

## **MARS PETCARE ACQUISITION OF OPTIGEN, LLC WILL ENABLE DISCOVERY OF NEW GENETIC HEALTH MARKERS FOR DOGS**

We are pleased to announce that Mars Petcare acquired Optigen, LLC, a DNA diagnostics company specializing in inherited eye disorders in dogs. Included in the acquisition are exclusive licenses to a portfolio of genetic disease tests patented in the U.S., Australia and many countries in Europe, and an extensive biobank of more than 150,000 samples collected over 20 years representing various canine eye diseases. Moving forward these samples will be used to discover new genetic health markers for dogs.

“Through our pioneering Wisdom Health business, Mars Petcare is leading the discovery of new genetic markers for pet health. As our scientists seek to improve the understanding of the genetic basis of pet health and disease, this acquisition will contribute to the development of personalized veterinary care,” said Leonid Sudakov, President of Connected Solutions, the global ventures, consumer technology, and genetics division of Mars Petcare. “We see our continued efforts to contribute to the ground-breaking companion animal genetics science as a great way to deliver on our purpose: ‘A Better World for Pets.’”

With this acquisition, WISDOM PANEL™ genetic test kits designed for breeders will now be able to detect over 185 genetic disease mutations that will help breeders select the best breeding matches for the most genetically healthy offspring. This will help reduce the impact of these disorders in puppies and across breeds.

“DNA testing is the only way to detect carriers or affected puppies with late onset forms of inherited canine eye disorders. Working with breeders, we can help decrease the incidence of these disorders in the future,” said Cynthia Cole DVM PhD, DACVCP and General Manager of Wisdom Health, Mars Petcare’s companion animal genetics business. “We’re at a pivotal time in companion animal genetic research, and with this acquisition we will add to the growing body of knowledge to help veterinarians’ ability to predict and treat inherited eye disorders for dogs.”

“This acquisition is a welcome and natural evolution of OptiGen’s 20 year history of working with conscientious dog owners, breeders, clubs and canine health registries around the world,” said Sue Pearce-Kelling, OptiGen’s President. “OptiGen’s and Wisdom Health’s shared commitment to providing the highest quality of DNA testing for dogs while also supporting research aimed at identifying new

genetic markers for inherited diseases, as well as our mutual respect for intellectual property where it exists in the field, makes this an excellent fit.”

The acquisition was finalized 10 April 2018, and the companies will manage the transition over the course of 2018.

**About companion animal genetic testing:**

- Genetic tests can detect which animals are carriers for specific diseases, so breeders can avoid mating them with other carriers.
- Genetic testing can identify mixed-breed dogs at risk for developing genetic conditions that would otherwise go undiagnosed; allowing earlier intervention and/or counseling to help the owner understand the condition and know what to expect.
- The initial products to incorporate these genetic tests for canine eye disorders will be OPTIMAL SELECTION™ and MY DOG DNA™ designed for breeding dogs.