

## Care of Exotics – Level 3

This progress pack has been put together to help you gain an understanding of what to expect when you start this course in the next academic year. Hopefully you already have some knowledge of what the course entails, and this work pack is designed for you to gain an understanding of the depth of information required in the work, and we can see any areas that may need to be covered when we start in September.

For the sake of this work pack, you will be covering some of the basics in signs of animal health (303 1.1) and understanding the basics in nutrition (304 1.1). You are expected to complete this independently, but you may do your own research to complement your existing knowledge. If you are using information from a source, be sure to paraphrase and not copy the information directly.

### Signs of Health in animals- 303 1.1

For this module of the course, you need to be able to perform and record routine health checks. These include being able to take a temperature, respiratory rate, pulse rate and capillary refill time (CRT).

**Temperature-** this can be taken with a digital or mercury thermometer, and for most animals this should be taken rectally if conscious.

**Respiratory rate-** this is recorded as number breaths per minute (or bpm), this includes a full inhalation and exhalation as 1. Recorded by observing the number of times the chest either expands or contracts (count one or the other, not both).

**Pulse-** this is recorded by number of times the heart beats in a minute and can be taken in several places on the body, which vary for different animal species. You can use a stethoscope, or just using your finger to feel for the heartbeat. Recorded as beats per minute or bpm

**Capillary refill time (CRT)-** pressure is applied to the gum, preferably above a canine tooth (or incisor if canine not present) for a few seconds, and then time recorded for the pink colour to return to the gum gives your CRT. Normal CRT should be 1-2 seconds.

Task;

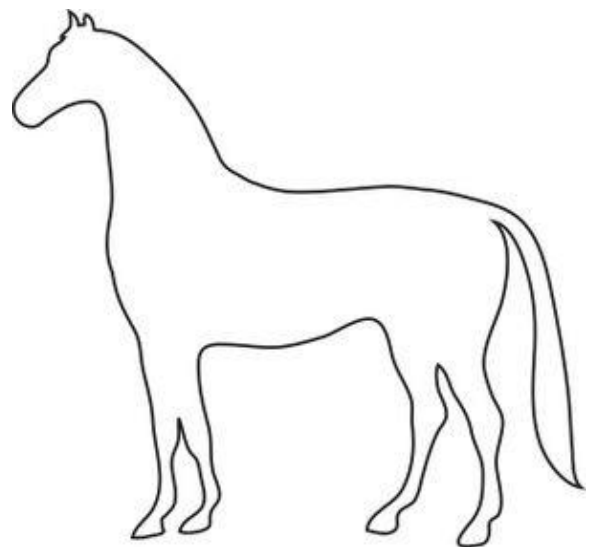
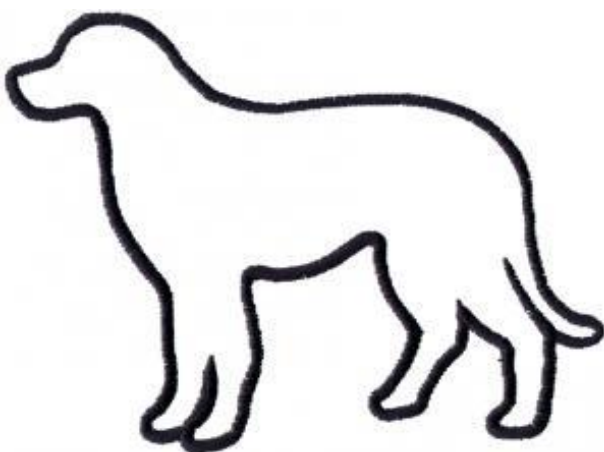
Fill out the table below for each species, with the normal parameters for temperature, pulse and respiration rate. Remember to include the units. The first one has been done for you as an example

Species	Temperature	Pulse	Respiration rate
Dog	38.3-39.2 °C	70-140 bpm	10-30 bpm
Cat			
Rabbit			
Horse			
Sheep			
Guinea pig			
Ferret			
Mouse			

As previously mentioned, there are several places that you can take an animal's pulse, and this varies between species.

Task;

Using the outlines below, draw a dot on the pulse point locations for each species.



Further to checking an animal's vitals, you will also be required to assess and record more qualitative information regarding an animal's condition. When recording qualitative information, it is important that the meaning of the words and phrases is clear to whoever may need to understand it.

