



Leading the pack

Offering a clearer view 'inside', the DR digital detector, with MUSICA™ image processing, is helping AlmaVet's 'Power Team' diagnose and treat their animal patients more quickly, more safely, more precisely – and less intrusively than the CR system they used previously.

Case study:

AlmaVet, Jyväskylä, Finland



Case Study

INTERVIEW WITH:
DR. SUVI HEINOLA
CO-OWNER

AlmaVet, in Jyväskylä Finland, has built for itself a clear and firm niche among the multiple veterinary clinics in the region. Since 2016, co-owners, veterinarians and spouses Suvi and Teppo Heinola provide not only general veterinary and dental care, but specialist endoscopy services as well. Each day, they treat 20-30 small animals – mostly dogs, cats and occasional exotics – with veterinary, dental and laboratory services, X-ray, ultrasound, laser treatment and behavioral therapy.

It's an approach that has made the practice a referral site for some of the hardest cases from other clinics, and has earned the veterinary staff nicknames including 'Power Team' and 'Miracle Makers'.





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Dr. Suvi Heinola



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Dr. Suvi Heinola

“GIVE IT A TRY”: FIRST-HAND BENEFITS OF DR

Suvi and Teppo Heinola previously worked at a larger clinic that used Agfa computed radiography (CR). When they opened their own practice, they also chose Agfa CR, purchased from Imaqen, the authorized Agfa Imaging distributor in Finland.

Then, in 2018, Imaqen approached them with a proposal. “We were very happy with Agfa’s MUSICA image quality, and Imaqen’s service and support were excellent. So when they came to us and suggested that direct radiography (DR) could offer us benefits that would support our practice and our goals, we certainly listened,” explains Dr. Suvi Heinola. “We asked them if DR really made such a difference, and they said ‘give it a try and see for yourselves’. We agreed to install the Agfa DR Retrofit solution in our clinic temporarily. But after a very short time, we were hooked! We decided to make the switch to DR permanent.”

Agfa’s DR digital detector with MUSICA image processing software has been a real game-changer for AlmaVet, its staff and its patients. “I understood about the workflow and dose reduction benefits of DR, as well as the excellent MUSICA image quality, from the beginning. But the reality still surprised me: it wasn’t until we had carried out many very high-quality thorax and abdominal images that I realized how much more contrast and information I was getting,” comments Dr. Suvi Heinola. “You actually have to relearn to read the images – you see so many more details that you have to realize are ‘normal’.”

While the clinic does not do orthopedic surgery, it still carries out a complete range of both soft and hard tissue imaging. “Dog breeders, for example, will come to us from as far away as Helsinki to make sure their animals have no joint or bone problems. They also bring in their pregnant dogs to check on the puppies. With the CR, when there were more than seven puppies, it became hard to get a good count. But with the DR system, we can see and count all of the puppies. It’s almost like seeing in 3D! I don’t think we have gotten a puppy count wrong since we started using the DR system.”

THE CASE FOR DR: LESS INVASIVE PROCEDURES

The wife-husband team are well-versed in leading the pack. Dr. Suvi Heinola, for example, was the first in Finland to carry out veterinary laparoscopies: a surgical diagnostic procedure used to examine the organs inside the abdomen. “In 2008, I attended some lectures on minimally invasive procedures. Pain management and optimizing patient care are priorities for me. As I was always most interested in soft tissue surgery, I wanted to learn more about endoscopy and laparoscopy.” No-one in Finland offered this technique, so Suvi went to the U.S. to learn, and began offering the procedure at home in 2009.

The clarity offered by the DR detector has supported this preference for less invasive procedures, as Dr. Suvi Heinola describes in a recent case: “A 12-year-old, male cocker spaniel was referred to us by another clinic for urinary calculi, which were confirmed by their CR images. But it was not clear from the images whether there was one large or multiple small stones. We made our own DR images: the excellent quality enabled us to clearly distinguish and even to measure the stones. We discovered that the dog had a very large number of small stones. Based on this, we chose against surgical removal, and proposed urohydropropulsion: a less invasive, non-surgical technique in which we fill the bladder with saline through a catheter and flush the stones out by manually expressing the bladder. It’s not a very common procedure yet, and with male dogs it can only be carried out if the stones are under 3-4 mm: larger stones can get stuck in the urethra and cause even more problems! So very clear, detailed imaging is critical in choosing this technique.”

“The dog was sedated, and the urohydropropulsion carried out; then we did a second X-ray to make sure no stones were left. In all, the urohydropropulsion procedure took 5 minutes, as opposed to 1 hour for surgery. The dog required much less anesthesia, the recovery time was significantly faster, and the cost was minimal: a clear benefit for everyone.”

“With the MUSICA image processing software, you know you will always get a great image right away.”

Dr. Suvi Heinola

GREATER EASE, LESS DOSE... BETTER CARE!

But the benefits from clear images are just the start for AlmaVet. Dr. Suvi Heinola describes, “What first struck us was how much easier the DR digital detector made the imaging process, especially for our staff. The DR system is so fast, it had an immediate impact on our workflow: just snap and take the image.”

“It also means lower doses for our patients: both in radiation and sedation. We take fewer images, more quickly. The workstation, which enables an intuitive workflow and fast image previews, is in the X-ray room so we only need one nurse for imaging. And with the MUSICA image processing software, you hardly have to think about it: you just know you will always get a great image right away. In a vet clinic, you’re always in a hurry, so that’s a big help.”

Dr. Suvi Heinola expects to see a lot more DR used for veterinary imaging in Finland in the future: “First of all, Finns love technology! But even more, DR systems simply offer so many benefits for all kinds of veterinary clinics; it makes diagnosing and treating both soft tissue and orthopedic cases much faster and easier.”



DID YOU KNOW

Dr. Suvi Heinola and Dr. Teppo Heinola are both committed to investing in knowledge for animal care professionals in Finland. Dr. Suvi Heinola has trained many veterinarians in the laparoscopy techniques. The team also allows Imaqen to organize Agfa DR user days at their clinic, to enable learning opportunities and sharing of experiences.





AGFA'S SOLUTIONS

DR RETROFIT WITH DR DIGITAL DETECTOR:



The easiest way to go **Direct Digital**.



High DQE and **optimal pixel size support**
low-dose examinations.



Fewer retakes: **improves the delivery of animal healthcare** and reduces the amount of sedation needed.



Ease of cleaning and disinfecting
simplifies tasks of busy veterinary staff.

MUSICA IMAGE PROCESSING:



Intelligent image processing software
offers **excellent contrast detail**
and consistent image quality.



The software is adapted to veterinary needs,
for both **small and large animals**.



Exam-independent, it automatically applies the
appropriate image enhancement parameters,
without manual intervention.



Excellent image quality enables
potential dose reduction.



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