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PROF. DR. JIMMY SAUNDERS
DVM, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Department of medical imaging and small animal orthopaedics, Ghent University, Belgium

Ghent University helps Agfa HealthCare to further optimize equine digital imaging

Business-educational collaboration drives optimized image quality and image processing for veterinary medical imaging

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Interview with PROF. DR. JIMMY SAUNDERS, DVM, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Department of medical imaging and small animal orthopaedics, Ghent University, Belgium

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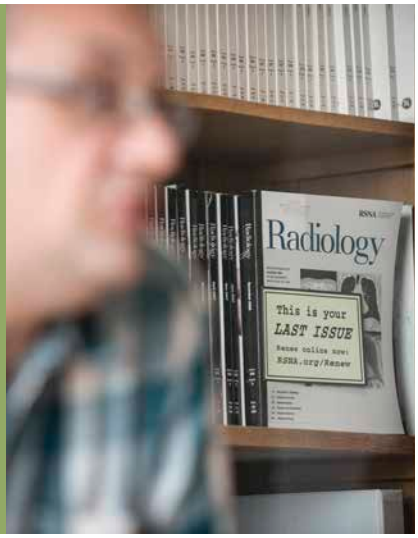


The Ghent University (UGhent) Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is the only university in Flanders (Belgium) offering a veterinary degree, and focuses on teaching and research. Its renowned animal care clinic plays a major role in training the faculty’s 1400 students and offers a full range of services for small animals (dogs, cats, exotics), equines and farm animals. The department dedicated to medical imaging and small animal orthopaedics carries out imaging for some 1500 horses every year. This made it an ideal partner to test and provide feedback on Agfa HealthCare’s CR solutions for equine imaging.

Dedicated to vets

As a teaching facility, the UGhent Faculty of Veterinary Medicine offers imaging ranging from radiography (X-ray) and ultrasound, to computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). In certain cases, it can also carry out nuclear medicine, such as scintigraphy or bone scans. About 90% of all the imaging performed on horses is orthopaedic, i.e. imaging the legs. The remaining 10% is thorax, teeth, sinuses, etc.

Prof. Dr. Jimmy Saunders explains: “For horses we use computed radiography (CR) rather than direct radiography (DR). The risk of damage to the equipment is much higher with horses, especially as we cannot fix the panels to the X-ray table, as we do for small animal imaging. Plus, we are training students in how to use the equipment. So it is significant to us for equine imaging that replacing a CR phosphor plate costs much less than replacing a DR detector.”

In September 2013, UGhent agreed to collaborate with Agfa HealthCare on testing and comparing over 18 months the diagnostic image quality of two CR solutions: the CR 30-Xm and the more compact, cost-effective CR 12-X. The university would carry out a number of tests relating to image quality, performance and applications, and provide feedback that Agfa HealthCare will use to continue optimizing the solutions for veterinarian use.

Based on their observations, the university vets found that the two systems offer similar resolution for imaging of horses’ legs. Both systems were ‘plug and play’, so they could be installed and the settings fine-tuned in half a day. Training is barely needed. And while Prof. Saunders explains that the main CR solutions on the market have acceptable image processing software, they are not always adapted to the specific needs of veterinary imaging, while Agfa HealthCare’s gold-standard MUSICA is.

“With Agfa HealthCare, we can interact with people who have a lot of expert knowledge and who are dedicated to veterinary medicine. This is a level of service we rarely encounter with other suppliers in our country,” says Prof. Dr. Jimmy Saunders.

“Working with institutions like the UGhent Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in business-educational cooperation is a core part of our commitment to providing solutions that address the unique requirements of veterinary facilities,” explains Dirk De Langhe, Global Solutions Development Manager with Agfa HealthCare. “We collaborate with a panel of about 50 veterinarians around the world so that we can offer them a better image quality and dedicated solutions.”

As for Prof. Saunders, he has been very pleased with the tests so far: “Once the initial agreement with Agfa HealthCare is completed, I hope to continue doing research to further optimize the systems.”

CR 12-X

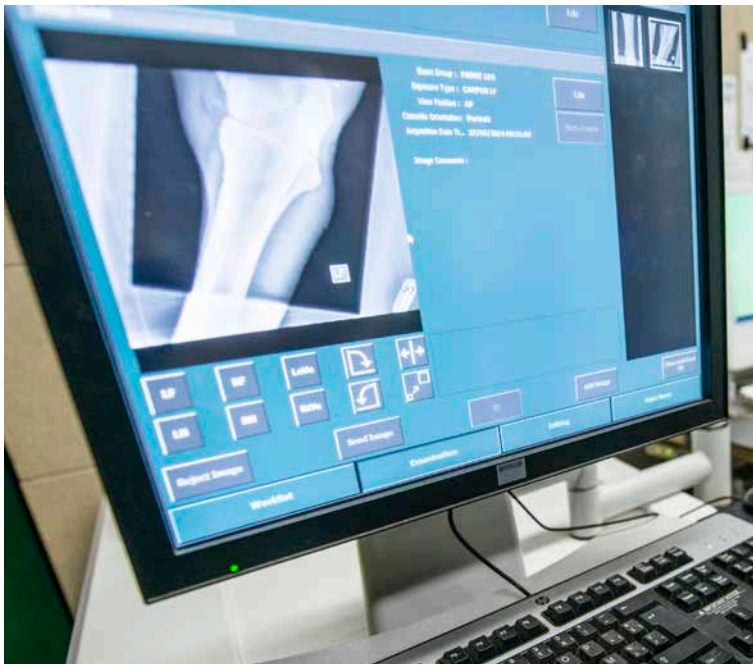
- Affordable and efficient tabletop solution offering high image quality and high speed.
- Modular yet robust design.
- Adjustable speed and a user-tuned workflow: the user can choose to adjust speed and resolution depending on the needs of the exam.
- Compact size allows it to be fitted into cars, vans, trucks and other mobile facilities, for mobile applications.

