

Paws claws and judder things

April 2020



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Welcome

Welcome to a new edition of our newsletter.

We hope you are all doing well and are coping in these challenging times? We understand how awkward it is to carry on our normal work (and home) lives, maintaining excellent levels of service and staying safe at the same time.

Please just call us on 0800 GRIBBLES if you need our help with anything.

Kind regards,
[Karen Cooper](#)
Marketing Administrator

Autumn trace element testing

Tissue and serum sampling in the autumn or at drying off provides an opportunity to ensure trace elements and magnesium concentrations are appropriate heading into winter and to assess any effects of sporidesmin on the liver.

Options for sample collection include collecting liver and/or blood samples on the farm (recommended), or getting liver samples collected at the slaughter plant. On-farm collection of liver biopsies provides guaranteed animal selection and identification, better traceability of samples, is more cost effective for the farmer and provides more accurate results due to the controlled handling and transport of the samples.

The panels in Table 1 can be used as a guide, but you can add to these or change them using our [MineralCheck made-to-measure \(M2M\) testing options](#). Indicate clearly on the submission form how many of each test you would like performed and quote M2M.

Copper:

Liver is the sample of choice for determining the copper (Cu) status of clinically normal

animals, and autumn is a good time to assess liver copper stores. This gives time to supplement before the high demands of late pregnancy and lactation. Serum Cu or ferroxidase (Fx) can be used to determine if copper deficiency is the cause of a current problem, reflecting the amount of copper at essential sites.

Selenium:

Measuring serum selenium (Se) gives an indication of current selenium status as selenium is absorbed from the diet and translocated to serum and liver within hours.

Magnesium:

Measuring serum magnesium (Mg) status in autumn allows you to monitor if sufficient magnesium is available and check on the efficacy of supplementation. This test should be part of a series of serum Mg tests throughout lactation, including: drying off, mid-winter, pre-calving and peak lactation.

GGT:

The liver is the main source of GGT in serum. In the presence of sporidesmin, bile ducts are damaged and occluded resulting in marked increases in GGT concentrations.

Additional information can be found on our website or simply give us a call:

- [Autumn trace element info sheet](#)
- [MineralCheck package information](#)

Table 1. Recommended autumn trace element testing panels

	Serum Se or GPx	Serum Mg	Serum Cu or Fx	Liver Cu	Liver Se
OPTION 1 On-farm liver biopsies and bloods	5	10	-	≥10	-
OPTION 2 On farm bloods only	5	10	10	-	-
OPTION 3 Slaughter plant liver collection	-	-	-	≥10	5
Optional Extras	Refer to MineralCheck <i>made-to-measure</i>				



Parasitology toolbox for sheep

... target, review, investigate.

Our exciting new ovine parasitology toolbox provides clear guidelines for recommended testing to help determine if drenching is required, if the current drench is working and whether anthelmintic resistance is present in your flock.

1. **Target** drenching to when parasites are actually present in your flock. Reduce the advancement of anthelmintic resistance by drenching only when required.

Targeted drench package:

- 10x individual faecal egg counts (FEC)

2. **Review** drench effectiveness regularly. Regular checks will help reduce the advancement of drench resistance by identifying poor drench technique and highlighting potential emerging drench resistance early.

Post-drench parasite burden indicates a breakdown of drench performance, this can be due to:

- Incorrect drench selection
- Incorrect dosage rate
- Poor drench technique
- Emerging resistance

Ensure the current on-farm drench programme is effective at reducing parasite burden with a Drench Review.

Drench efficacy review packages:

- 10x pre-drench FEC and a pooled larval culture; 10x post-drench FEC and a pooled larval culture
- Post-drench FEC and pooled larval culture.

Larval cultures can be standard or quantitative. Larval culture will detect parasites at a lower burden level than regular FEC, increasing the chance of detecting emerging anthelmintic resistance.

3. If a drench review test has indicated that there is a breakdown in drench performance, then further **investigation** is required to detect if anthelmintic resistance is present in the flock. Faecal egg count reduction tests (FECRT) with larval cultures will identify a resistance problem.

Investigation programmes should be customised for each farm and will depend on:

- Size of farming operation
- Result of drench review tests
- History of anthelmintic resistance on farm and in the area
- Current and historic drenching regimes
- Farmer engagement and budget

- Farming operation—ability to test multiple drench groups

Drench efficacy investigation tests available:

- Pre-drench, post-drench and control*
- Individual FEC
- Standard larval culture (composition of parasite species only)
- Quantitative larval culture (composition of parasite species and total counts of all third-stage larvae recovered)

**A minimum of 10-15 individual FEC and a pooled standard or quantitative larval culture is recommended pre-drench, for the control group and also each anthelmintic group post-drench.*

Gribbles' pathologists and parasitologists are always available to advise on drench investigations, tailoring a testing approach to each farm situation.

