

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Darwin's Ark Teams Up with Hill's Pet Nutrition and Leading Research Institutions to Explore Cats' Genetic Code

Groundbreaking partnership brings together science, community, and industry to unlock the mysteries of feline DNA and improve cat health worldwide

EDMONDS, WASHINGTON - April 24, 2025 - In an exciting step forward for feline genetics research, [Darwin's Ark](#), the nonprofit behind community-powered pet science, today announced its partnership with [Hill's Pet Nutrition](#) and leading research institutions to advance one of the most ambitious feline genetics initiatives to date. This joint effort unites Darwin's Ark's innovative community science model, Hill's pet health expertise and funding, and scientific knowledge at the UMass Chan Medical School and Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard.

[Darwin's Cats](#), the partnership's groundbreaking research initiative, combines genetic data with thousands of owner-reported insights on each cat's appearance, behavior, and health to create a large-scale database, which will provide research partners and other science collaborators with a powerful resource to accelerate discovery research and scientific breakthroughs.

"The Darwin's Cats partnership is rooted in a shared commitment to scientific discovery and the belief that enhanced understanding of feline genetics will lead to better care and health for cats everywhere," said Elinor Karlsson, PhD, co-founder and chief scientist of Darwin's Ark, as well as associate professor of genomics and computational biology at UMass Chan Medical School and director of vertebrate genomics at the Broad Institute. "But what makes the partnership a game changer for feline research is the unique combination of expertise, resources, and community connections."

Darwin's Cats' four partners are all leaders in their respective fields, combining their unique expertise to advance community-powered research to help cats live longer, healthier lives:

- **Darwin's Ark** brings its community-powered research platform and strong community connections, which have already catalyzed canine science through its Darwin's Dogs initiative.
- **Hill's Pet Nutrition** brings decades of experience applying genomics research and science-based nutrition to improve the health of companion animals.
- **Broad Institute** brings cutting-edge technologies and a proven record of accelerating genetic and genomic discoveries through computational biology.
- **UMass Chan Medical School** brings its research hub that combines medical and comparative genomics expertise to enhance scientific understanding of human diseases.

“We’re thrilled to team up with Hill’s and our incredible scientific partners to bring community power to the question of cats,” said Jill Simmons, interim CEO of Darwin’s Ark. “This isn’t just about decoding DNA—it’s about empowering cat lovers to be part of scientific discovery that will lead to brighter futures for our feline friends.”

As the initiative’s anchor funder, Hill’s was the catalyst that brought the partners together to build a repository of cat data that will allow researchers to explore the genetic drivers of traits, behaviors, and diseases. While the initial research will focus on foundational knowledge about feline genetics, Darwin’s Cats data could one day help identify genetic risk factors for common health conditions, like diabetes and kidney disease, paving the way for better prevention and treatment.

“At Hill’s, we’re passionate about advancing pet health through scientific discovery and genomics,” said Dr. Jennifer Radosevich, senior vice president of research and innovation at Hill’s Pet Nutrition. “This collaboration is a perfect example of how community-driven research and exploratory science can transform the future of pet care.”

With more than 12,000 cats enrolled, Darwin’s Cats is the world’s largest community-powered study of feline genetics. In partnership with cat owners, Darwin’s Ark is building the most comprehensive database of feline behavioral and genetic information ever assembled. As an open science resource, this data will power foundational research by Darwin’s Cats’ scientific partners and the broader feline research community to better understand cat behavior, genetics, and health.

Embark on the journey of discovery by joining Darwin’s Cats at darwinsark.org.

About Darwin’s Ark

Darwin’s Ark is a community science nonprofit that empowers pet owners to drive large-scale research on dog and cat genetics. By uniting pet lovers with leading scientists, Darwin’s Ark explores the genetic foundations of health and behavior, helping to advance scientific discoveries that improve well-being for both pets and their people. Darwin’s Cats, one of its flagship research initiatives, is the first pet science study to sequence DNA from fur. It’s an easy method that is cat-friendly and will accelerate research to help cats live longer, healthier lives.

About Hill's Pet Nutrition

Founded more than 75 years ago, Hill's Pet Nutrition is committed to providing pets with the best nutrition through extensive research and a scientific understanding of their specific needs. With a team of 220+ veterinarians, PhD nutritionists, and food scientists constantly striving to develop innovative solutions for pet health, Hill's offers a full line of products, including Hill’s Prescription Diet therapeutic nutrition and Hill’s Science Diet wellness products, which are available at veterinary clinics and pet specialty retailers worldwide. For more information about products and nutritional philosophy, please visit HillsPet.com.

About UMass Chan Medical School

UMass Chan Medical School, one of five campuses of the University of Massachusetts system, comprises the T.H. Chan School of Medicine; the Morningside Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences; the Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing; ForHealth Consulting at UMass Chan Medical School, a public service health care consulting division; MassBiologics, the only nonprofit, FDA-licensed manufacturer of vaccines, biologics and viral vector gene therapies in the United States; and a thriving Nobel-Prize-winning biomedical research enterprise.

UMass Chan is [advancing together](#) to improve the health and wellness of our diverse communities throughout Massachusetts and across the world by leading and innovating in education, research, health care delivery, and public service. UMass Chan has built a reputation as a world-class destination for biomedical research, with more than \$300 million in annual funding and more than 500 active clinical trials. It is ranked among the best medical schools in the nation for [primary care education](#) and biomedical research by *U.S. News & World Report*. In 2021, the Medical School received a [\\$175 million gift](#) from The Morningside Foundation and was renamed UMass Chan Medical School. Learn more at www.umassmed.edu.