MUSICA Image processing

- Dedicated MUSICA image processing software for animals makes imaging easy for vets by automating the image optimization process.
- For any body part, or size or type of animal, MUSICA ensures high-quality and consistent images, without any intervention by the vet.

CR 30-Xm

- Versatile high-volume digitizer, ideal for veterinary use and veterinary dental use.
- 'No compromises' image quality: reads imaging plates at the high resolution of 10 pixels/mm for all image plate sizes.



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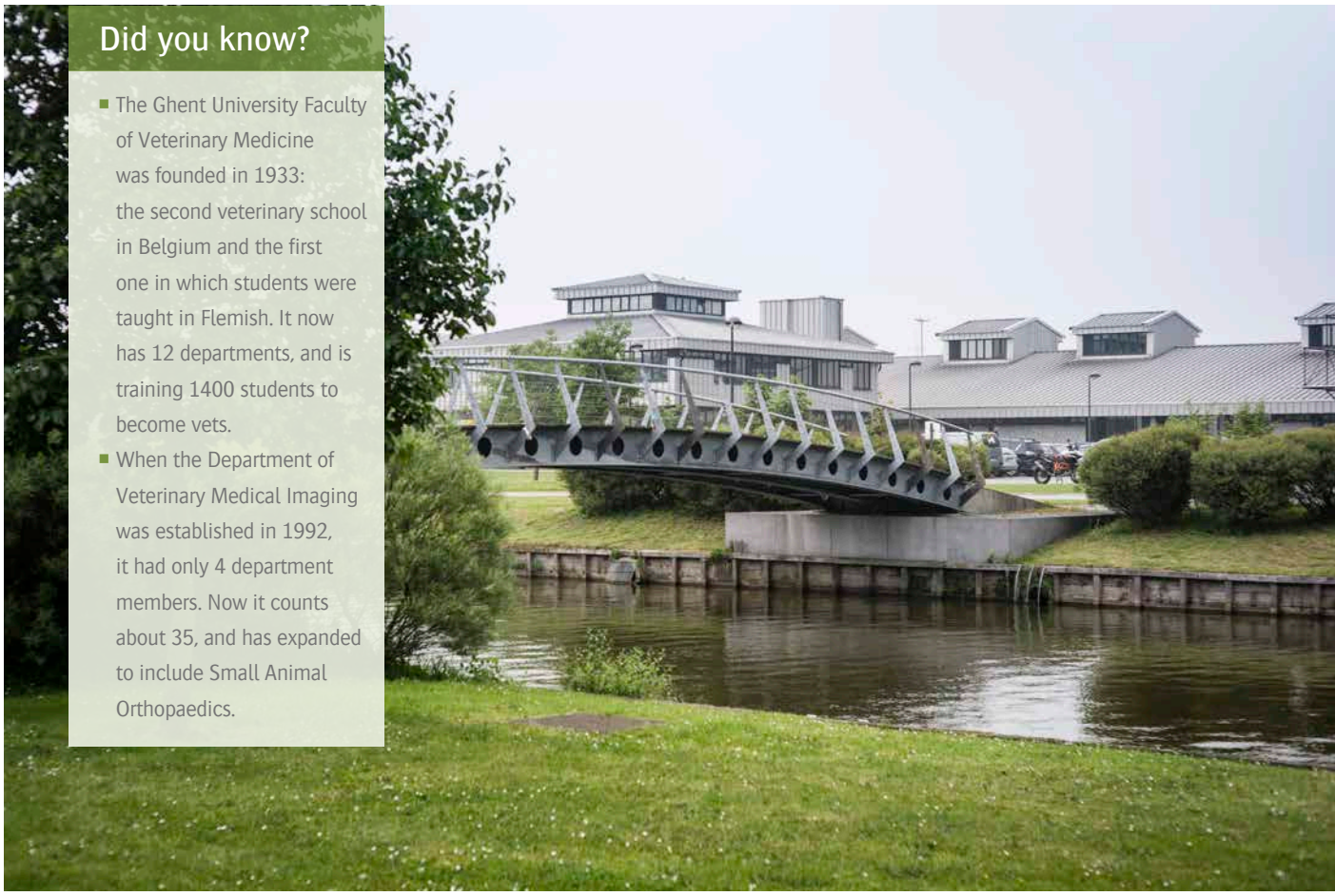

Did you know?

- The Ghent University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was founded in 1933: the second veterinary school in Belgium and the first one in which students were taught in Flemish. It now has 12 departments, and is training 1400 students to become vets.
- When the Department of Veterinary Medical Imaging was established in 1992, it had only 4 department members. Now it counts about 35, and has expanded to include Small Animal Orthopaedics.

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