Universiteit Utrecht

Utrechts Universiteitsfonds

We are Friends of VetMed

Together, we can make a real difference to animals everywhere.

By supporting research, innovative projects and (veterinary) patient care we aim to protect and improve animal health and welfare.

Today. Tomorrow. Together.

Let’s make a difference. Let’s get all our ducks in a row.

Who are Friends of VetMed?

Animals. They play an integral part in our society. We share our homes with them, consider them our closest friends or integral members of the family. We want them to live healthy, happy lives.

Today. Tomorrow. Together with us.

And should the moment come that they're anything other than healthy and happy, we want to be able to help them as quickly and effectively as possible, with all the love and empathy they deserve.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is the only academic institution of its kind in the Netherlands. The researchers and veterinarians who work there are deeply committed to protecting and improving the health and welfare of animals, in the Netherlands as well as worldwide. Their research and innovative projects aim to solve short-term problems and develop long-term solutions.

However, not all of the work they hope to do qualifies for funding from the government or national scientific organizations.

That is why we have set up the Friends of VetMed. At Friends of VetMed, we support research and innovations aimed at protecting and improving animal health, welfare and veterinary (patient) care by creating lasting connections between the researchers and veterinarians of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and individuals, organisations and institutions with a heart and passion for animals.

Together, we want to create a better future for, and with, our animals.

Let's make a difference. Let's get all our ducks in a row.

Dr. Inga Wolframm
Head of Fundraising
Manager Friends of VetMed

Pascaline van der Linden
Project leader

Get in touch:

Friends of VetMed
Utrecht University Fund
Utrecht Science Park,
Bestuursgebouw
Room 0.30 (ground floor)
Heidelberglaan 8, 3584 CS Utrecht
The Netherlands

Postbus 80125, 3508 TC Utrecht
The Netherlands

Telephone:
+31 30 253 7508
E-mail:
i.wolframm@uu.nl
Website:
www.friendsvetmed.org

Prof. Dr. Hans Kooistra
Chair of Internal Medicine Companion Animals

Prof. Dr. Marianna Tryfonidou
Chair of Regenerative Orthopedics

Dr. Franck Meijboom
Head of the Centre for Sustainable Animal Stewardship

It's all about animal health & welfare

Friends of VetMed is the charity fund of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University and part of the Utrecht University Fund*.

Friends of VetMed support research and innovations aimed at protecting and improving animal health, welfare and veterinary (patient) care. Supported by individuals, companies and organizations who share our mission, we aim to make a real difference in the lives of animals.

VISION

We are committed to safeguarding and improving the health and welfare of animals through research, education and (specialised) patient care.

We focus on socially relevant initiatives, that promote responsible and sustainable relationships between people and (their) animals.

SUPPORT

Thanks to the support of animal lovers, alumni, organisations and foundations, we work towards a better future for, and with, our animals.

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

The Scientifc Advisory Board advises the board of the Utrecht University Fund on matters relating to Friends of VetMed.

The board of the Utrecht University Fund is composed of six board members (alumni of Utrecht University), including one member of the University's Executive Board.

*The Utrecht University Fund is a Public Benefit Organisation registered in the Netherlands. Friends of VetMed is therefore exempt from donation- or inheritance tax.

CANCER

Scan for more info.

