



UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

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Media Release

**From the
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)**

13 June, 2011

For Immediate Release:

UFAW awards research scholarship to develop methods for detecting and measuring chronic pain in dogs

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) has awarded a Research Training Scholarship to Alastair Cockburn of the University of Bristol. The three-year programme of research at doctorate level will investigate methods for assessing pain, underlying emotional state and quality of life in dogs with chronic pain conditions.

The aim of the research project is to deliver a useful clinical tool to measure chronic pain in dogs, a problem area due to the often very subtle changes in behavioural indicators of pain and the difficulty of assessing underlying emotional state and cumulative experience of pain – factors of critical importance in assessing ‘quality of life’.

The research aims to address both these areas by developing and validating practical methods to reveal subtle behavioural signs and, through cognitive bias testing, the emotional state associated with chronic pain. Investigations will focus on two conditions, syringomyelia and osteoarthritis, although it is intended that the assessment methods developed will have general applicability in the detection and management of chronic pain in dogs, and may also help to ameliorate some behaviour problems that may be pain related, such as aggression.

The project at Bristol will be supervised by an accomplished group of experts from a number of fields including Professor Mike Mendl, Dr Emily Blackwell, Dr Rachel Casey, Dr Jo Murrell, Dr Liz Paul and Dr Becky Whay.

Further information about UFAW’s range of grants and awards can be found on www.ufaw.org.uk .

-ENDS-

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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

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Note to Editors:

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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