Blood Donation

Mr Thomas’ six year old working sheepdog Gel very suddenly went off colour one day. He stopped eating and didn’t want to work, and on the whole just looked thoroughly miserable. Mr Thomas rushed him down to the vets who found that he had very pale gums, and painful stomach and blood in his stools.

 After thinking about what could have caused the Gel’s signs Mr Thomas remembered that he had put rat poison down about 3 weeks ago. The vets all agreed that Gel’s illness was caused by either eating the rat poison directly or by eating a rat that had been killed by the poison. There are many different types of rat poison but the majority work by stopping the blood from being able to clot.

 Due to the amount of blood Gel had lost it was necessary to give him a blood transfusion which led to a massive mission on the part of both Mr Thomas and the vets to try and find a suitable donor dog before it was too late for Gel. A donor was eventually found and Gel is now back home and working again.

The above situation is a true story, and sadly not the first we’ve seen here at the surgery, with several cases unfortunately not having such a happy outcome. To avoid similar situations in the future we are now trying to set up a list of blood donors that we could call on in the case of an emergency.

What makes a good donor dog?

Healthy and friendly

More that 25kg in weight

Between 2 and 7 years old

Fully vaccinated

Ideally no history of foreign travel

How much blood would we take?

This depends on how much your dog weighs and the results of a simple blood test we would run beforehand (known as a Packed Cell Volume) which tells us how many red blood cells your dog has to begin with,

An adult dog can safely give up to 10% of their blood volume (which works out as 9ml per kg of bodyweight) but we will taper this to the individual dog.

A healthy dog will replace the lost blood cells within 2-3 weeks.

How do we collect the blood?

We use a quiet room and always invite you to stay with your dog if you would like to. A mild sedation may be used to minimise the stress to your dog during the procedure. Your dog will be laid on his side and a patch of fur clipped over his neck, just as if we were doing a blood test. An intravenous catheter is placed into the jugular vein; a tube will then be connected to the catheter and the other end of this to a blood collection bag. The whole procedure should take no longer than 30 minutes.

***Thank you for taking the time to read this information. If you have any further questions or would like to add your dog’s name to our list please do not hesitate to contact us at the surgery****.*