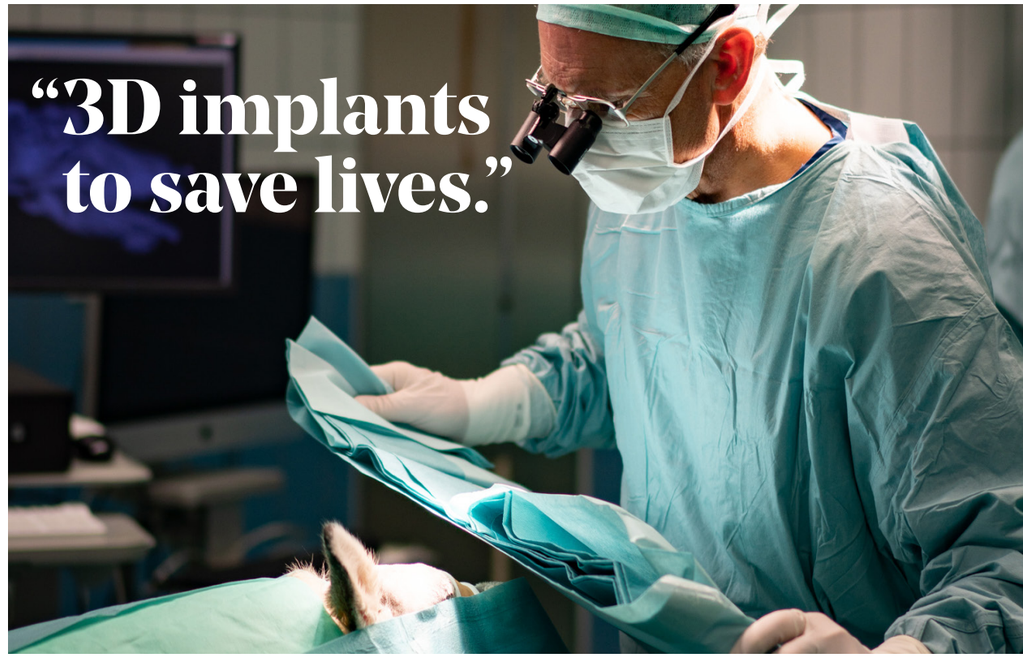
The American Bulldog puppy Bandito was only 4 months old when he was diagnosed with papilliferative squamous cell carcinoma, one of the various forms of cancer in the oral cavity. Tumors that unfortunately occur all too frequently.

Such a tumor is normally treated surgically, whereby not only the tumor but often also the upper or lower jaw bone is removed. With a young dog like Bandito, this would have led to many problems in the future. Fortunately, the veterinarians at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine were able to remove the tumor and spare Bandito's jaw - and his life!

However, not every dog is as lucky as Bandito! Every year, thousands of dogs and cats die of cancer worldwide. Just like in humans, cancer in animals is one of the top 5 causes of death. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Utrecht University, the Netherlands, is the largest academic veterinary hospital in Europe.

The resident researchers and veterinarians are committed to developing the most advanced treatment options through research and applied veterinary medicine. These insights will benefit animals and humans alike. Today, tomorrow and in years to come!

3D IMPLANTS



At the end of 2018, just before Christmas, the owners of the 3-year-old Siberian Husky Iza found out that this stunningly beautiful dog with the large, blue eyes had a tumor of the skull wall.

Although benign, but the tumor grew so rapidly in size, both inside and out, that it pushed the brain outward through the skull. It seemed like there was no hope for Iza!

Scan for more info.

Then, Prof. Dr. Björn Meij, Head of Surgery at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine came up with the idea to use the available CT scan of Iza's skull to print a 3D implant. The tumor was surgically removed and the titanium implant placed back on Iza's skull to protect the brain. Iza was allowed to go home after only a few days to celebrate Christmas with her family.

Iza's still doing fine.

The veterinary surgeons of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine want to show that animals with various chronic conditions can be successfully treated with 3D implants.That way, the technique of 3D printing can increasingly be integrated into veterinary medicine, as well as human medicine.

Scan for more info.

We know by now that being close to, and working with, animals is very good for people with different physical or mental handicaps. Since 2012 a number of service dogs have been trained for, and matched to, military veterans suffering post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), in support of their treatment.

While results to date seem promising, they are mostly based on subjective experiences and self-reflection. Even though such experiences are, of course, extremely relevant, they nevertheless make it difficult to develop a type of treatment that is beneficial to as many veterans with PTSD as possible while also catering to individual needs.

The V-PWR project (‘Veteran PTSS Working Dogs-Research-project’) investigates the interaction between trained service dogs and veterans suffering from PTSS through the use of qualitative and quantitative parameters. The ultimate aim is to maximize the mental and physical health benefits gained from such a relationship while safeguarding the welfare of the service dog.

Scan for more info.

Animal abuse. Domestic violence. Heinous crimes that are the bane of modern society. What’s more, they are closely linked to each other. Previous research has shown that even minor indications of animal abuse can be a sign of violence towards other members of the family or within the home.

Veterinarians are often the first point of contact for animals that have fallen victim to acts of violence. However, an accurate diagnosis can often be difficult. In order to provide diagnostic assistance to veterinarians who suspect an animal may have been the victim of abuse at home, we have set up the National Animal Abuse Expertise Centre.

The National Animal Abuse Expertise Centre features an immediate helpline to veterinarians. The aim is to provide expert advice within 48 hours on possible cases of animal abuse, both in order to prevent current and future abuse to the affected animal as well as to gain insight into, and to develop strategies to combat, animal abuse on a larger scale.

