

Feline Genome Project to Launch

Morris Animal Foundation's research will help in the prevention and treatment of feline diseases.

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The Morris Animal Foundation recently reported that its feline genomic research project will launch in 2010. The aim is to help researchers prevent and treat the most serious diseases affecting cats today.

The project will be funded by a \$1 million pledge from Hill's Pet Nutrition Inc. The pledge was announced in 2008, around the same time that the Topeka, Kan.-based company donated a database of feline single nucleotide polymorphisms. The database will be shared with feline health researchers worldwide.

"The development of these genetic tools will bring about critical breakthroughs in feline health issues, such as diabetes, renal disease, endocrine disease, cancer, diseases that alter the immune system and more," said Patricia Olson, DVM, Ph.D., president and chief executive officer of Morris Animal Foundation. "These breakthroughs will help prevent disease in kittens and will help develop better therapies for curing diseases in adult cats."

The foundation's feline genomic advisory committee will work with medical technology company Illumina to develop a tool for using this database and genetic information from other partnering scientists.