

March 2010

Lamb, kid and cria scour package



NWL Leeds has had a number of faecal samples from lambs recently.

Ruminant Scour Package A, although primarily aimed at calves, can easily be adapted to cover common causes of neonatal scour in lambs, kids and crias, with most results on the day of sample receipt and bacterial culture results at 48 hours.

In these species, coccidiosis, rotavirus, cryptosporidia and salmonellosis are important differential diagnoses, however coronavirus infections are not as well described as in bovines. Also, although most problem strains of *E.coli* are K99 positive in lambs, those associated with watery mouth often are not. Bacterial cultures can therefore be set up as appropriate. In cases where lamb dysentery is suspected, additional testing of the intestinal contents for the presence of clostridial toxins, rather than culture, is required. In crias, differentiating between pathogenic and non pathogenic coccidia is vital—we are able to do this morphologically as part of the scour package, for no additional charge.

Onychodystrophy—diagnostic tips

Onychodystrophy, ie abnormal claw growth, is a common sequel of many claw disorders and concentrating on the early signs of disease is helpful. For example, onychomadesis, ie sloughing of the claws, is the earliest sign of symmetric lupoid onychodystrophy, which often responds to essential fatty acid supplementation, or treatment with tetracycline and vitamin B3 (niacinamide).

Trauma is the commonest cause of claw disease in dogs, either physical, or occasionally, chemical.

Usually only one or a few claws are affected (asymmetric disease) in such cases. Infectious causes are next in the claw disease top ten.

Bacterial infection should be considered as occurring secondary to an underlying problem.

Trauma, hypothyroidism, Cushing's, diabetes mellitus, atopy, immune mediated or Idiopathic disease, neoplasia, or other infectious agents may be involved.

Fungal or yeast infections can occur, causing brittle and discoloured nails.

Malassezia pachydermatis infection may affect **just** the feet and nails of atopic dogs, often causing paronychia (infection or inflammation of claw folds) with a dry brown exudate.

Parasitic diseases, including demodicosis, hookworm infestation & leishmaniasis have been associated with claw disease.

Immune mediated disease is a potential cause of claw disease alone, or claw disease with paronychia and/or foot pad disease. If **only** the claws are affected, symmetric lupoid onychodystrophy is the most likely immune mediated cause.

Useful lab tests in cases of claw disease include a blood work up, plus cytology and bacterial/ fungal culture on fresh material from the nail core/nail bed. Histopathology on an amputated digit may be necessary in severe or persistent cases.

NWL Clin Path Club

The next meeting will be at the Village Leeds South Hotel at 8.00 pm on Thu 25 Mar 10, refreshments from 7.30 pm.



Dr Mark Stidworthy from the International Zoo Veterinary Group will take the title

***Exotic medicine
—a pathologist's perspective***



Happy Easter!

**NationWide Laboratories
will be closed
Good Friday and
Easter Monday only**