Seeing that there exists a strong correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence, the diagnostic helpline may also help to prevent violence towards other members of the family.

HEALTHY DOGS

Scan for more info.

Dogs are wonderful animals. They cheer us up when we're down, are loyal friends and integral parts of the family. To see a beloved dog suffer from serious illness is heartbreaking for owners and treating veterinarians alike, and helping the animal becomes their top priority.

However, the most common serious diseases in dogs are genetic in nature, making long-term treatment options often difficult if not impossible. What's more, even if an affected dog doesn't show any symptoms, he or she can still pass the condition on to his or her offspring.

The researchers and veterinarians at the Companion Animal Genetics Expertise Centre are developing new methods to fight genetic diseases in dogs and other companion animals.

First of all they want to identify the frequency of different diseases among companion animal populations. To that effect, they have developed 'PETscan', software programme treating veterinarians all over the country can use to register diagnosesn and thus help to track and discover recurring health and welfare problems in canine populations.

In a second step they want to conduct research activities focusing on developing DNA tests to trace carriers of diseases. Lastly, they will offer support to canine breeding clubs with scientifically founded breeding advice.

SHELTER MEDICINE

Imagine you're constantly surrounded by others, crammed together, with no space to call your own. There's never a moment of peace or quiet.

Everyone around you - including yourself - is sick from all the stress. And you don't know when you'll be able to leave - or if you ever will.

Scan for more info.

Many of our companion animals spend a considerable part of their lives in animal rescue centres or shelters. Life in one of these shelters is hardly ever pleasant for the animal, with all of its unfamiliar scents, noises and people that'll all affect an animal's immune system.

Under these stressful conditions, dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs are more likely to become infected with diseases that are already more common in shelters.

The Shelter Medicine Programma aims to gather more insight into, and to develop specialist care for, animals kept in rescue centres or shelters. The knowledge gained is then shared with veterinarians and shelter personnel in order to maximise health care and increase welfare for all residents.

H-PWR

Scan for more info.

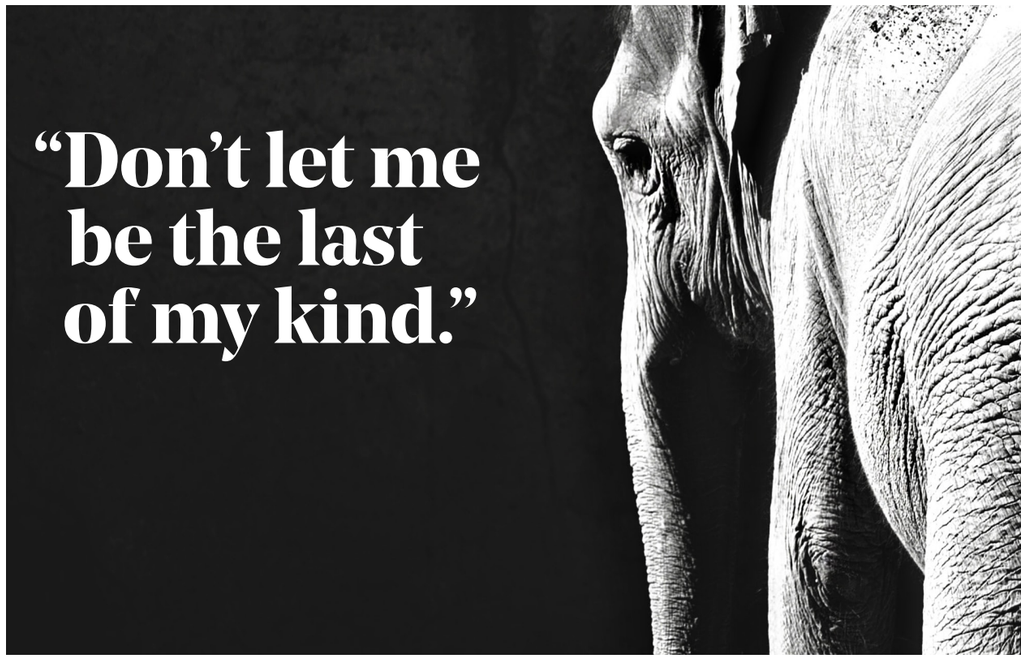
Every day, soldiers risk their lives to fight for a safe and stable world. Essential work that requires the utmost, both physically and mentally.

