



VETQAS® Customer Newsletter

Welcome to the first Vetqas® newsletter which forms part of our commitment to you, as customers, to keep you informed of who we are and how we can help you. In this issue we introduce the 'team' and let you know about several new PT Schemes for 2011/12.

Vetqas® is the Proficiency Testing (PT) service of VLA Scientific, offering over 80 different PT Schemes designed specifically for the needs of veterinary laboratories. It is an external source of quality assurance that offers an independent and confidential verification of a laboratory's testing practices, enabling the monitoring of quality, reliability and accuracy of its own performance. It is also a UKAS accredited PT provider working to ILAC-G13 and ISO/IEC Guide 43. The Schemes cover all aspects of microbiology, serology, virology, haematology, clinical chemistry and parasitology and are internationally recognised by third party accreditation organisations for laboratories working to ISO 17025 and ISO 9001 standards.

The VETQAS® Unit & Team

Vetqas® is based at Sutton Bonington, near Loughborough in Leicestershire and was first established in 1974. It is the market leader in proficiency testing for veterinary laboratories with over 30 years experience. Six years ago the unit was completely refurbished and is now a modern, well equipped, dedicated laboratory and office facility.

The team consists of scientists and administrators and is lead by Paula Johnson, who joined VLA in 2006. Paula has over 20 years previous experience in private industry including over 10 years as a manager of a food testing laboratory that participated in comprehensive proficiency testing programmes.

Diane Dawson and Steve Pember have worked in QA for 14 and 12 years respectively and have a wealth of experience in both quality assurance and laboratory testing. Linda Howgill and Poppy Lowe are the initial point of contact for customers and they are ready and waiting to deal with your enquiries in an efficient and friendly way.



The Vetqas® Team



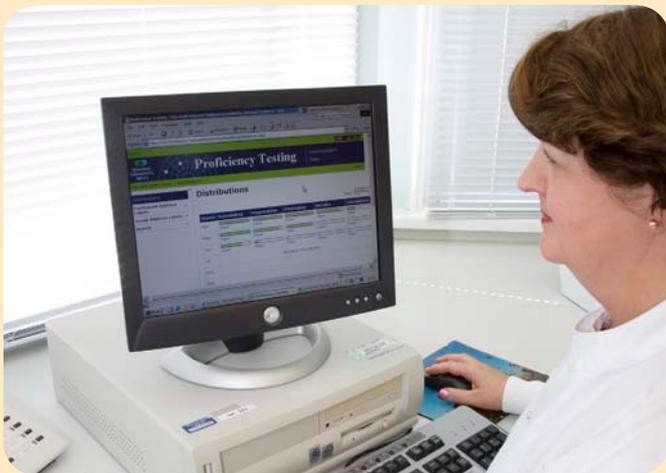
The Vetqas® Laboratory



The schemes we offer are principally directed towards farm animal species but, we have not only expanded our range of schemes, but also moved into other areas covering small animals and histopathology. This is all part of our on-going commitment to continually increase our offering to customers.

PT SCHEME FOR SMALL ANIMALS

This PT Scheme (PT0140), has been designed specifically for laboratories that deal with submissions from companion animal clinical practice. Simulated specimens are provided for analysis and they contain the most commonly isolated organisms as well as some that are less common.



Freeze dried simulated clinical specimens, that may contain pathogenic and non-pathogenic organisms are issued 4 times per year. The organisms present will be reference or field strains and are required to be identified using routine culture and isolation methods selected by the scheme participants. Confirmatory tests may also be required.

Clinical information about the samples will also be provided and participants should record any organism isolated. The final report will be issued electronically and will indicate the identity of the intended pathogen, record any other organisms isolated and the show the results from all other participants in the Scheme.

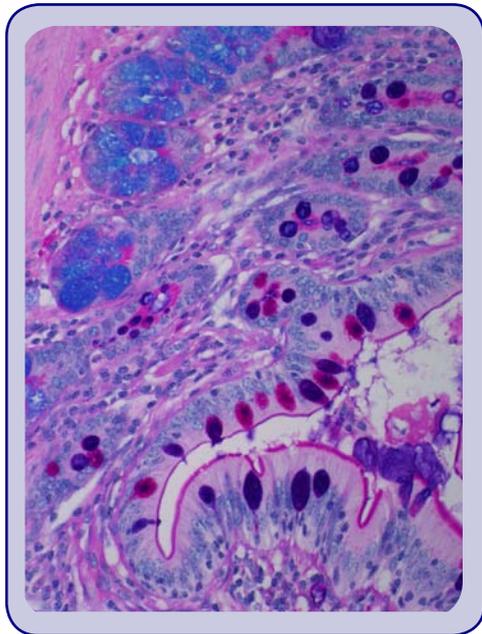
Veterinary comments on laboratory results often form an important part of the reporting process especially when deciding whether an organism is a pathogen, if there are possible implications for diagnosis or a treatment regime is required. There is provision for these comments to be made on the submission form but they are not assessed as part of the Scheme.

