



FERRET ENTERIC CORONAVIRUS

Ferret enteric coronavirus (FRECV) is widespread in the US ferret population. The virus causes a highly contagious diarrhoeic disease called enzootic catarrhal enteritis (ECE). Infected ferrets initially go off their food; they seem lethargic and may vomit. Shortly afterwards, they start to produce large volumes of green foul smelling mucoid diarrhoea. Most animals recover within 1 week. However, older ferrets and ferrets with other infections may become seriously ill.

We believe from investigation work carried out by veterinary surgeon Simon Thomas, that FRECV is present in the UK. However, we do not yet know how common it is.

To answer this question, we will screen ferrets for FRECV in the UK using a new ferret-specific PCR test developed at the University of Michigan. If we find the virus here, we will look more closely at infected ferrets to assess which animals are the most susceptible to infection, and whether FRECV is always associated with diarrhoeic disease.

Our study

We are inviting all ferret owners to submit faecal samples from their ferrets for free PCR testing at the University of Glasgow. Please send samples from both healthy ferrets, and ferrets with diarrhoea. Please visit your veterinary surgeon for advice if you are at all concerned about the health of your ferret.

You must also complete a brief submission form. This form gives us permission to use your sample for this study, and will give us additional information we can use to identify the risk factors for infection. We cannot process your sample without this submission form.

You can download the submission form [here \(link\)](#), or from the University of Glasgow website: <http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/vds>

Sending samples to Glasgow

- Place at least 1 gram fresh faeces (no bedding etc) from each ferret in a sterile plastic container with a screw cap lid. Place the container in a sealable plastic bag, e.g. a sandwich bag, and then in a padded envelope for posting.
- Ask your local practice for a suitable specimen container; we will be happy to supply your practice if required.
- Complete and send the submission form.
- You can send multiple samples, but please send a separate submission form for each one.
- Post the sample(s) and form(s) by **FIRST CLASS MAIL** to:

Ferret Study
Veterinary Diagnostic Services
School of Veterinary Medicine
College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences
University of Glasgow

Bearsden Road
Glasgow G61 1QH

Please start submitting your samples today. The pilot study will run until the end of September.

Results

We will notify you of your individual results by e-mail ONLY so please make sure you provide us with a valid e-mail address. The results will not be reported until after the pilot study is completed, which we anticipate will be October at the earliest.

For further information, please contact Dr Libby Graham at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Glasgow. Please email vet-sch-vds@glasgow.ac.uk