However, time and again, these soldiers have to endure events that will haunt them long after the mission has ended. Even when safely back home, they are forced to relive their traumatic experiences, including associated feelings of fear and helplessness. This condition is known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and prevents countless veterans from living normal lives. Support our project and help our veterans!

What is more, PTSD presents a particularly heavy burden to the family, friends and immediate environment. We believe that these veterans, as well as their families and friends, deserve all the support they can get. With the current H-PWR project, we aim to provide tangible evidence on the impact of therapy with horse, in order to help as many veterans as possible with PTSD. We want to pay particular attention to the 20% of veterans with PTSD who are labelled “therapy resistant” in the current therapy setting.

That way, we hope to help as many veterans with PTSD as possible to enjoy a better quality of life, That’s because horses may lead to this group a clear improvement in the quality of life.

EEHV IN ELEPHANTS



Who doesn’t love elephants?

They are big and beautiful, extremely intelligent and socially aware. They are quick learners, care for their young as well as those of others, and are playful with a sense of humour. They’re even capable of using tools! The perfect animal, you might say!

Scan for more info.

But here’s the catch: unless we do something right now, these wonderful animals might not be around for much longer.

Why? Because elephants are threatened by a terrible disease, the so-called ‘Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpes Virus’ (EEHV). It is the most common cause of death among elephants between one and eight years old. Victims of EEHV are almost certain to die within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms of the disease. Due the lack of a vaccine, effective treatment and diagnostics that are both reliable and fast, help almost always arrives too late...

...but we’re determined to do something about this!

The researchers at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University, want to stop this nightmare of a disease. They want to develop a vaccine effective treatment and better diagnostics in order to make sure that young elephants have a future.

PARROT WELFARE

Scan for more info.

Parrots may be able to talk, but they still can't quite express what they want and what they need. Sometimes you can see it in their behaviour, though.

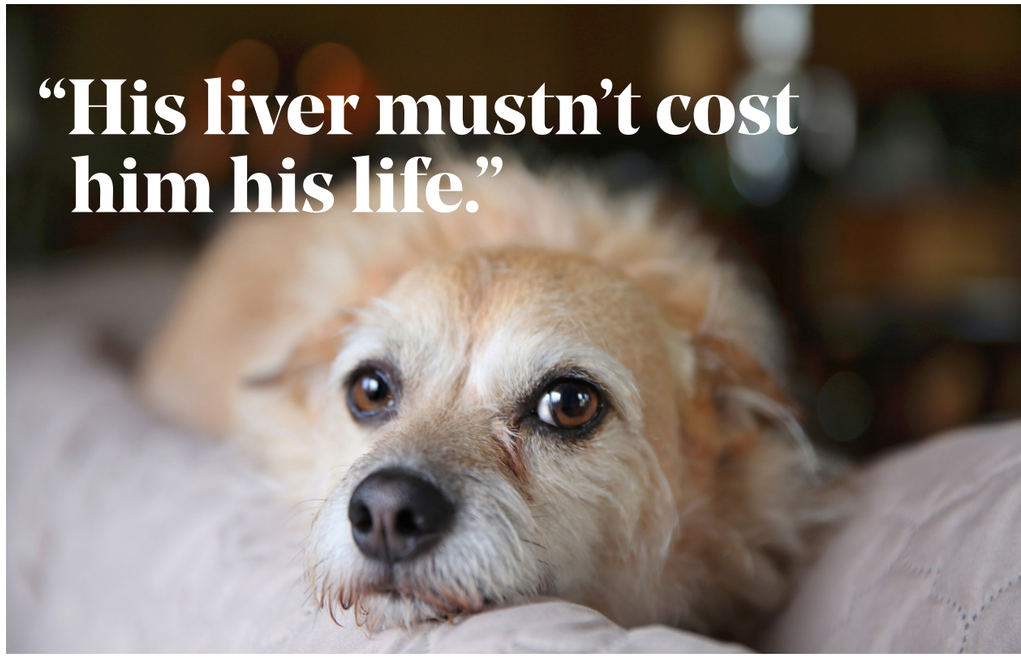
When a parrot begins to pluck at its own feathers, it probably doesn't feel at home in its own skin – or rather, its feathers.

Many parrots that are kept as pets suffer from behavioural problems. Feather plucking is one of them, which especially affects grey parrots and cockatoos. Another form of behavioural problem is stereotypical behaviour, in which a bird repeats an apparently useless action over and over again. These kinds of behavioural problems occur because the parrot's environment is not optimally attuned to what the parrot needs - it doesn't feel 'at home'.