Please contact your Territory Manager if you require further information, have any questions or would like a brochure.



Case of the month

REBECCA ALLAN

A palpable thyroid gland in an elderly cat equals hyperthyroidism, right? Not always!

When we think of thyroid issues in adult cats we usually think of hyperthyroidism, however occasionally the opposite problem of hypothyroidism can occur. Coco a 15-year-old Burmese is a case in point.

Clinical history:

Coco presented to the veterinary clinic with a history of weight loss, poor appetite and lethargy. The owner had noticed she was slow to get out of the way and had become less aware of the presence of the family dog. She had a history of mild renal insufficiency

and the only finding of note on clinical examination was a palpable right thyroid gland.

Laboratory results:

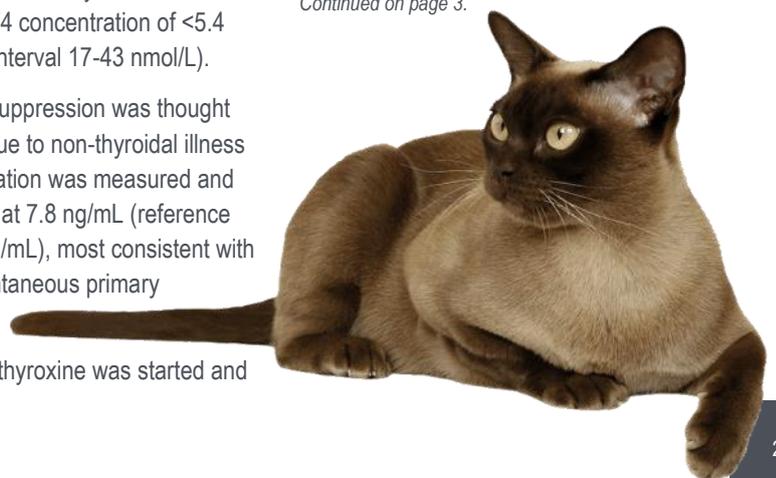
Bloods submitted to the laboratory revealed a mild azotemia consistent with previously diagnosed renal insufficiency and an unexpectedly low T4 concentration of <5.4 nmol/L (reference interval 17-43 nmol/L).

The degree of T4 suppression was thought too marked to be due to non-thyroidal illness so a TSH concentration was measured and the result was high at 7.8 ng/mL (reference interval 0.03-0.3 ng/mL), most consistent with a diagnosis of spontaneous primary hypothyroidism.

Treatment on Levothyroxine was started and

the T4 and TSH concentrations both normalised over the next few weeks. The most recent recheck showed a normal T4 of 25 nmol/L (RI 17-43 nmol/L) and normal TSH of 0.06 ng/ml (RI <0.03-0.3 ng/ml) indicating good treatment control, however there was persistence of mild azotemia.

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COVID-19 service updates

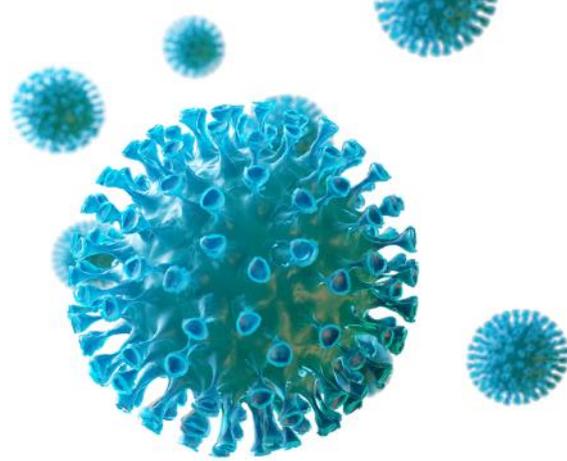
Gribbles Veterinary have been advised by MPI that since we are a part of the national Surveillance Programme, as well having accreditation as a Recognised Laboratory Programme (RLP), our laboratories are considered an essential service and will remain open for testing during all COVID-19 Alert levels.

