



Veterinary Diagnostic
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WE ARE ON THE WEB!
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VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

Featured in this issue: Featured Faculty, Potomac Horse Fever Diagnosis, *Rhodococcus equi* Pneumonia

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Director's Message

It is often of diagnostic value and always of educational benefit to students, residents, and faculty to see the gross lesions from which biopsy and cytology specimens are obtained. If you have taken digital images of these lesions as a part of your clinical evaluation, please send these via email to vldirectoroffice@vetmed.illinois.edu. They will be passed on to the pathologist or clinical pathologist handling your submission. Please identify owner, animal and date of submission so the images can be connected with the appropriate specimen.

Walter E. Hoffmann, DVM, PhD, Interim Director

Featured Faculty

Dr. Laura Kohrt received a DVM degree in 1996 and a master of science degree in pathobiology in 1999 both from the University of Illinois. She completed her residency in veterinary anatomic pathology in 2001 also at Illinois. After spending approximately five years in a research laboratory at the University of Minnesota, she joined the Illinois VDL faculty as an anatomic pathologist in 2006. In addition to her diagnostic duties, Dr. Kohrt is training residents and fourth-year veterinary students and teaches the poultry disease course in the professional curriculum. Dr. Kohrt has special interests in ophthalmic and dermatologic pathology and is very interested in increasing her caseload in these areas. If you are interested in having her handle your biopsies, please indicate so on the request form and we will direct them to her when at all possible.

Potomac Horse Fever Diagnosis: Dr. Carol Maddox

Diarrheal diseases, fever, and septic infections of horses can be difficult to diagnose due to the intermittent nature and the significant role of diet and stress. In addition to the more common agents of diarrhea, such as parasitism, Salmonella, and Clostridial enteritis, Potomac Horse Fever (PHF) or Equine monocytic ehrlichiosis (EME) should be added to your list of differentials. Sporadic cases occur throughout the mid-Atlantic to midwestern regions, generally in late summer months. The disease causes watery diarrhea, fever, lethargy and inappetence and is linked to ingestion and systemic spread of *Neorickettsia risticii* (formerly *Ehrlichia risticii*) carried by fresh water snails. We have had several cases of PHF come through the University of Illinois teaching hospital and VDL. Histopathology lesions are not always conclusive and an anti-mortem assay was needed so a nested PCR was developed based upon primers designed by Chaichanasiriwithaya et al., JCM 38:3026 and Kanter et al., JCM 38:3349. The organism can be detected in blood (EDTA or citrate), fresh feces or GIT mucosa. The assay is routinely performed at VDL on Thursdays at a fee of \$35.00 per specimen (please submit specimens for Wednesday arrival) but can be performed STAT if needed.

Rhodococcus equi Pneumonia: Dr. Carol Maddox

Another new test that has been added to the VDL molecular/microbiology section is the *Rhodococcus equi* PCR. *Rhodococcus equi* is a significant cause of interstitial pneumonia in weanlings and secondary respiratory infections associated with viruses in horses. However, the bacteria is slow-growing and sometimes difficult to recover by culture. An appropriately collected trans-tracheal wash, 50 ml of sterile water, should be submitted on ice. Post mortem lung samples are acceptable. This test is performed as needed, so please call the laboratory to inform us a sample is expected. The cost is \$35.00 per specimen.