We've known for a while that parrots like to be challenged. Now, we need to find out what parrots like most. And whether that's the same for all parrots. One parrot might be really keen on picking seeds out of a carton, while another would rather put together a puzzle (and yes, they can do that too!)

The researchers and veterinarians at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine want to find out what parrots need in their environment, and how that differs from parrot to parrot.

LIVER SHUNTS



Did you know that a healthy liver saves you from getting poisoned every single day? It filters your blood, removing toxins and other waste products along the way. And that's exactly how it works in other mammals, too.

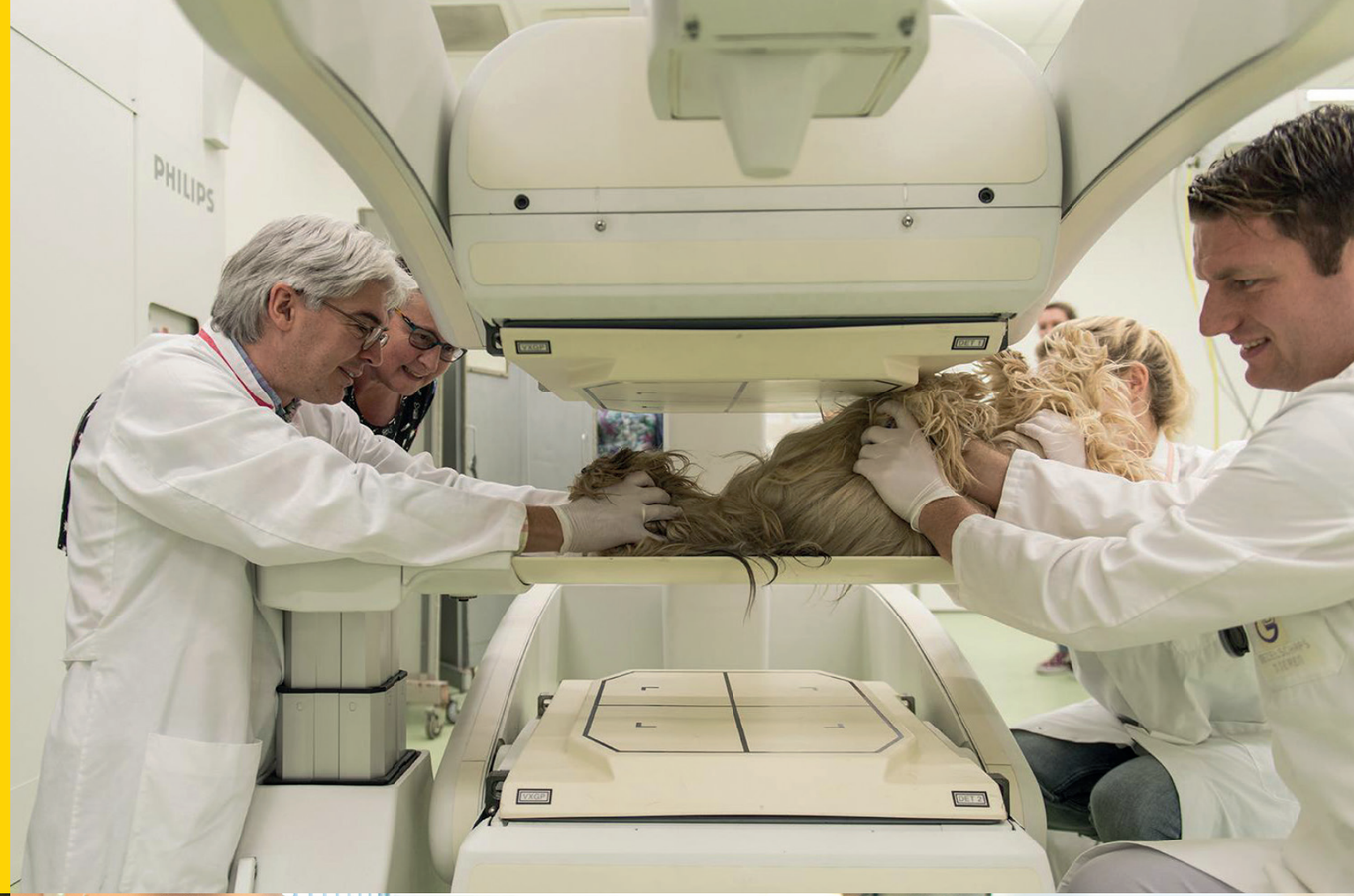
Scan for more info.

