

NEWS RELEASE

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Iams to Open Region's First MRI Center for Pets at NC State

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cutting-edge medical-imaging technology is going to the dogs – and other domestic animals.

Officials at North Carolina State University and the Iams Company today announced that Iams will open a new magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) center at NC State's Centennial Biomedical Campus in spring 2004.

The 3,348-square-foot Iams Pet Imaging Center will be the region's first MRI facility dedicated solely for use on pets and domestic animals. It will provide area veterinarians with state-of-the-art diagnostic tools – comparable to those used on humans – and help doctors detect and begin treatment of hard-to-diagnose health conditions earlier, more accurately and with less need for exploratory surgery.

Iams, which makes pet food and pet-care products, is the first corporate partner to locate a facility on NC State's Centennial Biomedical Campus, a 70-acre research and development "neighborhood" anchored by the university's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Veterinarians and technicians working at the new pet imaging center will be employed by the Iams Company and will also have clinical faculty status at the College of Veterinary Medicine's Teaching Hospital.

Construction of the facility is expected to begin this fall.

Dr. Ian Robertson, assistant professor of radiology at NC State, says there is a lot of excitement about the center. "Magnetic resonance imaging provides much better image detail of many organs, in particular the spinal cord and brain, in a safe and non-invasive fashion," he said.

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“We anticipate that we will be able to diagnose many problematic diseases of the nervous system such as strokes, gliomas (a type of brain tumor), and malformations that were previously difficult to detect. Common problems like slipped discs can also be diagnosed more effectively and safely.”

“The Iams Pet Imaging Center is helping change the way veterinarians can practice medicine,” said Dr. Dan Carey, a veterinarian and director of technical communications at Iams Research & Development. “With the MRI technology, we are enabling veterinarians to diagnose pets’ illnesses definitively and non-evasively.”

In addition to being a powerful new diagnostic resource, the center also provides a key opportunity for non-clinical research, Robertson says. “MRI not only provides anatomical information in the form of images but also functional information about body physiology. This resource will greatly assist researchers and will complement the developing genomics program at the Centennial Biomedical Campus,” he explained.

The facility at NC State will be Iams’ second pet imaging center. The company opened its first in Vienna, Va., in 2002. Veterinarians there have already completed more than 1,600 scans on animals, and have conclusively been able to diagnose conditions such as strokes and bursitis that previously were difficult to detect with traditional technology like X-rays or exploratory surgery.

Pets can be referred to the Iams Pet Imaging Center by veterinarians in private practice as well as by clinicians at NC State’s Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

The new facility may be used for horses, too, Robertson notes. “With some customization, the center’s Siemens MRI unit will be able to image the lower limbs and skull, including the brain of anesthetized horses,” he said. “Equine magnetic resonance imaging is very new, but already the tremendous diagnostic potential is apparent.”

Centennial Biomedical Campus is an extension of NC State’s Centennial Campus. University, industry and government partners will work side by side on the new campus to develop new biomedical technologies that benefit animals and humans alike.

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About the NCSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital

The NCSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital, established in 1983, provides state-of-the-art veterinary medical services for veterinarians and the people of North Carolina and surrounding regions. Each year nearly 17,000 patients are examined at the hospital.

About the Iams Pet Imaging Center

The Iams Pet Imaging Center houses the most advanced equipment on the market, manufactured by Siemens with technical expertise provided by ProScan, a world leader in the development of MRI technology. To learn more about The Iams Pet Imaging Center, call 1-866-4PETMRI or 1-866-478-8674.

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About the Iams Company

For more than 50 years, the Iams Company has enhanced the health and well-being of dogs and cats by providing world-class quality foods.