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NOVEL NEW DOG DNA TEST TURNS BREEDERS INTO GENETIC MATCHMAKERS**-- *Optimal Selection™ from Mars Veterinary™ Poised to Make Long-Term Positive Impact on the Health of the Worlds Dog Population* --**

Rockville, Md. (October 17, 2011) – Dog breeders in the United States and abroad now have access to a first-of-its-kind tool that will help them make better educated decisions on optimal breeding matches based on science. Mars Veterinary, the global leader in canine genetic breed identification, announced today the introduction of *Optimal Selection*, a DNA test that is expected to help breeders avoid many health problems associated with inbreeding while still being able to select the physical and behavioral traits that are important to them.

Changing In-Breeding to Out-Breeding

For centuries, dedicated breeders have worked to improve the temperament, conformation, and health of their purebred dogs. However, this can cause a decrease in genetic diversity leaving the breeding community to contend with concerns such as smaller litter size, puppy mortality, and other health issues, in addition to a negative consumer perception around breeding practices.

Optimal Selection will help breeders make better educated decisions on breeding matches based on science. Breeders can make a preliminary assessment of a number of dogs based on their respective breeding goals. When the list has been narrowed to the top candidates, they can then use *Optimal Selection* to help make their final breeding decision. This new test uses a small blood sample to analyze and compare chromosomes of potential breeding pairs. By comparing the potential sire and dam's chromosomal similarities and differences, the breeder is given the opportunity to diversify the genetic makeup of their puppies and reduce the risk of recessive medical conditions while still being able to select for the physical and behavioral traits that are important to them. The analysis provided by *Optimal Selection* utilizes a scoring system based on the dog's DNA that can be compared across multiple potential pairings. Each potential mate will be given a breeding score based on the compatibility of the chromosomes analyzed. The lower the score, the more likely it is that these dogs will produce puppies with the desired traits while limiting their disease risk. Everyone benefits as a result of this test.

"We have leveraged our extensive knowledge of the genetic structures across breeds to closely examine the DNA of dogs within each breed and help owners take their breeding programs to the next level," said Dr. Angela Hughes, Veterinary Genetics Research Manager at Mars Veterinary. "*Optimal Selection* has the potential to transform dog breeding so that the genetic diversity within a breed or family line can be protected and maximized, which can make a tangible, long-term positive impact on the health and wellness of these wonderful dogs. Dogs, breeders and owners -- everyone is better off!"

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Optimal Selection Puppies Poised for Champion Status

Among the first breeders to benefit from using *Optimal Selection* was Woodland, Wash.-based Miriam Couto. She has bred Dandie Dinmont Terriers for over 10 years and has now produced three litters with *Optimal Selection*. Three puppies from those litters are actively competing and doing very well in American Kennel Club conformation shows; one of which has become a champion and achieved three Terrier group wins at only 7 months of age.

"*Optimal Selection* helps breeders dedicated to selecting the best for both their program and their breed. We already select for best possible type, temperament, health, and soundness," said Miriam Couto. "Now, using *Optimal Selection*, we have a brilliant means for choosing genetic diversity as well. This is thrilling especially for breeders passionate about numerically endangered breeds and their overall health and wellness. I couldn't be happier with the results!"

Mars' Science behind *Optimal Selection*

Mars Veterinary's canine DNA analyses are based on more than a decade of extensive research, drawing from the expertise of leading scientists, veterinarians, universities and breed organizations throughout the world and the Waltham® Center. This science has also yielded Wisdom Panel *Insights*, the most comprehensive swab-based mixed breed dog DNA analysis on the market and Wisdom Panel™ *Professional*, the only blood-based dog DNA analysis available exclusively through veterinarians, as well as the new Wisdom Panel *Purebred* and *Designer Dog* tests.

About Mars Veterinary™

Mars Veterinary is a division of MARS® Incorporated, a company known for innovative consumer and pet food brands that are trusted by people around the world. Its mission is to facilitate responsible pet care by enlightening pet owners and communities with valuable insights into their pets as individuals through innovative, science-based discoveries. For more than a decade, Mars Veterinary has researched and developed state-of-the-art genetic tests for mixed-breed dogs, revolutionizing personalized pet care. By discovering a dog's ancestry, pet owners and veterinarians can work together to tailor wellness programs that fit the needs of a dog. For more information, visit www.wisdompanel.com.

About Mars, Incorporated

In 1911, Frank C. Mars made the first Mars candies in his Tacoma, Washington kitchen and established Mars' first roots as a confectionery company. In the 1920s, Forrest E. Mars, Sr. joined his father in business and together they launched the MILKY WAY® bar. In 1932, Forrest, Sr. moved to the United Kingdom with a dream of building a business based on the philosophy of a "mutuality of benefits" for all stakeholders – this vision serves as the foundation of the Mars, Incorporated we are today. Based in McLean, Virginia, Mars has net sales of more than \$30 billion and six business segments including Petcare, Chocolate, Wrigley, Food, Drinks and Symbioscience. More than 65,000 Associates worldwide are putting our Mars Principles in action every day to make a difference for people and the planet through our performance.

Mars brands include: Chocolate – M&M'S®, SNICKERS®, DOVE®, GALAXY®, MARS®, MILKY WAY® and TWIX®; Petcare – PEDIGREE®, WHISKAS®, SHEBA®, CESAR® and ROYAL CANIN®; Wrigley – ORBIT®, EXTRA®, STARBURST®, DOUBLEMINT® and SKITTLES®; Food – UNCLE BEN'S®, DOLMIO®, EBLY®, MASTERFOODS® and SEEDS OF CHANGE®; Drinks – ALTERRA COFFEE ROASTERS™, THE BRIGHT TEA CO.™, KLIX® and FLAVIA®; Symbioscience – SERAMIS®, and COCOAVIA™.

For more information, please visit www.mars.com.

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