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Mars Petcare Launches One of the Largest Tech-Enabled Pet Health Studies Seeking to Uncover Early Signs of Illness

Wearable pet tech and electronic vet records aim to connect behavior to pet health

COLLEGE STATION, TX -- April 05, 2018 -- Today at the North American Veterinary Community (NAVC) and Texas A&M University's Veterinary Innovation Summit, [Mars Petcare](#) announced the launch of [Pet Insight Project](#), a three-year study of more than 200,000 dogs across the United States to uncover important links between pet activity, behavior and health.

Through its leading pet tracker business, [Whistle™](#), and high-quality veterinary care practice [Banfield Pet Hospital™](#), Mars Petcare is looking to discover groundbreaking insights to enable a new era of proactive, preventive care for pets. Using machine learning, rich data science and deep veterinary expertise, the aim of the longitudinal study is to better understand when behavior may signal a change in a pet's health and make it possible for pet owners to better partner with their veterinarian on treatment. The study will continuously capture behavior data from hundreds of thousands of participating pets and correlate that information with repeat wellness visits.

"Innovative projects like Pet Insight Project are exactly what this industry needs to drive care forward," said Tom Bohn, Chief Executive Officer of the NAVC. "Technology and big data are powerful tools that could radically alter how we deliver veterinary care. This notion of transforming veterinary medicine is the driving force behind NAVC's Veterinary Innovation Council and the Veterinary Innovation Summit, and resonates strongly with our Summit attendees working hard to transform pet health."

Pet Insight Project is one of the largest tech-enabled studies of pet health, in which participating pet owners agreed to have their pets take part in this revolutionary study. One of the key focus areas relies on repeat wellness visits to Banfield hospitals, where veterinarians will update electronic health records with relevant health changes. These records will then be correlated with high-resolution data collected through Whistle Fit, a purpose-built wearable activity monitor. This unique combination of insights will be analyzed by data scientists and veterinary professionals to map relevant patterns of pet behaviors and movement with illness, to aid in more precise detection of ailments – and eventually, early warnings.

"We are undertaking this cutting-edge research to pursue a future in which pet health care is improved by data-driven insights that connect pet owners and veterinarians," said Leonid Sudakov, President of Connected Solutions, the global ventures, genetics, data and analytics division at Mars Petcare. "This collaborative approach is a great illustration of how we are leveraging our unique business scale, science and data capabilities to deliver on our purpose: 'A Better World for Pets'."

Pet Insight Project is now enrolling participants across the United States. For more information about the study and to follow insights as they are announced, visit petinsightproject.com.

About Pet Insight Project

Pet Insight Project is a tech-enabled pet health study, built to collect and interpret the health stories of hundreds of thousands of over time. Dogs enrolled by their owners in Banfield's [Optimum Wellness Plan](#) will be invited to participate in the tech-enabled research. Participants will receive a free Whistle FIT Activity Monitor, a collar-worn pet tracker, built to capture behavior data and learn to classify a variety of movements that may characterize a pet's overall wellbeing.

The behavior data collected and compiled into the Pet Insight Project database is critical to advancing pet health and will be used exclusively for research purposes. All collected data will be anonymized for research, and Pet Insight Project participants can rest assured that Mars Petcare will never share personal information with anyone or provide access to your personal data.

To learn more about Pet Insight Project, visit petinsightproject.com.

About Mars, Incorporated

Mars is a family-owned business with more than a century of history making diverse products and offering services for people and the pets people love. With almost \$35 billion in sales, the company is a global business that produces some of the world's best-loved brands: M&M's™, SNICKERS™, TWIX™, MILKY WAY™, DOVE™, PEDIGREE™, ROYAL CANIN™, WHISKAS™, EXTRA™, ORBIT™, 5™, SKITTLES™, UNCLE BEN'S™, MARS DRINKS and COCOAVIA™. Mars also provides veterinary health services that include BANFIELD™ Pet Hospitals, Blue Pearl™, VCA™ and Pet Partners™.

Headquartered in McLean, VA, Mars operates in more than 80 countries. The Mars Five Principles – Quality, Responsibility, Mutuality, Efficiency and Freedom – inspire its more than 100,000 Associates to create value for all its partners and deliver growth they are proud of every day. For more information about Mars, please visit www.mars.com. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Mars Petcare

Mars Petcare is a diverse and growing business with 75,000 Associates across 50+ countries all dedicated to building 'A Better World For Pets', by serving the health and nutrition needs of almost half the world's pets. With over 75 years of experience, Mars Petcare has developed an enviable portfolio of almost 50 brands, including the leading global pet nutrition brands [PEDIGREE™](#), [WHISKAS™](#), [ROYAL CANIN™](#), [NUTRO™](#), [GREENIES™](#), [SHEBA™](#), [CESAR™](#), [IAMS™](#) and [EUKANUBA™](#). Mars Petcare is also the world's largest veterinary health provider through a network of over 2,000 pet hospitals including [BANFIELD™](#), [BLUE PEARL™](#), [PET PARTNERS™](#), and [VCA™](#). The company is also at the forefront of emerging innovation and technology for pets, pet owners and veterinarians, with [WISDOM PANEL™ HEALTH](#), a patented genetic technology testing for dogs and the [WHISTLE™](#) GPS dog tracker, as well as the [Leap Accelerator](#) and [Companion Fund](#); programs to support startup innovation and the next generation of disruptors in the pet care industry. As part of the [Mars family of companies](#), we are privileged with the freedom and flexibility to fight for what we believe in – and we choose to fight for a better world for pets.

About WHISTLE™

WHISTLE is the pet tech brand born out of a love for pets. Founded in 2012 by Ben Jacobs, Steven Eidelman, and Kevin Lloyd, Whistle is on a mission to equip pet owners with simple tools that help them stay connected to their pets from anywhere. Today, Whistle leads the industry in innovation with Whistle 3 GPS pet tracker & activity monitor, the most reliable all-in-one pet device and the Whistle FIT Activity Monitor. For more information about Whistle visit www.whistle.com, www.facebook.com/whistlelabs or www.twitter.com/whistlelabs.

About Banfield Pet Hospital™

Founded in Portland, Ore., in 1955, Banfield is the largest general-veterinary practice in the world. In 2007, Banfield joined the Mars, Inc. family of businesses, and today has more than 1,000 hospitals across the United States and Puerto Rico. More than 3,600 Banfield veterinarians are committed to providing high-quality veterinary care for over three million pets annually. In 2017, Banfield Pet Hospital – including the work of the Banfield Foundation – was named among [Points of Light's 'Civic 50'](#) as one of the most community-minded companies in the U.S. Press seeking additional information are invited to call the [Media Hotline](#): (888) 355-0595.