

Press Release

Stockholm, 20 November 2015

## **Mission: Mine Detection Dog**

*In several parts of the world, there are large areas of land that are heavily mined. Landmines and explosives in the soil are not only a danger to the population, but also render agricultural land, roads and water unusable. In the continuous work with de-mining in Iraq, amongst other countries, mine detection dogs play a significant role.*

Thanks to their very acute sense of smell, dogs are of invaluable help in efforts to detect mines and explosives. AniCura, through the organisations Veterinarians without Borders Sweden and MAG (Mines Advisory Group) has the opportunity to contribute to the valuable mine dog work in Iraq, one of the world's most mine dense countries. Bufty, a five year old female Malinois, began her training as a mine detection dog in Bosnia and arrived Iraq in 2012. There she was taught by her trainer, Muhammed Ali Sdiq, to recognize the different smells in the environment and the explosive substances present. Since completing her training in May 2013, she has worked as a mine detection dog in the Kurdish part of Iraq. Over the past three years, Bufty and Muhammed Ali Sdiq scanned an average of 1,000 square meters of land per day – land that can once again be used by people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods after war, free from danger and fear.

Mine detection dogs are used mainly in areas where the risk of mines is low to medium high, and as a complement to technical demining in high risk areas. No mine detection dogs have been harmed in their work.

"The work that MAG is doing is incredibly valuable and in the mine detection dog project we see yet another example of how animals are important to human life and health. I am happy and proud that AniCura with Veterinarians without Borders Sweden have been privileged to contribute to safer lives and community development in a vulnerable part of the world", says Charlotta Warnhammar, AniCura.

"Mine detection dogs increase the efficiency of MAG's clearance work and are therefore an invaluable part of our Iraq programme. MAG is excited by this innovative partnership with AniCura and VSF-Sweden and grateful for their fantastic support. We hope to expand this partnership because we need to do more, faster, to free innocent people from the fear of these weapons and allow them to rebuild their lives and livelihoods", says Ingrid Turner, Partnerships Officer, MAG.

*For further information, please contact:*

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### **About AniCura**

AniCura is a leader in high quality veterinary care for companion animals. The company grew out of the idea that shared resources create possibilities for better veterinary care. AniCura was established in 2011 as the first animal hospital merger in the Nordic region and is today a best-practice example of specialized veterinary care and an appreciated partner to pet owners and referring veterinary surgeons in northern Europe.

The company offers a full range of medical and surgical services. This covers everything from preventive and basic health care, to advanced diagnostics, intensive care, surgery and orthopaedics. AniCura also provides rehabilitation, physiotherapy and dietary advice and offers selected animal foods and care products.

AniCura comprises many of Europe's most prominent animal hospitals and clinics, offering modern, high-quality veterinary care at 80 European locations and creating peace of mind through excellent access and opening hours. Every year, AniCura's staff take care of approximately 850,000 patients in need of medical attention. AniCura is a leading training and referral body.

For more information, please visit [www.anicuragroup.com](http://www.anicuragroup.com)

### **About Veterinarians without Borders Sweden**

Veterinarians without Borders Sweden was founded in 2010 for the purpose of, based on Swedish Veterinary Medicine, helping animals and people worldwide, mostly in vulnerable areas. In addition to its work in support of mine clearance using mine detection dogs in Cambodia and Iraq, the organisation has conducted neutering and vaccination initiatives in Malawi and educational initiatives in Zambia. The organisation focuses on serious and long-term projects and is growing rapidly.

For more information, or to become a member of VSF-Sweden, please visit [www.vsf-sverige.org](http://www.vsf-sverige.org)

### **About MAG**

MAG is an international humanitarian organisation, expert in clearing and destroying landmines and unexploded bombs, and stopping weapons and munitions from causing harm.

MAG operates in an area of Iraq which is heavily contaminated with landmines and unexploded ordnance from multiple sources. Since the programme's start in 1992, MAG has helped over 1.2 million people in Iraq and disposed of 165,328 mines and 1,975,633 bombs of various types. The mine dogs, which are able to secure an area around 20 times greater than can be managed manually, constitute an important part in the ongoing work.

For more information, please visit [www.maginternational.org](http://www.maginternational.org)