

Facial eczema

Gribbles Veterinary offers a range of cost effective solutions to assist veterinarians monitor facial eczema (FE) risk, minimise incidence of the disease, check your management programme is working and assess the damage caused by sporidesmin ingestion.

Monitor spore counts:

A national FE spore count monitoring service is coordinated by Gribbles Veterinary during the summer months. If you or your local farmers perform spore counts, visit our [online portal](#), set up a user account and you will be able to submit your spore counts online as well as view weekly reports and keep track of historical data for your region. Instructions for using our portal can be found [on our website here](#). Or if you simply wish to view weekly reports, no user account is needed, [just click here](#).

Protect:

Protection measures include not grazing high spore count paddocks, feeding supplements, spraying pastures with fungicide, and treating animals with zinc. Zinc sulphate can be added to drinking water, zinc oxide given as a drench and zinc additives applied to feeds or given as a slow release bolus.

Assessing if sufficient zinc is being dosed into the water supply can be achieved by measuring the concentration of zinc in water. Collect a 50mL pottle of water from a well mixed trough and submit to your nearest Gribbles Veterinary laboratory for analysis.

Predict risk / Monitor management programme:

To determine if animals are at risk or to check that your management programme is working we have several testing options. We recommend 10 cows are selected to test for serum zinc and GGT, 3-6 weeks after your management programme has started.* This will ensure you catch any signs of liver damage and will determine if zinc levels are adequate.

Test	Sample	Reference Interval
Spore counts	Paddock	>20,000/g of pasture – preventative treatment required >40,000/g of pasture – toxic range, control measures required to limit damage
	Faecal	Sheep: >600,000/g of faeces – moderate challenge is occurring Cattle: >75,000/g of faeces - preventative measures required
Zinc concentration	Serum	18 - 34 µmol/L to be protective
	Faecal	>200 mg/kg of fresh faeces to be protective
	Water	60 - 230 mg elemental Zn/L to be protective
GGT concentration	Serum	<75 IU/L – no effects of sporidesmin on liver (see below)

Assess damage:

Gamma-glutamyl transferase (GGT) is produced by bile duct epithelial cells damaged by sporidesmin ingestion. Collect serum samples from animals suspected of being affected by sporidesmin and measure GGT levels. If prevention and protection measures haven't succeeded, a guide to the degree of biliary damage is provided by an increase in GGT concentration: mild (100-300 IU/L); moderate (300-800 IU/L); and severe (800-1000 IU/L).

Testing options available:

- Spore counts - pasture and faeces
- GGT - serum
- Zinc - water, faeces or serum

* [Facial Eczema – Management for New Zealand dairy herds, Dairy NZ](#)



Please refer to our current price book for sample types, test turn-around times and pricing. If you have any questions or would like any further information, please contact your local Gribbles Veterinary laboratory or Territory Manager.