

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Pathology facilities at The Donkey Sanctuary include three laboratories and a PM room. We provide diagnostic pathology for The Sanctuary's resident populations, but also receive samples from our foster donkeys and from privately owned donkeys around the country. Tests for the latter are run free of charge (though donations to The Sanctuary are gratefully received).

WHAT TESTS CAN WE OFFER?

Parasitology

Dung samples can be examined for endoparasite eggs (strongyles, ascarids, tapeworm, and fluke) and lungworm larvae.

Tests for all parasite eggs and larvae are run using approximately 25g of dung - the amount depicted in this photograph. (Individual tests require 9g for a worm egg count, 10g for lungworm and 3g for fluke).

We can also test for faecal occult blood.



Clinical chemistry

We can do haematology, biochemistry including coagulation factors and endocrinology on blood samples using donkey-specific blood reference intervals; we are currently refining these according to age ranges of donkeys.

As stated on our submission form we need a clotted sample for our main biochemistry tests. We need a fluoride/oxalate tube for glucose and a citrate tube for fibrinogen and prothrombin time. We can perform haematology on EDTA or lithium heparinised blood but prefer EDTA.

Ideally avoid despatching samples to the lab at the end of the week as there is no weekend service in The Donkey Sanctuary lab.

Endocrinology

We run insulin and ACTH in-house. For ACTH measurement we need EDTA plasma. If it is possible samples should be spun down and the separated plasma sent with an ice-pack or frozen. If this is not possible then send the whole EDTA sample with an ice pack as soon as possible after collection. Insulin is run on serum (clotted blood). It is advisable to send both clotted and EDTA samples for endocrinology tests and also a fluoride/oxalate for glucose if Equine Metabolic Syndrome is suspected. Other samples such as BAL fluids, peritoneal taps, and urine are examined at the lab for cytology, or are sent out for microbiology and further testing as required. Samples for certain endocrinology tests (e.g. rig and pregnancy tests), protein electrophoresis, and serology are submitted to external laboratories. Costs imposed by any testing at external labs will be charged at the relevant lab rate.

Dermatology

We are able to examine skin scrapes and hair for presence of lice or other external parasites and can culture for ringworm. Perianal tape strips can be submitted on glass slides and submitted for identification of pinworm (*Oxyuris*) eggs.

Anatomical pathology

The Donkey Sanctuary Pathologist carries out full necropsy of all resident or local animals which die or are euthanased. External vets and pathologists are sometimes called upon to perform post mortem examinations on our foster donkeys around the country and we can arrange for histological examination of formalin-fixed samples of post mortem (or biopsy) material submitted to us. Fresh tissues and swabs are submitted to external laboratories for microbiology.

Should you require further information please contact the Veterinary Department, Slade House Farm, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 0NU, by telephone on +44 (0)1395 579162, or by email to vets@thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk