



# media *release*

Thursday 13 September, 2012

## **SUSPECTED CASES OF MYSTERY DOG ILLNESS REOCCUR AT FIVE UK SITES**

**Animal Health Trust continues investigation into Seasonal Canine Illness**

A leading veterinary charity has confirmed it has had reports of suspected cases of Seasonal Canine Illness (SCI) from all of its five study sites since the end of August 2012.

SCI claimed the lives of several dogs during autumn 2009, 2010 and 2011, however scientists from the Animal Health Trust (AHT) have not been able to confirm if there have been any fatal cases in 2012 to date.

Charlotte Robin, SCI Research Co-ordinator at the AHT, said: "We have had a great response to our online SCI questionnaire from dog owners with more than 200 questionnaires completed to date. Of these, there have been 14 suspected cases of SCI reported to us.

"These 14 cases are those which fit our case definition. There could, of course, be more cases that are occurring but have not been reported to us."

The AHT's investigation continues at five previously-affected sites across England, all of which have had cases reported at them since the end of August:

- Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire
- Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk
- Sandringham Estate, Norfolk
- Sherwood Forest\*, Nottinghamshire
- Thetford Forest, Norfolk.

Whilst the AHT's investigation focusses on these five study sites, the veterinary charity is quick to highlight that dogs could be at risk of SCI walking in any woodland during autumn, so it advises dog owners to remain vigilant and seek veterinary advice immediately if they suspect their dog has SCI.

Dog owners are advised to look out for vomiting, diarrhoea or lethargy which usually appears within 24 to 72 hours of dogs having walked in woodland in autumn. The AHT advises any dog owners who see these signs in their pet to seek veterinary advice immediately.

The AHT continues to ask dog owners to help with their investigation.

Charlotte Robin, added: "We need dog owners to help us in two ways. Firstly, by completing our online SCI questionnaire - the more information we can gather through the questionnaires the better chance we have of identifying the cause of this mystery illness.

"Secondly, we hope dog owners will help us to spread the word about SCI to other dog owners. Updates on social media, or dog walking forums or even a quick chat with dog owners you meet whilst out walking, will all help to minimise the impact of SCI in 2012."

An information video about SCI is available to view at [www.youtube.com/ahttv](http://www.youtube.com/ahttv)

**Ends**

**For further information, please contact:**

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**Additional notes:**

- The Animal Health Trust (AHT) is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit the website at [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)
- In September 2010, the AHT was asked by the Sandringham Estate to investigate the illness on its site. Since the investigation began, more cases have been identified across Norfolk, Nottinghamshire and Suffolk and the

AHT has been working with the Natural History Museum, the Institute of Zoology, the National Trust, Nottinghamshire County Council and the Forestry Commission on the investigation. The Camping and Caravanning Club and the Environment Agency have also assisted the investigation

- The AHT is grateful to The Kennel Club for helping with funding towards the investigation. The funding, which started in January 2012, has enabled the AHT to appoint a dedicated SCI coordinator
- The AHT advises any dog owner who is concerned about their dog's health, or if their dog is experiencing vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy to contact their vet immediately
- \*There have been no reported incidents of SCI at Sherwood Forest Country Park, Edwinstowe. Suspected cases of SCI, prior to 2012, have been reported in Nottinghamshire at Sherwood Pines, Clipstone and Blidworth Woods, Blidworth
- The AHT has produced an informative video about SCI which can be viewed at

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_b\\_VyHb99Y&list=UU0QyXayBwiIbj0HGhvzvcQw&index=1&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_b_VyHb99Y&list=UU0QyXayBwiIbj0HGhvzvcQw&index=1&feature=plcp)

Please link to this video from any online media outlets so that dog owners can find out more.