Two New Histopathology Services

VETQAS is pleased to announce the launch of two new Schemes for Cellular Pathology Technique (CPT) and Veterinary Immunohistochemistry (VetIHC), from April 2011. Here are some preliminary details:

Testing methods

The testing methods for both CPT (PT0166) and VetIHC (PT0167) are similar and include the issue of two paraffin wax sections per method, 6 times per year. Participants will be asked to carry out their procedure on the sections then return one section for each method for assessment.



The CPT test requires the participating laboratory to submit two further 'in-house' stains using their own archived H&E preparations. The VetIHC test requires the participating laboratory to submit one 'in-house' control for each specific antibody for assessment.

Results and advice

The assessment of your submissions will be carried out by our assessors who are skilled in cellular pathological techniques and a score will be allocated. The final report will be issued electronically and will include a summary of your results and histograms showing the overall scores. Any substandard performance should be dealt with by the participating laboratory but, our team will be available for advice if required.

Further details are available on our website.

Additional Schemes for 2011/12

Campylobacter species (PT0165)

Clinical information will be supplied with the simulated samples and, using your own routine procedures participants will be asked to isolate and identify any organisms present. The samples may contain either enteric strains or abortion linked strains of Campylobacter species.

Koi Herpes Virus (PT0136)

Samples of lyophilized dilutions of carp tissue, that may contain inactivated Koi herpes virus should be tested using your own routine PCR method.

Leptospira in kidney (PT0153)

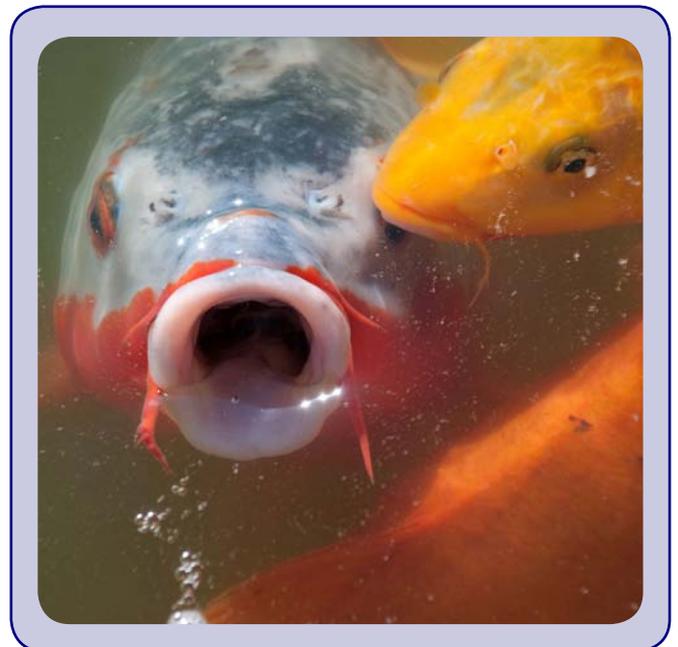
Samples of lyophilized dried kidney tissue, that may contain pathogenic or non-pathogenic Leptospira are required to be tested using your own routine PCR method.

Composting of animal by-products (PT0164)

This scheme is offered to laboratories carrying out ongoing testing of compost rather than validation of composting plants. They must also be accredited to ISO 17025 to perform the designated tests.

Acid alcohol-fast Bacteria (PT0163)

Samples are positive and negative slides made from faeces spiked with *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis*. Participants will be required to stain and read slides using the Kinyoun cold stain or equivalent.





During 2010, several PT Schemes were added to our offering including one for Equine microbiology. In case you did not see the changes please see the details below:

Equine Microbiology (PT0134)

This scheme comprises a panel of 3 freeze dried simulated clinical specimens that may contain pathogenic and/or non-pathogenic organisms. These organisms will be either reference or field strains that need to be identified using routine culture and isolation methods, selected by the participants. Confirmatory tests may also be required. Clinical information about the samples will be provided and participants will be required to record any organisms isolated.

Brucella canis (PT0022)

Antibody detection using slide or rapid agglutination test.

African Swine Fever (PT0137)

Antibody detection by ELISA using serum from infected animals.

Bluetongue Virus (PT0138)

Antibody detection using ELISA for bovine or ovine serum taken from animals either vaccinated or experimentally infected with different BTV serotypes.

Foot & Mouth Disease (Eurasian strains) (PT00139)

Antibody detection using ELISA and virus neutralization test on bovine, ovine or porcine serum samples from either challenged or vaccinated animals.

Avian Leukosis Ag (PT0142)

Sample origin is from Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) chicken embryo fibroblast cell cultures infected with ALV – J subgroup to be tested using ELISA to detect P27, the core protein found in all subgroups of ALV.

Avian pneumovirus (PT0144)

Antibody detection using ELISA

Avian reticuloendotheliosis (PT0145)

Antibody detection using ELISA

Neospora caninum (PT0155)

Antibody detection using ELISA and IFAT



Customer surveys

The Vetqas® team is always interested to hear from customers and we would like to thank all of you who took part in our recent customer surveys. Your feedback is very much appreciated.

For further information please contact:

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