Task;

The phrases below are not appropriate for use when recording information on an animal's health. For each phrase, re-word it so that the meaning is clear and could be understood by another person. The first two have been done for you to give you an idea.

"Dirty bottom" - faecal matter matted in the hair around the anus and perineal area

"Limping movement" - mildly lame on the off forelimb on every stride

"Really fat"

"Skin problems on the belly"

"Off colour eye membranes"

"Coughing loads"

"He's not happy"

"Not eating"

"Teeth are gross and breath stinks"

"Feathers are missing"

Health checks need to be performed causing minimal stress to the animal but ensuring that all areas are assessed effectively.

Task;

Watch the video linked below on a health check of a dog;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m891te7Nwag>

Write up a health check like the one you have just seen but for a dog with multiple signs of poor health.

Now can you write up a health check for a healthy rabbit;

In order to minimise stress during health checks, it is important to have an understanding of animal behaviour. The aim of this is to keep you as animal handlers safe, and also to protect the mental health of the animal as much as possible.

Here are some video links to Channel 4's "Dogs; their secret lives" and Bristol Veterinary School as additional resources to help you:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3P4X1kFhDw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQwrylmRkgk>

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/vet-school/services/behaviour-clinic/dogbehaviouralsigns/>

Task;

Draw lines to link the behavioural indicators of a dog to the behaviour itself, each indicator can link to multiple behaviours.

Yawning

Tail wagging

Barking

Jumping up

Avoiding eye contact

Baring teeth

Growling

Spinning in circles

Destructive behaviour

Tail between legs

Whining

Panting

Humping

Ears back

Hiding

Direct eye contact

Whale eye (showing whites of eyes)

Aggression

Excitement

Stress

Anxiety/fear

Submission

Dominance

Warning/threatening

Now, to continue with this part of the task, can you pick out the behavioural indicators shown in the pictures below. This includes different species as well as a dog, and so you may want to research behavioural indicators of the other animals. Draw lines to label the indicators, and then write what kind of behaviour you think they are showing. Some behaviours may overlap, and so you may give more than one answer.



Behaviour shown:.....



Behaviour shown:.....



Behaviour shown:.....

Another factor in assessing an animal's health that you need to be aware of, is body condition scoring. This is a visual and palpable assessment of the fat covering over an animal. This can be measure in a scale of 1-5 or 1-10, although the scale of 1-10 is more accurate, the 1-5 scale is more commonly used.

Task;

Can you think of 3 reasons why it might be useful to body condition score and animal? This is not restricted to domestic pets so try and think about livestock and working animals too.

1)

2)

3)

Have a look through the resources on body condition scoring below. When you are next able to, or if you have pets at home, have a go at body condition scoring some animals and record your results.

Note: if you are body condition scoring another person's animals or pets, you are not yet qualified to give advice. This is for practice purposes only!

<https://www.vets4pets.com/services/body-condition-scoring/>

<https://www.farmhealthonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/AHDB-Ewe-Condition-Handout-2015.pdf>

<https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/how-body-score-your-horse>

Whilst studying the course with us, everything we do (theory and practical) will be taught within the relevant legislation that applies to the animal care sector. Hopefully by the end of the course you will be able to summarise each piece of relevant legislation.

To start with, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 outline 5 essential needs for an animal in a persons care, can you name these 5 needs?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Although entirely relevant to an animal's health, we will also be studying nutrition as a separate module. To begin with we need to have an understanding of the major nutrients in an animal's diet.

The main components of an animal's diet; carbohydrates, fats/lipids, vitamins, minerals, proteins and water.

Task;

Give an example of a type of fresh food or supplement that is rich in each of the main components of an animal's diet;

Carbohydrates-

Fats/lipids-

Protein-

Vitamins-

Minerals-

Water (a food with high water content)-

All the above components have a chemical structure. This is very relevant to the process of digestion as the chemical structure can depend on whether a molecule of that component of the diet can be absorbed or not.

Carbohydrates can be divided into monosaccharides, disaccharides and polysaccharides.

Task;

For all 3 molecules of carbohydrate can you find an example and write down or draw the chemical structure.

Monosaccharides-

Disaccharides-

Polysaccharides-



Amino acids are the building structural building blocks for protein in the diet.

Task;

Can you name 5 essential amino acids in an animals diet?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Bonus question;

Which amino acid is essential to a cat's diet as, unlike other animals, they are unable to synthesise it themselves?

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