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**LINNAEUS, A LEADING UK PROVIDER OF VETERINARY SERVICES, TO JOIN MARS  
PETCARE'S VETERINARY HEALTH GROUP**

*Linnaeus to become a unit of Mars Petcare alongside its other veterinary businesses VCA™, BANFIELD™ Pet Hospital, BLUEPEARL™ and PET PARTNERS™*

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BRUSSELS (June 7, 2018) --- Mars Petcare today announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Linnaeus Group Limited (“Linnaeus”) from private equity firm Sovereign Capital Partners. On completion of the transaction, Linnaeus will become a unit within Mars Petcare’s Veterinary Health Group.

Linnaeus was founded in 2014 on the highly-regarded Willows Veterinary Centre and Referral Service following its acquisition by Sovereign Capital Partners. It is an innovative provider of veterinary services and offers an outstanding referral-led hub-and-spoke platform in the UK. Linnaeus and Mars Petcare share a common ethos for the provision of best-in-class care for pets and putting patient care at their heart.

Mars Petcare has been providing veterinary care since 1994 when it first began partnering with BANFIELD™ Pet Hospital. Today, Mars Petcare employs approximately 50,000 veterinary professionals and cares for more than 10 million pets annually across VCA™, BANFIELD™ Pet Hospital, BLUEPEARL™ and PET PARTNERS™. Aided by research centers around the globe, Mars Petcare is dedicated to creating A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS, by advancing science, innovation and care.

“Pet care has been an important part of Mars for over 80 years and Mars has a large and growing veterinary practice in the US. This strategic acquisition reaffirms our commitment both to the pet care industry and veterinary profession,” said Alejandro Bernal, Vice President, Veterinary Health Group, Mars Petcare. “Alongside our other veterinary businesses, Linnaeus will enable Mars Petcare to provide pets with even greater access to high-quality veterinary care. Its reputation as a leading partnership of highly-respected veterinary practices and professionals means that it is well placed to meet the increasing demand in the UK and help drive our purpose, to create A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS.”

Linnaeus has five highly-respected, multidisciplinary referral centers, complemented by a thriving first opinion practice portfolio of 82 sites which are strategically located in key urban areas across the UK. The business is known for its highly-qualified team and employs more Diplomates from the European College of Veterinary Surgeons than any other veterinary group in the UK.

“Linnaeus has seen significant growth, and we are making strong progress in building a true specialist veterinary offering in the UK with continued investment into high-quality staff,” said Lynne Hill, Chief Executive Officer of Linnaeus and former President of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. “Joining Mars Petcare will enable us to provide pets with even greater high-quality veterinary care, from wellness and prevention, through primary, emergency and specialty care.”

On completion of the deal, Linnaeus’s existing management will continue to lead the business. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

J.P. Morgan Securities plc acted as financial adviser and Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer acted as legal counsel to Mars.

## About Mars Petcare

Mars Petcare is a diverse and growing business with 75,000 Associates across 50+ countries dedicated to one purpose: A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS. With 75 years of experience, our portfolio of almost 50 brands serves the health and nutrition needs of the world's pets – including brands PEDIGREE<sup>®</sup>, WHISKAS<sup>®</sup>, ROYAL CANIN<sup>®</sup>, NUTRO<sup>™</sup>, GREENIES<sup>™</sup>, SHEBA<sup>®</sup>, CESAR<sup>®</sup>, IAMS<sup>™</sup> and EUKANUBA<sup>™</sup> as well as The WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition which has advanced research in the nutrition and health of pets for over 50 years. Mars Petcare is also a leading veterinary health provider through a network of over 2,000 pet hospitals including BANFIELD<sup>™</sup>, BLUEPEARL<sup>™</sup>, PET PARTNERS<sup>™</sup>, and VCA<sup>™</sup>. We're also active in innovation and technology for pets, with WISDOM PANEL<sup>™</sup> genetic health screening and DNA testing for dogs, the WHISTLE<sup>™</sup> GPS dog tracker, and LEAP VENTURE STUDIO accelerator and COMPANION FUND<sup>™</sup> programs that drive innovation and disruption in the pet care industry. As a family business and guided by our principles, we are privileged with the flexibility to fight for what we believe in – and we choose to fight for: A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS.

## About Linnaeus

Linnaeus is a leading veterinary services group comprising some of the most highly-respected practices in the UK, working through a 'hub and spoke' network of small animal specialist referral 'hub' hospitals and first opinion 'spoke' practices. The group, which formed in September 2014, has seen continued growth and investment in its service offering. This has enabled Linnaeus to maintain its position at the forefront of specialist and first opinion veterinary services and excellence. Linnaeus employs approximately 1,400 staff, including 370 clinicians and 77 of the leading specialist veterinary surgeons in the world. Through its flexible and supportive culture, its practice teams focus on delivering top-quality care to their patients. For more on the Linnaeus Group, please visit [www.linnaeusgroup.co.uk](http://www.linnaeusgroup.co.uk)

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