



Media Release

From the

Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)

UFAW Awards recognise work for the welfare of companion animals

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) has announced the winners of its inaugural Companion Animal Welfare Award for outstanding innovation in animal welfare science to the benefit of companion animals. The standard of entries in this, the first in an annual series of awards, was very high and three winners have been chosen: Oliver Forman of the Animal Health Trust (AHT), UK for 'The development of a genetic test for spinocerebellar ataxia in the Italian Spinone; Dr Paul McGreevy of the University of Sydney, Australia for the 'Online Mendelian Inheritance in Animals (OMIA) and the Listing of Inherited Disorders in Animals (LIDA); and the University of Glasgow Pain and Welfare Research Group for their development of 'Instruments to measure canine pain and health-related quality of life'.

The Companion Animal Welfare Award was established by UFAW to recognise and encourage innovative and beneficial work in the field of companion animal welfare.

Spinocerebellar ataxia is a distressing neurological disease in the Italian Spinone dog and Mr Forman's work at the AHT has made significant progress in identifying the genetic mutation responsible. Identification will enable the development of a genetic DNA test that will be 100% accurate in determining carrier animals. Through appropriate breeding practices such a test will enable the goal of completely eliminating the mutation. Mr Forman's £1000 award will help further research into genetic diseases in dogs.

Dr Paul McGreevy and his team at the University of Sydney have developed an on-line scientific and epidemiological information resource relating to inherited diseases in dogs in order to inform prospective pet purchasers and to provide an effective basis for improved breeding programmes and breed standards. Further work within the project is aimed at providing a means for collecting (through links with veterinary practices), analysing and presenting real-time genetic epidemiological data on the incidence and prevalence of inherited disorders in various companion animal species.

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SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Chief Executive and Scientific Director: James K Kirkwood BVSc PhD CBiol FIBiol MRCVS

Secretary: Donald C Davidson

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



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The University of Glasgow Pain and Welfare Research Group has been working for a number of years on the development of a practical system that can easily be used by veterinarians to accurately assess acute post-operative pain in dogs as an effective basis for its treatment. The system has been successfully validated in practice and is now being extended to include chronic pain, for example arthritis, and health-related quality of life in dogs.

“We chose three winners for the 2009 Awards for the high quality of their work and because their projects will be of great benefit to very large numbers of companion animals, not only in this country but around the world,” said James Kirkwood, Chief Executive and Scientific Director of UFAW.

The three Awards were presented by Dr John Bradshaw, Reader in Companion Animal Welfare and Waltham Director of the Anthrozoology Institute at the University of Bristol, at a reception at the Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery on 22nd June during UFAW’s 2009 International Symposium ‘Darwinian selection, selective breeding and the welfare of animals’ held at the University of Bristol.

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors:

1. Brief biographies of the Award winning applicants

a) Application title: **The Development of a Genetic Test for Spinocerebellar Ataxia in the Italian Spinone.**

Lead Applicant: Mr Oliver Forman BSc, Animal Health Trust.

Mr Forman graduated from the University of York in 2003 and since then has been a Graduate Research Assistant in the Canine Genetics team at the Animal Health Trust. His work has focused on searching for genes associated with autosomal recessive canine conditions and he is currently studying the molecular biology of inherited neurological conditions as part of a PhD, registered at the University of Glasgow, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

Co-applicant: Dr Cathryn Mellersh BSc PhD, Head of Canine Genetics, Animal Health Trust

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b) Application title: Online Mendelian Inheritance in Animals (OMIA) and the Listing of Inherited Disorders in Animals (LIDA).

Lead Applicant: Dr Paul McGreevy BVSc PhD MRCVS, University of Sydney, Australia.

Dr McGreevy graduated from Bristol University Veterinary School in 1987. He worked as a general veterinary practitioner in Australia and England before returning to Bristol to take a PhD in horse behaviour. Since 1996 he has been teaching, researching and consulting at the University of Sydney's Faculty of Veterinary Science. His research focuses on the behaviour of horses and dogs. He is the author of six books and over 70 peer-reviewed articles.

Co-applicants: Professor Frank Nicholas, University of Sydney.
Assistant Professor Peter Thomson, University of Sydney.
Dr Vanessa Barrs, University of Sydney.

c) Application title: Instruments to Measure Canine Pain and Health-related Quality of Life.

Applicant: The University of Glasgow Pain and Welfare Research Group

This unique group of scientists is truly multidisciplinary and members cover a variety of disciplines including Veterinary Pharmacology, Neurophysiology, Veterinary Anaesthesia, Small and Large Animal Clinical Studies, Animal Behaviour and Statistics. A major focus of the Group's work over a number of years has been to develop reliable methods of assessing pain and quality of life in non verbal species, thus highlighting the occurrence of pain and quality of life disturbance in domestic animals while fostering interdisciplinary research in the recognition and management of pain and quality of life issues.

Past and current members who have and are working in this area include Andrea Nolan, Jackie Reid, Marian Scott, Lesley Wiseman, Lynne Young, Matthew Burnell and Carolyn Gill.

Represented by: Professor Marian Scott BSc PhD, Department of Statistics, University of Glasgow.

Marian Scott graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1978 with first class honours in statistics, gaining her PhD in 1981. She has been a Professor in the Department of Statistics since 2000. Her research interests include the development of scaling models for measurement of acute clinical pain in dogs; on-farm assessment of disease and welfare in cows and sheep; and the development of chronic pain assessment instruments. She has gained a number of major research awards in these areas with colleagues at the University.

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2. Photos attached:

a) Mr Oliver Forman of the AHT.



b) Dr Paul McGreevy of the University of Sydney.



c) Professor Marian Scott of the University of Glasgow Pain and Welfare Research Group.



- 3. The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)** is an internationally recognised, independent scientific and educational animal welfare charity. It 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.

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