

# Paws of Life Joins Nationwide Efforts to Screen Dogs for Arthritis

*“Million Dog Search” Campaign Helps Veterinarians and Dog Owners While Raising Money for Pet Charities.*

GREENSBORO, N.C., April 21 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Millions of dogs suffer from canine arthritis and their owners often have no idea their beloved pets are in such pain. A new initiative spearheaded by Novartis Animal Health US, Inc. and Hill’s Pet Nutrition will combat that disconnect with a goal of screening one million dogs for canine arthritis. The two companies teamed up to launch the “Million Dog Search,” a nationwide awareness campaign that will also raise thousands of dollars for animal charities, including Paws of Life, one of seven charities participating in the campaign. Paws of Life is dedicated to the education of search and rescue dogs and their handlers ([www.pawsoflife.org](http://www.pawsoflife.org)).

“We are absolutely thrilled to be a part of such an important campaign that raises awareness about the millions of dogs suffering from arthritis,” said Robin Habeger, executive director of Paws of Life. “The Million Dog Search campaign is also a great opportunity for dog lovers to support the organizations that are on the front lines protecting the health and safety of animals.”

An estimated 14 million dogs are affected by arthritis, but only 1.4 million are receiving treatment – just 10 percent.

“One in five dogs suffers from canine arthritis, yet so few get treatment,” said Mickey McDermott, vice president of communications at Novartis Animal Health. We hope this campaign helps these dogs get help from a veterinarian quickly.”

Novartis Animal Health makes Deramaxx® (deracoxib), a medication that provides rapid pain control and reduces inflammation associated with canine arthritis. It is in a class called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDS, designed to block enzymes associated with pain and inflammation. About a million dogs with arthritis have already been helped by the medication.

Hill’s Pet Nutrition manufactures Hill’s® Prescription Diet® j/d™, a pet food that relieves dogs’ aching joints and improves their quality of life in as little as a few weeks.

The campaign’s Web site ([www.milliondogsearch.com](http://www.milliondogsearch.com)) plays a vital role in the awareness effort and includes a simple pain checklist dog owners can use to determine if their pets are suffering. The campaign also encourages screenings through educational and support materials that help veterinary hospitals teach dog owners and staff about arthritis. For each checklist and screening completed online, Novartis Animal Health and Hill’s Pet Nutrition will donate a dollar to the owner’s charity of choice. The charity with the

most donations receives a grand prize of \$20,000.

The Lifetime channel will feature the Million Dog Search on episodes of "The Balancing Act" that air on April 21 and May 18 at 7:30 a.m. EDT.

The Million Dog Search campaign ends on November 30, 2010.

#### **About Paws of Life:**

The Paws of Life Foundation is dedicated to the education of search and rescue dog handlers and other working dog handlers. Through hands on instruction as well as online training, Paws of Life is educating the handlers and canines that keep the country safe and bring loved ones home. Initiatives include the Working K9 Handler Academy and a coaching/mentoring program for search and rescue dog teams. More information can be found at [www.pawsoflife.org](http://www.pawsoflife.org) or [www.k9handleracademy.com](http://www.k9handleracademy.com).

#### **About Novartis Animal Health:**

Novartis Animal Health researches, develops and commercializes leading animal treatments that meet the needs of pet owners, farmers and veterinarians. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis Animal Health conducts business in 40 countries and employs 2,600 people worldwide. For more information, please consult [www.ah.novartis.com](http://www.ah.novartis.com).

#### **About Novartis:**

Novartis provides healthcare solutions that address the evolving needs of patients and societies. Focused solely on healthcare, Novartis offers a diversified portfolio to best meet these needs: innovative medicines, cost-saving generic pharmaceuticals, preventive vaccines, diagnostic tools and consumer health products. Novartis is the only company with leading positions in these areas. In 2009, the Group's continuing operations achieved net sales of USD 44.3 billion, while approximately USD 7.5 billion was invested in R&D activities throughout the Group. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis Group companies employ approximately 100,000 full-time-equivalent associates and operate in more than 140 countries around the world. For more information, please visit [www.novartis.com](http://www.novartis.com).

Note: As with all drugs in this class, side effects involving the digestive system, kidneys or liver may occur. These are normally mild, but may be serious. Pet owners should discontinue therapy and contact their veterinarian immediately if side effects occur. Evaluation for pre-existing conditions and regular monitoring are recommended for pets on any medication, including DERAMAXX. Use with other NSAIDs or corticosteroids should be avoided.

*Costs associated with this news announcement were donated to POL by Neotrope®.*

#### **IMAGES FOR MEDIA:**

\*(PHOTO 300dpi: [www.Send2Press.com/wire/images/10-0421-sagesebastian\\_300dpi.jpg](http://www.Send2Press.com/wire/images/10-0421-sagesebastian_300dpi.jpg))

\*(Photo Caption: Paws of Life supports the education of search and rescue dog handlers such as this one.)

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