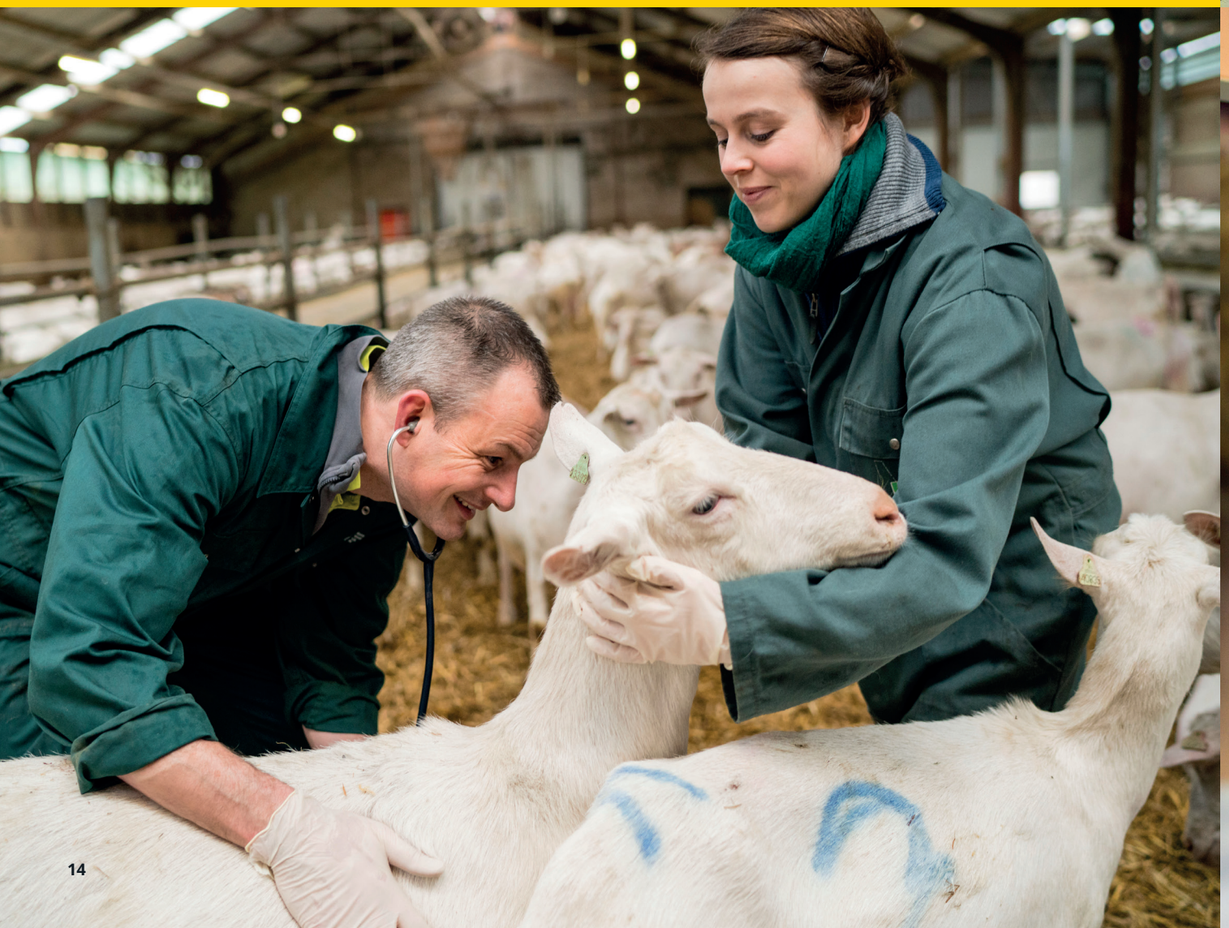
Except that it doesn't in dogs with a congenital liver shunt. These dogs are born with an extra blood vessel, which guides the blood around the liver, rather than through it. This means that the blood doesn't get filtered and toxins end up where they don't belong – in the body. The result? A very sick dog.

