

About Our Veterinarians

Dan Johnson, DVM

Dr. Johnson earned his BS in Biology from North Carolina State University in 1988, and his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from NCSU-College of Veterinary Medicine in 1992. He worked in small animal and emergency medicine for 4 years before starting North Carolina's first all-exotics practice.

Dr. Johnson serves as an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Sciences at NCSU-CVM. He publishes and lectures nationally about avian and exotic animal medicine. Dr. Johnson's areas of special interest include surgery, orthopedics, zoological medicine, and exotic animal dentistry.

Christine Eckermann-Ross, DVM, CVA, CVH

Dr. Christine Eckermann-Ross joined Avian and Exotic Animal Care after graduating from North Carolina State College of Veterinary Medicine in 2000. Prior to veterinary school, Dr. Eckermann-Ross earned a BS in Biochemistry and worked as a research specialist in Radiation Oncology at UNC/CH.

Dr. Eckermann-Ross serves as an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Sciences at NCSU-CVM, and has lectured at professional conferences on avian and exotic animal medicine and acupuncture. She is certified in both veterinary acupuncture and traditional Chinese herbal medicine. She has special interests in avian medicine, acupuncture, herbal medicine, surgery, and oncology.

Stacey Leonatti, DVM

Dr. Leonatti earned her Bachelor of Science from Truman State University in 2002, and her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine in 2006. During college, Dr. Leonatti worked in the university's herpetology lab, providing care for the lab's reptile and amphibian collection. During veterinary school, she conducted a research project on infection of iguanas by a new species of bacteria. She volunteered her time at a nearby raptor center, and spent a six week externship at the Saint Louis Zoo. Dr. Leonatti's professional interests include reptile medicine, raptor medicine, ophthalmology, surgery, and behavior.

Our Veterinarians are members of the Association of Avian Veterinarians, the Association of Exotic Mammal Veterinarians, the Simian Society of America, the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians, the International Association of Aquatic Animal Veterinarians, the American and North Carolina Veterinary Medical Associations, and the American Animal Hospital Association.

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Hours and Appointments

Office Hours are:

Monday - Friday 7:30 am - 6:00 pm
Saturdays by appointment only

For an appointment, please call us at (919) 844-9166

House calls also available

For after-hours emergencies, please call (919) 781-5145

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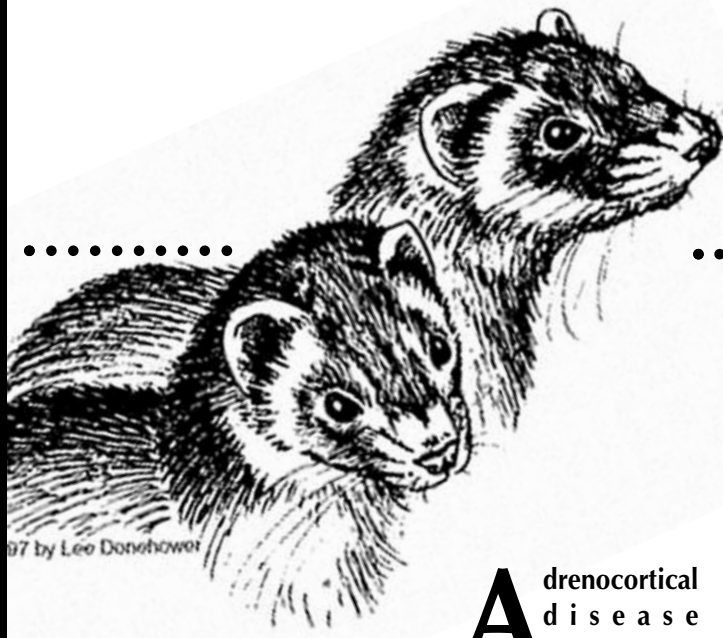
Important Ferret Health Update

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Adrenocortical disease (ACD) is a common malady affecting up to 70% of ferrets. ACD differs from Cushing's disease because the affected adrenal gland over-produces sex hormones, not cortisol. While the etiology of ACD is unknown, new evidence suggests that simply spaying or castrating a ferret may be the underlying cause. Delaying gonadectomy until adulthood only delays the onset of ACD.

This unique aspect of ferret physiology is just beginning to be understood. In the gonadectomized ferret, a lack of negative feedback by GnRH leads to persistently elevated LH which, in turn, induces adrenal gland hyperplasia. Over time, hyperplasia often progresses to adenoma or adenocarcinoma.

Work done by leading ferret veterinarians suggests that ferrets treated once a year with leuprolide acetate (Lupron) from puberty onward tend not to develop adrenocortical disease. It appears that Lupron administered annually in January or February effectively blocks

Preventing Adrenal Disease in the Ferret

the annual Spring LH surge, thereby preventing tumor induction. Beginning treatment at puberty is essential, and the ACD-preventive effects of Lupron treatment may be diminished if started later in life.

Avian and Exotic Animal Care recommends the leuprolide protocol for prevention of adrenal disease in ferrets. Ferrets under one year of age should receive 100-200 mcg of leuprolide acetate 30-day depot formulation IM between January and February, and annually thereafter. All healthy adult ferrets will be encouraged to follow the protocol, but clients must understand that the beneficial effects of annual leuprolide may be less than if instituted before puberty. The only potential side effect of Lupron treatment is pain at the injection site.

To discuss this protocol or refer a patient for preventive therapy, veterinarians are encouraged to contact our office, or have their clients call: (919) 844-9166

The Vets for Unusual Pets
Avian & Exotic Animal Care, P.A.



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