



# News Release



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Canine Heritage Breed Tests Roll Out to All PETCO Stores** *Mixed-Pedigree Pups Across the Nation Can Now Bark Up Family Tree with DNA Testing*

SAN DIEGO (Dec. 3, 2008) – Has your dog’s breed got you puzzled? Barking up the family tree just got easier with cutting-edge DNA testing for mixed-pedigree pups now available to pet parents in all of PETCO’s nearly 950 stores across the nation. The Canine Heritage Breed Test (CHBT) and Canine Heritage XL Breed Test, which use DNA technology to genetically identify the make-up of mixed-breed dogs, have been available online at [www.petco.com/dna](http://www.petco.com/dna) and in limited markets since July 15, 2008.

“We’ve had some great results from the Canine Heritage Breed Tests since we started offering them online and in select stores earlier this year and we’re so pleased to make them easily accessible to even more pet parents now in all of our stores,” said John Dunn, PETCO vice president for pet services. “We’ve now seen, firsthand, how these tests help improve animal well-being and strengthen the human-animal bond. They’re not only safe and fun, they also help our customers take better care of their dogs by learning more about the pet’s heritage and adjusting their nutrition, healthcare and training programs accordingly.”

Since the initial launch of the tests less than six months ago, many pet parents have yielded some surprising results – like those of Bella – a newly adopted mixed-breed puppy owned by John Cheney, PETCO’s national pet services field director. Originally abandoned in Georgia, she made her way to a local dog shelter in the Northeast and was adopted by the Cheney family – who were told Bella was a Labrador retriever and boxer mix. As soon as the breed test was available through PETCO, Cheney decided to find out Bella’s breed background so he could learn how to better care for her. Four weeks after the DNA swab was mailed to the lab, the Cheneys learned of Bella’s true background – Collie, Shetland Sheepdog, Chow Chow and Poodle.

“Canine Heritage Breed Testing is a great service PETCO offers to anyone that has adopted a mixed-breed dog. In some cases it may explain some behaviors or medical preconditions the dog may have, which is truly a plus when caring for any pet,” said Cheney. “Bella is a great addition to our family -- she loves people, long runs on the beach, all her toys from PETCO and has claimed the leather chair in our family room. And now, we know the true background of all her lovable character traits.”

The CHBT tests are part of PETCO's industry-leading assortment of innovative products that make it easier for pet parents to love and care for their pets as part of their family. Developed by MetaMorphix, Inc. (MMI), a world leader in DNA based marker systems, the non-invasive CHBT test includes a cheek swab that is rubbed along the inside of a dog's cheek to collect cells. The swab is then mailed to MMI's lab for DNA analysis. In four to six weeks the pet owner will receive the results on a certificate suitable for framing. PETCO customers will be offered two purchasing options: They can have their pets swabbed by a PETCO associate trained through a program developed by the two companies, or they may choose to purchase the dog DNA test and perform the swabbing at home.

PETCO customers can purchase the standard CHBT test, which can detect more than 50 breeds, for \$69.95. The expanded XL version, which can detect more than 100 breeds, sells for \$119.95. Now through Saturday, Dec. 20, PETCO P.A.L.S. members can purchase the CHBT tests at 10 percent off.

To learn more about or to purchase the test, visit [www.petco.com/dna](http://www.petco.com/dna). For the latest news on anything and everything PETCO – from updates about the company to incredible acts of animal kindness, visit the company's blog at [PETCOnews.com](http://PETCOnews.com).

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#### **About PETCO**

PETCO is a privately held specialty retailer that provides products, services and advice that make it easier for our customers to be great pet parents. We operate more than 900 stores in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as a leading pet products and information destination at [www.PETCO.com](http://www.PETCO.com). Our nonprofit organization, The PETCO Foundation, has raised more than \$45 million since its inception in 1999 to help promote and improve the welfare of companion animals. In conjunction with the foundation, we work with and support more than 5,500 local animal welfare groups across the country to help find homes for more than 200,000 adoptable animals every year.

#### **About MetaMorphix, Inc.**

MetaMorphix, Inc. is a life sciences company that uses DNA to improve animal wellness. Its wholly owned subsidiary, MMI Genomics, has more than a decade of experience in the area of canine DNA research. As a world-leader in the discovery and commercialization of DNA-based marker systems that enhance the ability to identify individual dogs, verify parentage, determine breed type and confirm gender, MMI Genomics has been at the forefront of developing technology and providing value-added services to the canine community. This unparalleled leadership continues to help protect the efforts of canine registries and support dog owners and breeders around the world. For more information please visit us at [www.Metamorphixinc.com](http://www.Metamorphixinc.com).

*Certain statements in this press release are forward-looking. These may be identified by the use of forward-looking words or phrases such as "believe," "expect," "intend," "anticipate," "should," "planned," "estimated," and "potential," among others. These forward-looking statements are based on MetaMorphix Inc.'s current expectations. The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 provides a "safe harbor" for such forward-looking statements. In order to comply with the terms of the safe harbor, MetaMorphix Inc. notes that a variety of factors could cause actual results and experience to differ materially from the anticipated results or other expectations expressed in such forward-looking statements. The risks and uncertainties that may affect the operations, performance, development, and results of MetaMorphix Inc.'s business include but are not limited to; (1) unproven use of scientific information to develop or commercialize products; and (2) other factors that might be described from time to time in MetaMorphix Inc.'s periodic filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.*