

## HAIR SAMPLING FOR ANIMALS

The accuracy of a mineral analysis depends upon many factors. While the laboratory is responsible for the technical aspects of the test, the results will only be as good as the raw material or sample that is received. For this reason, the more care that is exercised by the person sampling the hair, the better the results will be.

### WASHING:

Hair that has not been washed for more than four or five days is more prone to environmental contamination. If a salt-based water softener is used in the home, hair sodium levels may be affected. Dogs that swim in the ocean regularly will need to be kept out of it for several days and washed 1 - 2 days prior to collection.

Hair should be dry when it is sampled, otherwise it cannot be weighed correctly. The sample should be taken between four and twenty hours after washing. This allows the hair to re-equilibrate after washing.

### SUPPLIES NEEDED:

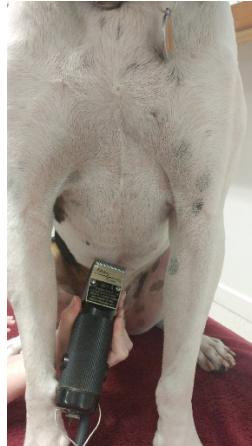
- Scissors or clippers,
- alcohol,
- cotton ball,
- cardboard scale (fold down the sides),
- paper envelope,
- submission form



Before cutting, clean scissors or clippers with alcohol. Scissors or clippers should be clean (no oil, no chemicals, no other animal fur) and sharp. Steel scissors are better than aluminum scissors. If plated scissors are used, be sure the plating is not peeling off, which could contaminate the sample.

### **LOCATION OF SAMPLE:**

BELLY or CHEST is preferred to avoid any visible “bald” spot. For very short haired, small breed dogs, it may need to be taken from other sites as well. [NOTE: At times I have had to take from inside the pinna’s or under the tail.] The exact location(s) will be recorded on the laboratory submission form.



### **SIZE OF SAMPLE:**

1 full teaspoon of hair or enough to make the scale tip when placed in the circle. Then place in the envelope provided.





### **QUANTITY:**

A problem at the laboratory occurs when too little hair is sent (less than 125 mg). Either the client must be contacted to send more hair, or the sample must be diluted, which reduces the accuracy. Most laboratories should keep some hair to re-run any mineral that falls outside a reasonable range. If the sample is too small, extra hair cannot be saved for this purpose.

For long haired animals, be sure to cut off the ends of any hair that is over 1 to 1 ½ inches long prior to weighing.

### **STORING:**

Hair can be stored if needed. It does not deteriorate with time.

### **RETEST:**

Samples should be taken from the same area as the original sample, if at all possible. This assures continuity from sample to sample. However, it is not necessary to find the precise strands of hair for the next retest. Simply take the sample from the same general area.