WALTHAM^{TM} FOUNDATION

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

2019 RESEARCH AWARDS

In 2019, the WALTHAM Foundation plans to fund a number of awards typically up to $25,000 (USD) each (please check current exchange rates for other currencies) to support high quality, innovative research projects that advances the understanding in the nutrition, health, behaviour or welfare of companion animals.

Application Deadline: 1st May 2019

1. Background

The WALTHAM Foundation is a **non-charitable** funding mechanism through which Mars Petcare divisions fund science from their research budget. It offers the opportunity for scientific researchers to apply for money to run research projects that advances the understanding in the nutrition, health, behaviour or welfare of companion animals around the world. At MARS Petcare, we believe that pets make the world better for people, so we make it our purpose to make 'A Better World for Pets'™. Our work is underpinned with an approach that helps ensure our commitment to pets and their wellbeing is based on scientific evidence as well as emotion. We invest in a huge amount of scientific research as a company and for 18 years, the WALTHAM Foundation has been one way we support key scientific and academic organisations globally to advance research and disseminate knowledge to help us all create 'A Better World for Pets'™.

We believe that progress towards achieving our purpose will be greatly advanced by the emergence of data science as a critical discipline. Data can be used to improve pet health and the world in which they live in a myriad of ways, from better veterinary care, data driven policy making and sustainable food for the future. To enable this, we will need rapid innovations in many areas of science from information management, analytics to data applications.

2. Preferred Topic Areas for 2019

The theme of the 2019 WALTHAM Foundation call is for data science based projects within any life science discipline. Recognising that the correct interpretation of any biological experiment depends on

the accuracy and consistency of knowledge within the domain, we are particularly keen to see applications that will generate persistent value for the scientific community.

This means foundational research that;
- Enrich publically available data.
- Transfer knowledge to the area of Petcare.
- Improve research methodologies.

2.1. Examples

Enriching publically available data could be delivered through:
- The curation of existing data or databases (for example, improving the gene, transcript, or protein annotations of companion animal reference genomes).
- New/additional data collection such as adding additional metadata/data points/data types to an existing or planned project in which the new data will be extensive and serendipitous to future analysis.
- FAIR-ification of a data source; improving the findability, accessibility, interopibility, and reusability of a data source to enable the second life of data which has tangible value for the community.

Transfer of knowledge to the area of petcare could be delivered through:
- Applying an existing or novel application to pet research. For example, the transfer of generalised models from non-pet data to applications of pet relevance.
- Using existing knowledge/data to create a new resource. For example, semantic analysis of literature to generate pet-relevant knowledge graphs.

Improved research methodologies could be delivered through:
- Algorithm development, i.e. fundamental research into improving the predictive accuracy or efficiency of an analytical method with a potential beneficial application within pet research.
- Integration of data. Methodological improvements that ease or benefit the interopobility of disconnected data types. For example, unsupervised methods that use inference to connect responses between multi-omics data using Bayesian, factorisation, network–based, or other analytical approaches.

3. Funding details

- The award amount is typically up to $25,000 (USD) (check exchange rates for amount in other currencies) to be paid up front for each funded project.

- Data collection is expected to be completed over a period of up to a maximum of two years, which allows for a preparatory period and time for final data analysis and final report write up.

- The principle investigator must be employed by a university or academic institution, but there is no geographic restriction on the location of that university.

- The approved project must be in compliance with the WALTHAM Foundation Award Requirements (see section 3.2.) in addition to receiving institute human and animal ethics approval prior to funding, if applicable.

- For more information on the WALTHAM Foundation go to https://www.waltham.com/grants-awards/waltham-foundation/.

3.1. Application and Review Process

The award application form can be obtained from the WALTHAM Foundation web site (see above for the web address). The application instructions and guidelines for completion are contained within the form.

Applications will be subject to the following review process:

- Step 1. A signed and dated applications must be submitted electronically to waltham.foundation@waltham.com by May 1st, 2019. Please use the subject line "WALTHAM Foundation Application 2019."

- Step 2. WALTHAM Foundation team will review all applications taking into consideration:
    – Scientific merit and impact
    – Robustness of the project design
    – Fit to current call preferred topics (see section 2.1.)
    – Compliance with the award requirements (see section 3.2.)

- All applicants will be notified of the status of their application via email once a funding decision has been made. This is estimated to be on or around 1st June 2019.

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide unsuccessful applicants with feedback, input or reviews. Status enquiries before this point will not be responded to.

3.2. Award Requirements

- An authorised institutional agent of the recipient's university or research institute should sign the application to acknowledging institutional acceptance of the awards requirements, including institutional overheads is limited to 10% of the total award value, within the overall award limit.

- The recipients will work at a university or research institute that provides appropriate research facilities.

- Research projects should be completed within a maximum of a 2 year period. Exceptions to this timing require written agreement of the WALTHAM Foundation.

- All research projects must pass through the WCPN Ethical Review Process prior to funding, where appropriate, and the research project should not deviate from the ethical standards agreed with the WALTHAM Foundation.

- Where animals are client-owned, it should be made clear in the protocol that owners will be asked to give written consent for the participation of their pet in the research project and that they are fully aware of all procedures their pet (or samples from the pet arising from clinical evaluation) will undergoing.

- For the selected projects, the WALTHAM Research team will not participate in data collection or statistical analysis, therefore the application and corresponding budget should provide the personnel and expertise to accomplish both. However, there is the possibility to obtain support/advice on project design considerations and results communication if required.

- The recipients are required to submit a suitable interim and final report to the WALTHAM Foundation on its progress and findings. This is to ensure there are tangible outputs achieved as a result of the research project in line with the original application.

- The recipients are expected to publish/present research findings through the usual scientific communication channels. In order to ensure that the research project accurately and ethically represents the research project funded, the WALTHAM Foundation should have the opportunity to review the communication of research findings in advance in a timely manner. There is no intent to restrict any such public exposure of the research findings unless they contravene the requirements of the WALTHAM Foundation as set out in 3.2.

- Funding will only be granted for travel and accommodation if it is to allow essential fieldwork.

- The Recipient will allow the WALTHAM Foundation to list the Recipient's Name, the Project Title and Recipient's University/Research Institution under WALTHAM Foundation grants on the WALTHAM website.

*The WALTHAM Foundation will **NOT** sponsor the following*:

- Research into surgical procedures, pharmacological studies, toxicological studies or studies that are likely to lead to the development of a drug or vaccine.

- Research into non-companion animal species (such as farm or wild animals) unless its relevance to companion animals is clearly stated.

- Research that causes suffering or results in euthanasia of the animals involved.

- Studies whose subjects have clinical conditions that have been artificially induced.

- Non-research activities (e.g. student travel and subsistence, registration for scientific meetings, conferences, workshops, college scholarships, charitable activities) or the purchase of equipment or computers.

- Donations to charitable organisations or for charitable work.