New Zealand Veterinary Journal ›
Te Hautaka Tākuta Kararehe o Aotearoa
Volume 53, 2005 - Issue 1

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Clinical Communication

Fatal levamisole toxicosis of captive kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*)

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Pages 84-86 | Received 20 Apr 2004, Accepted 19 Aug 2004, Published online: 18 Feb 2011

Cite this article https://doi.org/10.1080/00480169.2005.36474

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Abstract

CASE HISTORY: Nine of 24 captive kiwi treated with oral levamisole at a dose between 25–43 mg/kg showed signs of respiratory distress. Six died within 4 h of treatment and the remaining three made a full recovery within 24 h.

CLINICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL FINDINGS: Within 3–4 h of treatment, the affected birds had an elevated respiratory rate, mucoid nasal discharge and rapidly became comatose. Post mortem examination revealed accumulation of thick mucus in the oral cavity and trachea. There was severe pulmonary congestion and oedema and early bronchopneumonia in the lungs of five of the birds. In two birds, there was acute hepatic degeneration and necrosis and one bird had acute pancreatic degeneration and necrosis.

DIAGNOSIS: Acute levamisole toxicity.

CLINICAL RELEVANCE: Kiwi were acutely sensitive to levamisole toxicity at doses that are well within the safe range for domestic poultry. Levamisole should not be used as an anthelmintic in kiwi.

KEY WORDS:

Apterygiformes | kiwi | pulmonary oedema | anthelmintic | toxicity | levamisole

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Pat Davey and Evelyn Lupton of the Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences, Massey University, for technical assistance. This work was carried out with the financial support of the National Wildlife Surveillance Fund, Department of Conservation.

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