

# ESTHER THE WONDER PIG RECEIVES CANCER DIAGNOSIS FOLLOWING CT SCAN

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The fight to bring a first-of-its-kind CT scanner to Canada has proved to be lifesaving for Esther the Wonder Pig.

The famous pig initially fell ill in November 2017 and her owners, Steve Jenkins and Derek Walter, who formerly lived in Georgetown and now own the Happily Ever Esther Farm Sanctuary in Milton, have been scrambling to find a definitive diagnosis for months.

For Jenkins and Walter, that meant fundraising to bring the necessary CT scanning equipment to Canada - equipment fit for a 650-pound pig.

After months of going through the proper steps and creating an online campaign, Jenkins and Walter were able to raise \$651,000, and the scanner, which will have a permanent home at the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) in September, was temporarily installed this month for Esther's test.

Prior to attaining the scanner, Jenkins and Walter were told that Esther's illness was likely the result of musculoskeletal issues.

However, upon Esther

receiving the scan on Aug. 9, her fathers were struck with some difficult news: four tumors were discovered in Esther's mammary glands, one of which tested positive for cancer.

Jenkins says that the cancer appears to be in early stages, and tests so far have determined that it has not spread to other areas.

It was also concluded that not only did Esther not have any apparent musculoskeletal issues, but that the medication she had been given to treat those issues, had potentially caused an ulcer to form in her stomach, which was causing further mobility complications.

"Because we couldn't figure out what had happened in November, we were treating her for the worst, and in treating her for the worst, we made her worse," Jenkins said. "And it all goes back to the fact that we don't know anything about pigs. It's so hard to diagnose them, to treat them, to say anything about them, once they get over a certain age, just because there is no demand to know."

My little heath blip is nothing to be concerned about. We've got some of

the worlds best veterinary minds on the job. It's going to be the best medical team a piggy has ever seen, and they're already starting to arrive. #WeGetByWithALittleHelpFromOurFriends <https://t.co/Iicy9hPKyX> Esther TheWonder Pig (@EstherThePig) August 11, 2018?? I'm a survivor (what), I'm gonna make it (what), I will survive (what), keep on survivin'..... ?? #FutureCancerSurvivor [pic.twitter.com/0L1VE-CUEOq](http://pic.twitter.com/0L1VE-CUEOq) Esther TheWonder Pig (@EstherThePig) August 11, 2018We're going home!!! We were going to do a live-feed on our Facebook page as soon as we met with the doctors, but they discharged us!! We're heading home, and will provide a full update once Esther settles. Here's a brief review of the situation to hold you over though. ?? [pic.twitter.com/XCaiLYeRoL](http://pic.twitter.com/XCaiLYeRoL) Esther TheWonder Pig (@EstherThePig) August 9, 2018Jenkins says it still surprises him that - prior to his and Walter's intervention - this level of care for large animals did not exist in the country.

"Why did it take two guys and a pig to provide adequate medical care for thousands of horses and



Twitter/EstherThePig

Esther the Wonder Pig has been diagnosed with breast cancer, following her CT scan on Aug. 9.

countless large zoo animals and everything else that is in Ontario," he said. "It doesn't make sense to me."

Jenkins added that though this is a sad situation for Esther, he is grateful to be working with experts in both Canada and the U.S. on further research.

"Once you hear a word like cancer, you know it's there and you want it out. That's where I'm at right now," he said. "So it's really frustrating, but at the same time, an incredible opportunity to be working with these doctors figuring it out. The team at the

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- Steve Jenkins

OVC has been unbelievable; it's not for lack of trying or for lack of effort or enthusiasm. They're doing everything they can."

Jenkins says the OVC has also recently began offering a course about caring for large companion animals - a huge step for animals like Esther.

"You get vets now - that

are obviously vets because they love animals - that are now being forced to look at an animal that - like everybody else - they saw in a specific way, and are seeing them from a different perspective, which is really, really cool," he said.

Esther is expected to go in for surgery within the next few days.



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