



# Diagnostic and Forensic Veterinary Pathology



Faculty of Veterinary Science

Fakulteit Veeartsenykunde  
Lefapha la Diseanse tša Bongakadiruiwa

Diagnostic and veterinary forensic pathology forms the bases of contemporary veterinary pathology forensic practices to deal with certain legal requirements involving diagnostic pathology on submitted animal mortalities especially in, but not limited to wildlife cases.

- Diagnostic pathology
- Criminal and insurance investigations
- Stock theft, poaching and fraud
- Unexplained mortality events
- Undergraduate & post graduate training

### **Forensic pathology of domestic animals and wildlife**

Among other things, forensic pathology provides conclusive evidence that can be used in a court of law to settle differences pertaining to disputes between insurance companies and their clients as well as in fraudulent insurance claims. Criminal investigations involving stock theft and poaching often need expert reports from veterinary pathologists to successfully convict suspects.

The Veterinary Pathology Section in the Faculty of Veterinary Science is in regular demand by industry for expert testimonials by its pathologists. The Section faces numerous challenges on a day to day basis practising diagnostic pathology on submitted animal mortalities. In recent years the demand for the application of forensic principles on especially wildlife cases has increased exponentially resulting from increases in commercial value and international trade of many species.

Many post mortal diagnostic cases are often the first line in identification of research questions. In high profile cases of large unexplained mortalities involving endangered species, the section is regularly requested to assist investigative forensic teams. Often the need for further research in certain fields is identified and pursued by postgraduate students guided by experts from the Pathology Section. The most recent example of such a project involved the investigation into mass mortalities of Nile crocodiles in the Kruger National Park and wild fish kills affecting natural aquatic systems in the country.

The Section of Pathology features prominently in continuing education of veterinary practitioners and undergraduate training in the field of diagnostic and forensic pathology. In 2015 the section hosted an international symposium on Forensic and Diagnostic Pathology of African Wildlife followed by a 3 day workshop. There is a high demand for skills in this field and annual workshops are planned for the future.

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