A tail base aneurysm was diagnosed in a 6-year-old, female bearded dragon that presented for dragging a hind limb and vent prolapse, which progressed to worsening hind end neurological deficits and eventual euthanasia. A coelomic mass was present on ultrasound. On necropsy, a very large mass was present at the tail base suspected to be an aneurysm or neoplasia. An aneurysm was confirmed histologically with secondary thromboemboli in the lungs and heart. Aneurysms are well described in bearded dragons, typically arising in the head and neck or cranial coelom from the aorta or internal carotid artery. In this case clinical signs were thought to be due to the space occupying mass combined with reduced hind end perfusion.

Cervico-thoracic spinal kyphosis and scoliosis were diagnosed in related 3-month-old draft horses that were “unable to raise their heads”. The foals were by the same sire but out of unrelated dams; however, one dam had a foal with similar clinical signs the previous year. That foal progressed to hind end ataxia and was euthanized without diagnostics. Static and dynamic spinal cord compression and tracheal deformation occurred secondary to the spinal malformations. Ulceration and thickened keratin on their tongues were also present, suspected due to abnormal head positions while chewing and alterations to types of food the foals were able to eat. The congenital malformations were suspected to be hereditary from the sire and it was recommended that he be removed from the breeding program.
Hemagglutinating encephalomyelitis virus (HEV) was detected in 2-week-old piglets that died suddenly from gilt litters in a commercial farm. The piglets had cyanotic noses and ears with some frothing at the mouth. There were no overt changes on gross necropsy but a necrotizing bronchointerstitial pneumonia was present on histology highly suggestive of a viral infection. PCR was negative for common porcine respiratory viruses including swine influenza, PCV-2, and PRRS. HEV was detected by PCR from lung tissue. This porcine coronavirus is more typically associated with vomiting and wasting disease (VWD) and/or encephalomyelitis in piglets but has more recently been identified as a cause of viral pneumonia in piglets.

Coxiella burnetii was the cause of early neonatal death in a calf from a black angus heifer. The calving was assisted with the amniotic fluid described as “dirty”. On necropsy, no gross lesions were found and on histopathology necrotizing placentitis with vasculitis was present. PCR on the placenta was positive for Coxiella burnetii, the agent of Q-fever and negative for Chlamydia abortus and Ureaplasma diversum. Bacillus licheniformis, another known cause of bovine fetal loss, was cultured from the placenta. C. burnetii is a zoonotic pathogen that can cause flu-like symptoms in people and pregnancy loss in women exposed to birth products or dust contaminated with the bacteria. It is more commonly associated with sheep and goat abortions but does occur in other ruminant species. Occasionally the disease in people can be chronic resulting in endocarditis and death if not treated appropriately. This case highlights the need for appropriate PPE, including N95 respirators, when performing bovine fetal necropsies.

Renal medullary necrosis was found in a 1-year-old female dog following meloxicam administration for post-operative pain following routine ovariohysterectomy. The dog had normal pre-operative bloodwork before her spay procedure and received meloxicam for 5 days. She was doing poorly and re-presented 10 days following her spay and had bloodwork consistent with acute renal failure but normal looking kidneys on ultrasound. Gross necropsy showed bilateral acute severe renal medullary necrosis that was confirmed by histology. This finding is consistent with analgesic nephropathy in association with the use of NSAID drugs. No other pre-existing or concurrent condition was found that may have impacted the dog’s response to medications.

Tips & Tricks

The UCVM Veterinary Outbreak Investigation Service (VOIS) is a service offered by UCVM to assist private veterinarians in Alberta in working up unusual animal health events that are not reportable foreign animal diseases. This includes disease outbreaks, loss of productivity, or situations in which human disease risk is present. For more information please visit: https://vet.ucalgary.ca/departments-units/dsu/vois

Answer: A baaaaaad mooood.