

PHOENIX CENTRAL LABORATORY

Excellence in Veterinary Science



Leptospirosis Update, March 31, 2005

Many of you may have received calls concerning a newspaper article in the Seattle Post Intelligencer warning that there has been a rise in leptospirosis in western Washington.

At Phoenix Laboratories we have not seen a "spike" in the number of positive leptospirosis titers in the last six months. Our last report on leptospirosis was in our November 2004 flyer which is available on our website at www.pclv.net from the Publications link on the home page.

This morning, we spoke with Dr. Evermann at Washington State Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) which performs all of our leptospirosis testing and reports these numbers to the state. He feels that there has been no emergence of a new serovar in the last six months. He does feel that over the last three years there has been an increase in the number of samples submitted for leptospirosis testing, as well as a steady increase in the number of positive samples overall. Also, in the last few years, WADDL has begun testing for the *Autumnalis* and *Bratislava* serovars and has found that these serovars are among the predominant positive tests. These serovars are not in the *Leptospira* vaccines, and there is no cross-protection from the vaccine for these serovars. There is cross-reactivity when testing for leptospirosis, in that many animals will have positive antibody titers against multiple serovars.

Our current recommendation for testing is to consider submitting leptospirosis titers in cases of acute renal failure, hepatic failure or coagulation defects/vasculitis. Dogs may present with a variety of signs, including fever, generalized muscle tenderness, vomiting, hematemesis, hematochezia, epistaxis and coagulation defects. Some dogs will deteriorate very rapidly and die without developing renal and hepatic failure. Cats may also become infected with leptospirosis, but clinical signs are usually mild or inapparent.

An excellent educational resource for your clients is the Center for Disease Control website - www.cdc.gov. This website has information on all communicable diseases as well as recommendations for clients who may be immunosuppressed. The section of the website for pet owners is found at www.cdc.gov/healthypets/.

If you have more questions, please give us a call at 1-800-347-0043.