



# WINN FELINE FOUNDATION

## For the Health and Well-being of All Cats

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### WINN FELINE FOUNDATION AWARDS SEVEN GRANTS FOR FELINE HEALTH STUDIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MILLER TRUST

*Wyckoff, NJ, December 4, 2014:* Winn Feline Foundation is pleased to announce the award of seven feline medical research grants funded in partnership with the George Sydney and Phyllis Redman Miller Trust for 2014. Winn President Glenn A. Olah DVM, PhD, DABVP (Feline) commented, “With the help of the Miller Trust, Winn Feline Foundation continues its 46 years of remaining at the forefront of providing funding for feline health studies at major institutions. As the only foundation focused exclusively on feline medical research financial support, we are in a unique position to help advance the body of medical knowledge on the cat. Through the Miller Trust we are awarding \$111,392 in grants for studies on safer imaging systems for respiratory distressed cats, treatment for a fatal tick borne blood parasite, improving the feline genome, developing a test for the silver coat color, effective chemotherapy for injection site sarcomas, phase two of evaluating a safer sedative/pre-anesthetic drug, and looking at differences in normal skin flora compared to allergic skin of cats.”

Grants were awarded for the following research studies:

##### **Assessment of an imaging chamber for handling cats in respiratory distress (MT14-002)**

*Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Riedesel, DVM DACVR; Iowa State University; \$3133*

Handling unanesthetized cats in order to obtain high quality X-rays or CT scans can be a challenge. When the cat has respiratory symptoms, the stress of restraint can be life threatening. A tube for cat restraint has been developed to provide a low stress environment for the cat and allow for the administration of oxygen during imaging. This device will be evaluated during this study.

##### **Comparison of two treatment options for a tick borne blood parasite**

*(MT14-005) Principal Investigator: Leah A. Cohn; University of Missouri; \$23,023*

*Cytauxzoon felis* is a deadly tick borne parasite of cats that is increasing in prevalence. Traditional treatment regimens are difficult to administer and prohibitively expensive for many owners. Under this study, the traditional treatment regimen will be compared to a lower cost orally administered anti-malarial drug: Coartem®.

### **Improving the quality of the feline reference genome**

*(MT14-009) Principal Investigator: William J. Murphy; Texas A&M University; \$25,000*

Sequencing of the cat genome has resulted in numerous breakthroughs in the understanding of feline genetic disease. However, over 1000 genes (about 10% of the genome) remain unplaced or unresolved. This project will improve the quality of the feline reference genome and bring it more in line with the dog, human and mouse genomes.

### **Development of a genetic test for silver coat color**

*(MT14-010) Principal Investigator: Barbara Gandolfi, PhD; University of Missouri; \$10,000*

Mutations have been identified through whole genome sequencing appear to be correlated with silver coat color in cats. This study will evaluate whether these mutations are present in 300 cats of known coat color to establish which mutation causes this trait. This will enable the development of a genetic test for silver, one of the few remaining cat colors for which there is no genetic test.

### **Improving the effectiveness of chemotherapy on feline injection site sarcomas**

*(MT14-013) Principal Investigator: Kelly Hume; Cornell University; \$12,969*

Feline injection site sarcomas (ISS) are aggressive cancers that can occur at the site of injections. They grow quickly and invasively. Radical surgery and/or radiation therapy are often required and still do not necessarily result in cures. The role of chemotherapy in treatment is not well defined and there is little data supporting a positive impact on outcome. This study looks at ways to increase the beneficial effect of chemotherapy by evaluating a variety of therapeutic combinations on cancer cells. The combinations are designed to inhibit the way cancer cells recognize and respond to DNA damage inflicted by the chemotherapeutic.

### **Improving the safety of a drug used for sedation or pre-anesthesia, Phase Two**

*(MT14-017) Principal Investigator: Bruno Pypendop; University of California-Davis; \$12,479*

Dexmedetomidine is a drug commonly used in cats for its calming and pain-relieving effects. It is also sometimes used prior to general anesthesia. However, its use is mostly indicated in relatively young, healthy cats, because it produces severe effects on the cardiovascular system. MK-467 is a drug that is expected to prevent these cardiovascular effects, while preserving the beneficial effects of dexmedetomidine when administered simultaneously. It has been studied in dogs and sheep, but not in cats.

### **Changes in bacterial and fungal flora on the skin of cats with skin allergies from normal cats**

*(MT14-018) Principal Investigator: Aline Rodrigues-Hoffmann; Texas A&M University; \$24,788*

This study will use DNA sequencing technology to identify the normal bacterial and fungal organisms present on the skin of healthy cats. These species will be compared to those found on cats with skin allergies. This will aid in the identification of therapeutic approaches in the treatment of skin allergies and other skin diseases.

*The **Winn Feline Foundation** is a non-profit organization established in 1968 that supports studies to improve cat health. Since 1968, the Winn Feline Foundation has funded over \$5 million in health research for cats at more than 30 partner institutions world-wide. For further information, go to [www.winnfelinefoundation.org](http://www.winnfelinefoundation.org).*