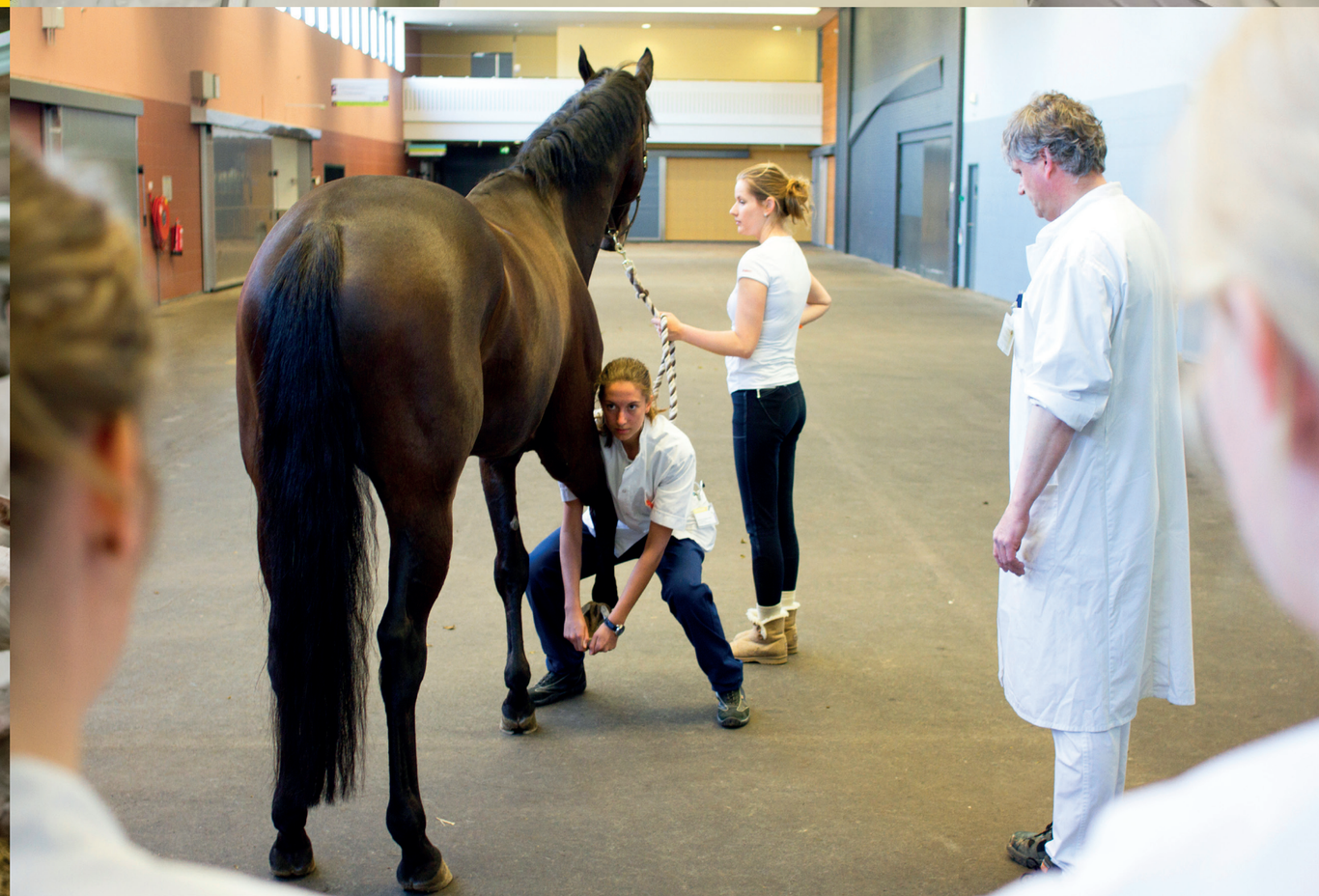
he genetic background of extrahepatic portosystemic shunts. Using Cairn terriers as an example, we found a relation between the disease and two different genes. This same relation was confirmed in Yorkshire terriers, West Highland White terriers, Jack Russell terriers, Miniature Schnauzers en Shih Tzu proving an identical genetic cause.

We would now like to extend our research, in order to confirm these initial findings in order to be able to develop a genetic test based on our research which will be instrumental in the prevention of the disease.

“Friends of VetMed. Because our animals deserve the very best of care.”







EDITOR
Inga Wolframm

FOTOGRAPHY
Istock

DESING
Utrecht University Branding

Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling
ANBI