will treat horses, dogs and cats. It also aims to further knowledge and understanding of cancer, not only in animals, but also in people.

Cancer is the most common cause of death in dogs and the second most common cause in cats. However with the right facilities, expertise and treatment it is the most curable chronic disease in these animals.

The AHT's Cancer Centre will provide all three treatment options: surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, on one site. The cancer facility is being purpose built to treat horses, as well as dogs and cats.

Sue Murphy, Head of Clinical Cancer Treatment at the AHT, said: "Having all three treatment options on one site means that whatever the diagnosis, we will be able to offer each and every patient the very best options for their specific case. With one in four dogs and one in six cats developing cancer at some time in their life this new centre will help many more animals – from Suffolk, East Anglia and all across the UK."

The new centre will also further research into cancer. Treating animals with all types of the disease will enable the AHT's vets and scientists to expand current knowledge about cancer. This will help with the development of new ways to diagnose and treat the disease.

Vets and scientists at the AHT already work collaboratively with cancer researchers looking at the disease in humans. There are a number of links between human and animal cancers which have already been identified. It is hoped that knowledge gained from the AHT Cancer Centre may also help in the understanding of cancer in people.

The AHT hopes the building will open in summer 2012 . It is launching an appeal to raise much needed funds to equip the centre with a linear accelerator. This piece of specialist equipment works by delivering high-energy radiation beams to break cancerous tumours down while sparing the surrounding normal tissue.

The AHT Cancer Centre will be one of only six veterinary facilities in the UK to house a linear accelerator.

Sue Murphy, added: "Currently, there is no way to tell which animals will, and which animals won't, develop cancer. It could happen to any animal at any time. This new centre will give more animals a fighting chance of beating the disease, enabling them to lead long and healthy lives. The fact that treatments developed to benefit our pets may also lead to improvements in the prevention and treatment of cancer in humans makes this centre all the more important.

"I would urge you to donate whatever you can to help equip the centre. Your donation, however large or small, will help many more animals beat cancer and it may also help in the fight against cancer in people."

If you would like to make a donation to the AHT Cancer Centre please visit [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk) or telephone 01638 555648.

Alternatively you can make a £5 donation by texting VETS24 £5 to 70070.

**Ends**

**For further information, please contact:**

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**Photographs:**

A photo of the AHT's Honorary Vice President, The Rt Hon the Lord Fairhaven KStJ JP DL, cutting the first sod of the new cancer centre is available from the press office on request.

An artist's impression of the AHT Cancer Centre is also available from the press office on request.

**Additional notes:**

- The 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 continuing education to vets. Visit the website at [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)
- Once the new Cancer Centre is opened, the AHT hopes to double the number of cancer patients it treats to more than 1,000 per year.