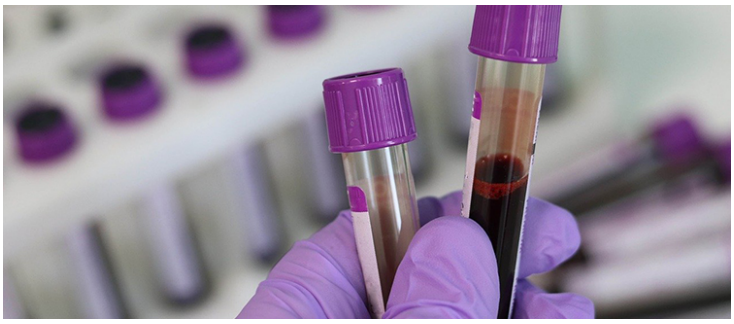
Blood sampling



Did you know taking a blood sample from your horse can not only aid in the diagnosis of disease but can be performed for many other reasons? Once collected, samples are analysed either in our clinic or sent to a veterinary laboratory externally. Some tests are quick to run, while others can take several days or longer to complete before the results are available.

Apart from helping the vet diagnose a disease, blood sampling can also be used to:

1. Monitor the response to treatment after diagnosing an illness ? this may be to ensure tissues are healing, an infection is resolving or assessing response to treatment. For example checking the dosage of ?Prascend' is suitable in Cushing's disease cases.

2. Screen normal animals ? Although animals may not show any signs of being unwell, there may be early indicators of disease that can be blood on routine haematology and biochemistry blood analysis. This is particularly relevant with older animals or those recently exposed to a contagious disease.

3. Pre-purchase examinations ? blood is routinely collected prior to purchase by the attending vet to allow for future testing of medicines that may mask signs of illness or injury. These are collected and stored frozen for six months. For example, if a lameness issue arises shortly after purchase then the sample can be tested for anti-inflammatory and pain relief medicines.

4. Confirm exposure to infectious diseases ? during an outbreak exposure to diseases such as equine influenza and strangles can be confirmed or ruled out. In some cases a second sample may need to be taken two weeks later if results are considered borderline or inconclusive.

5. Confirm the health status of an animal before export/import ? horses may need to be free from certain disease before entry into another country. Blood tests are used to rule out several serious diseases and maintain the disease-free status of a country. Diseases may include equine infectious anaemia, equine viral arteritis, African horse sickness or equine influenza etc but each country has its own specification for which tests must be taken.

6. Confirm the health status of a mare or stallion prior to breeding - some diseases can be spread during the breeding process, affecting both mare and stallion with fertility or illness. These include equine infectious anaemia, equine viral arteritis and strangles in some cases.

7. Monitor a patient prior to and during a general anaesthetic (GA) ? Bloods are often checked before surgery to identify any additional risks of performing a GA. These can be repeated during surgery to allow the anaesthetist to respond to any deterioration during the procedure.

8. Identify banned substances during competition - Professional equestrian competitions (e.g. BHA, FEI etc) monitor for the presence of prohibited performance enhancing drugs. The blood (and urine) of competitors may be tested to prevent any unfair

advantage. For example, administration of anti-inflammatory and pain relief medication such as phenylbutazone (bute).