



MEDIA RELEASE

UFAW's Genetic Welfare Problems website expanded

Valuable resource for prospective owners and breeders now includes 52 breeds of dog as well as cats, rabbits, horses, guinea pigs, birds and fish

Many painful and serious diseases in companion animals are the result of genetic conditions and, in recent years, concern has been growing about the prevalence of genetics-related health and welfare conditions.

Since 2011, UFAW has been developing a website to provide clear and comprehensive information about the welfare consequences of hereditary problems. Over the last year the charity, in partnership with scientists within the VetCompass group at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC), has been busy expanding this resource to provide information on more conditions affecting dogs, cats and other companion animals.

The purpose of the website (www.ufaw.org.uk/genetics) is to help people who are thinking of acquiring a pet to decide which species, strain or breed to choose – to be aware of inherited problems that might affect these animals and know the right questions to ask when buying in order to help avoid perpetuating the problems. The site also provides information to help breeders avoid or tackle problems.

Dr Robert Hubrecht, UFAW's Chief Executive and Scientific Director said: "The site provides comprehensive and detailed information, presented in a readily understandable way, not only on the genetic conditions themselves but also, most importantly, on their effects on the pet's welfare. As such it provides a valuable resource not only for the public, breeders and veterinarians, but also for other websites relating to pet choice, breeding and welfare."

Added RVC scientist, Dr Buckland: "Ensuring the information available to owners and breeders of pets is accurate and based upon high-quality scientific evidence is key to helping them make informed decisions in the best interests of animal welfare."

By providing this website, UFAW hopes to help reduce the severity and incidence of breed-related welfare problems in companion animals.

-ENDS-

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SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Chief Executive and Scientific Director: Robert C Hubrecht OBE BSc PhD FSB

Secretary: Jane Moorman

Registered Charity No. 207996 (Registered in England) and Company Limited by Guarantee No. 579991



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Notes to Editors:

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) is an internationally recognised, independent scientific and educational animal welfare charity. It was established in 1926 and works to improve knowledge and understanding of animals' needs in order to achieve high standards of welfare for farm, companion, research, captive wild animals and those with which we interact in the wild.

UFAW improves animal welfare worldwide through its programme of awards, grants and scholarships; by educational initiatives, especially at university and college level; by providing information in books, videos, reports and in its scientific journal *Animal Welfare*; by providing expert advice to governments and others, including for legislation and 'best practice' guidelines and codes; and by working with animal keepers, scientists, vets, lawyers and all those who care about animals. This work relies on the support of members, subscribers and donors.

About the Royal Veterinary College

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) is the UK's largest and longest established independent veterinary school and is a constituent College of the University of London.

The RVC offers undergraduate, postgraduate and CPD programmes in veterinary medicine, veterinary nursing and biological sciences, being ranked in the top 10 universities nationally for biosciences degrees. It is currently the only veterinary school in the world to hold full accreditation from AVMA, EAEVE, RCVS and AVBC.

A research-led institution, in the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF2014) the RVC maintained its position as the top HEFCE funded veterinary focused research institution.

The College also provides animal owners and the veterinary profession with access to expert veterinary care and advice through its teaching hospitals; the Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital in central London, the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals (Europe's largest small animal referral centre), the Equine Referral Hospital, and the Farm Animal Clinical Centre located at the Hertfordshire campus. <http://www.rvc.ac.uk>

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