

March 2009

Skin sampling - from the horses' mouth!



Dermatophilus congolensis

At NWL Leeds we have recently had a number of samples from variably scabby horses.

In both equine & companion animals, the more thorough the sampling technique, the more likely it is that skin samples will be diagnostic!

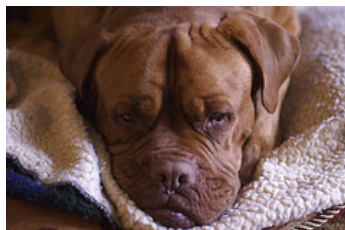
Plucked hairs are most suitable for dermatophyte (ringworm) examination and culture, whereas wide ranging skin scrapings, including any scabby material, are necessary to pick up any mites. Remember mites have legs and can therefore run away so samples should be submitted in a sealed universal tube, especially if scalpel blades are included! It is particularly important to collect plenty of scab material if dermatophilosis is suspected (mud fever or rain scald). Swabs for culture should ideally be taken from intact pustules and submitted in transport medium.

Our Skin Screen—Full (Equine), code SSFE, includes ringworm, mites, aerobic bacterial culture & dermatophilus.

Is it Lepto? A new rapid test for dogs

There is now available a new immunofluorescent antibody test (IFAT) to detect titres to field infection with leptospirosis, run 2—3 times per week. Vaccinal antibodies are not detected, so a dog with a positive titre is very likely to have been infected.

In contrast with the more costly and less frequently run modified agglutination test (MAT), the specific serovar with which the patient is infected cannot be identified by the IFAT system, however there is always the option of going on to the MAT in positive cases, if necessary.



- ◆ **Sample required: Serum**
- ◆ **Test code: LEPA**
- ◆ **Turn round time: 2— 5 days**
- ◆ **Cost: £30.00 + VAT**

NWL Clin Path Club

The next North West region meeting will be at 8.00 pm on 26 Mar 09 at The Tickled Trout, Preston, just off the M6.

Charlie Sale is taking the title OUCH, that looks nasty! How to manage open fractures.

Contact Kate Simister on 01253 881035 for more details.

Escherichia coli O157 - zoonotic potential



Electron micrograph of E. coli O157

Disease in humans associated with verotoxin producing *E. coli* O157:H7 first appeared in the USA in 1982. It was initially known as the 'hamburger bug' due to the number of outbreaks resulting from eating under-cooked hamburgers. However, in recent years a significant number of cases have resulted from direct or indirect contact with infected animals. Infection in cattle, sheep and goats is widespread and wildlife and pet animals can also act as carriers. Vitaly, *E.coli* O157 does **not** cause disease in animals, but the infective dose in humans is low—ingesting as few as 10 organisms can lead to clinical disease.

NWL are pleased to now offer an option to test for *E.coli* O157 as part of our faecal zoonoses packages.

Happy Easter

NWL laboratories will be closed Good Friday and Easter Monday only.

