

THE KENNEL CLUB GENETICS CENTRE TO RE-OPEN AS PART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Following the announcement in July 2020 of the closure of the Animal Health Trust, The Kennel Club is delighted to confirm that The Kennel Club Canine Genetics Centre will officially re-open and be located at the University of Cambridge. Here, the centre's vital research into dog genetics and inherited canine conditions can continue.

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust has funded the centre since its initial launch at the Animal Health Trust in 2009. The new centre will continue to be led by Dr Cathryn Mellersh, and will resume its mission to research genetic mutations and assist in developing breeding tools for some of the most common and debilitating inherited conditions in dogs. The Kennel Club and the canine genetics team will work together to ensure that the centre's research targets conditions that have the greatest impact on the health of dogs. The Kennel Club's breed health and conservation plans, a project that gathers all available health information and data about each breed, will play a vital role in guiding the centre's objectives and areas of research.

During its time at the Animal Health Trust, The Kennel Club Canine Genetics Centre had a significant impact on the health of numerous breeds. Researchers at the centre developed 25 different DNA tests for canine inherited diseases that affect over 50 breeds. Research into the impact of some of these tests revealed that over a ten year period, thanks to uptake of these tests by responsible breeders, the frequency of disease-causing genetic variants in some breeds reduced by a staggering 90%. Close collaboration with breed clubs and breeders is essential to the success of the centre, as is the collection of over 40,000 DNA samples that has been developed over the last twenty years. These samples, along with valuable scientific and DNA sequence data have now been secured and transferred to the University of Cambridge for further analysis.

Bill King, Chairman of The Kennel Club Charitable Trust, said: "The Kennel Club Genetics Centre has made an enormous positive impact on the health of dogs whilst under the auspices of the Animal Health Trust, the closure of which we were saddened and concerned to learn of last year.

“We’re now thrilled that the centre has found a home in such a reputable and prestigious research institute, and we’re very much looking forward to collaborating with the centre once more.”

Dr Cathryn Mellersh, head of The Kennel Club Genetics Centre added: “The last ten years have been incredibly important to dog health and, thanks to the University of Cambridge, especially Professor James Wood, Head of the Department of Veterinary Medicine at Cambridge Vet School, for all his assistance in safeguarding our resources and The Kennel Club Charitable Trust, this work can now continue. Our work to support breeders in reducing health problems in dogs is essential and we are eager to continue this important work and are thankful to everyone for their support.”

Professor James Wood said: “We are delighted that the important work by Cathryn and her team, funded by The Kennel Club Charitable Trust can now continue through The Kennel Club’s Canine Genetics Centre at Cambridge Vet School. We look forward to working together for the health and welfare of our much loved dogs.”

Further information regarding The Kennel Club’s extensive work in the field of canine health and research can be found on The Kennel Club website at www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health.

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22 March 2021

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The Kennel Club

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.

It runs the country's largest registration database for both pedigree and crossbreed dogs and the Petlog database, which is one of the UK's biggest reunification service for microchipped animals. The Kennel Club is accredited by UKAS to certify members of its Assured Breeders scheme, which is the only scheme in the UK that monitors breeders in order to protect the welfare of puppies and breeding bitches. It also runs the UK's largest dog training programme, The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Training Scheme and accredits dog trainers and behaviourists through The Kennel Club Accredited Instructors scheme.

It licenses shows and clubs across a wide range of activities, which help dog owners to bond and enjoy life with their dogs. The Kennel Club runs the world's greatest dog show, Crufts, and the Discover Dogs event at ExCeL London, which is a fun family day out that educates people about how to buy responsibly and care for their dog.

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.

About the University of Cambridge

The mission of the University of Cambridge is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence. To date, 110 affiliates of the University have won the Nobel Prize.

Founded in 1209, the University comprises 31 autonomous Colleges, which admit undergraduates and provide small-group tuition, and 150 departments, faculties and institutions. Cambridge is a global university. Its 19,000 student body includes 3,700 international students from 120 countries. Cambridge researchers collaborate with colleagues worldwide, and the University has established larger-scale partnerships in Asia, Africa and America.

The University sits at the heart of the 'Cambridge cluster', which employs 60,000 people and has in excess of £12 billion in turnover generated annually by the 4,700 knowledge-intensive firms in and around the city. The city publishes 341 patents per 100,000 residents.

www.cam.ac.uk