During this COVID-19 crisis, we will be making changes to testing and services as required in order to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on staff and help reduce the spread, as well as continue to provide you with a high level of service. We will keep you updated with changes as and when required. The following are reminders of the current changes to our services in case you missed them:

- HISTOLOGY—due to the increased processing demand in medical laboratories around the country, we are changing to processing more histology samples in our Christchurch Gribbles laboratory. There will be a small increase in turn-around-time for some histology testing— this mostly will affect Palmerston North clients.
- CYTOLOGY TESTING—following government advice that all staff who can work from home, should work from home, our pathologists have moved to home-

based set-ups where possible. This may impact on turn-around-times for cytology samples.

- CONSUMABLES ORDERING—please DO NOT call the laboratory to place orders for consumables over the phone. Visit our website and either download a form to email or fax through, or order online. This will ensure our admin staff are able to concentrate on processing samples to ensure our service levels remain at a high level.
- POST-MORTEM—Post-mortem (PM) services are no longer available at any of our laboratories, except for extraordinary circumstances:
 - Please call the laboratory before sending bodies and discuss with a Pathologist. Our Pathologists will decide if a necropsy will proceed.
 - We recommend Veterinarians perform PMs in-house or on-farm and submit samples to your local laboratory for further testing. Where this is not possible, e.g. SPCA, please call the laboratory and talk to a Pathologist.
 - Deferred PMs can be frozen at your premises with the understanding that histology samples will be compromised when a PM is finally performed.
 - Any bodies submitted to the laboratory without prior Pathologist consultation will be disposed of at your expense or can be retrieved. Clients will be notified on submission.
- OESTRONE SULPHATE TESTING—



(equine) testing is not available during this lock-down period. Any samples received will be placed on hold.

- MEAT-WORKS LIVER SAMPLING—AsureQuality have confirmed that the liver sampling services at North and South Island Meat Works locations will continue throughout the COVID-19 Alert Level-4 period. However, there is an increased chance of sampling being interrupted due to reduced staffing levels.
- PET CREMATIONS—this is also considered an essential service and Fond Farewells (Christchurch) is still operating, however it is no longer open to the public. ALL cremations must now be arranged via veterinary clinics.
- SATURDAY SERVICE—due to the decreased number of submissions during this COVID-19 crisis period, we are no longer offering a full Saturday testing service. Samples will be processed and then tested on Monday.

All updates can be found on our website by searching for “COVID” or [following this link](#).

Case of the month

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Discussion:

Spontaneous primary hypothyroidism is rare in adult cats, with most hypothyroidism diagnosed in younger cats due to congenital hypothyroidism. The two most common causes of a low T4 concentration in an adult cat are iatrogenic due to treatment for hyperthyroidism and suppression, due to non-thyroidal illness.

Clinical signs of hypothyroidism can be

absent to mild and include PU/PD, a thinning hair coat, lethargy, weight gain (as opposed to weight loss in this case) and a palpable thyroid gland. The palpable thyroid gland is associated with the goiterous form of hypothyroidism due to thyroid hyperplasia, rather than the less common idiopathic thyroid atrophy. Azotemia is often present in mature adult cats and it frequently resolves with successful treatment of hypothyroidism. This is in contrast to the current case, where azotemia persisted, indicating co-morbidity with renal insufficiency.

Many thanks to Michael Meehan from Wairakei Road Veterinary Clinic for this interesting case.

Reference:

[Spontaneous primary hypothyroidism in 7 adult cats](#). Peterson ME, Carothers MA, Gamble Da and Rishniw M. *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*. 32:1864-1873, 2018.

Snippets

- **Free equine ACTH testing** - this offer from Boehringer is available until the end of April - vouchers downloaded in April will be valid to use until Friday 8 May. For more information visit www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.nz
- **Keen to save MOO-lah** on herd BVD testing? Request "POOLED ONLY" testing when more than 30 samples are submitted for BVD PCR, easy! Find more information [here](#).
- **ANZAC day** - all of our laboratories will be closed on Monday 27 April. Lest we forget.
- **Facial eczema spore counts** - please send data through your by 2pm each Thursday so we can include it in our national report. Find a form, instructions, as well as a link to sign up to receive the report and/or weekly reminders on our website [here](#).

What's out there?

Here is a summary of some interesting cases we have seen in the past month:

Auckland:

- Salmonella in several species, most commonly in adult cattle and autumn born calves.

Hamilton:

- Zinc toxicity in cattle with severe anaemia
- Acorn toxicity in cattle.

Palmerston North:

- Zinc toxicity in cattle



Contact us

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