

**New Mexico Department of Agriculture  
Veterinary Diagnostic Services**

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**Case #:** 25-06898  
**Owner:** Santa Fe County Animal Control  
**ID:** 1218  
**Species:** Canine  
**Breed:** Shepherd NOS Cross/Mix

SANTA FE CNTY ANIMAL CONTROL  
SANTA FE COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL  
35 CAMINO JUSTICIA  
SANTA FE, NM 87508

**Received:** 03/05/25  
**Reported:** 03/13/25  
**Final Report**

## NECROPSY

The carcass presented frozen for postmortem examination was an adult, 41.0 pounds, reddish-brown, dog identified as "1218". The dog was listed as a male shepherd mixed breed dog on the submission form, but the dog was a spayed female dog that was most similar to an Australian kelpie. The dog had a green nylon collar with a blue "bone-shaped" tag that had "SF SUMMIT" and a 10-digit number printed on it. The dog had microchip #981020009559213. The dog was in good body condition with adequate body fat. There was severe postmortem decomposition with partial mummification. The ventral abdomen had been shaved with hair regrowth to approximately 1/2 the length of the normal hair coat. There was a 21 centimeter long scar on the midline of the ventral abdomen. The right and left eyes were severely shrunken into the orbits. There were small amounts (estimated 2-3 milliliters) of clotted blood in the mouth. There were 2 ulcers of the buccal mucosa on the left side and 3 ulcer of the buccal mucosa on the right side. The largest ulcer of the buccal mucosa was 1.0 x 0.8 centimeters. The spleen was absent. There was a 4 centimeter long segment of the greater curvature aspect of the pyloric antrum of the stomach that was sutured to the ventral abdominal body wall. The stomach was mostly empty except for very small amounts of hair and bile. There were 4, 1-2 centimeter long sutured incisions in the small intestine: 1 in the duodenum, 1 in the orad jejunum, 1 in the aborad jejunum, and 1 in the ileum. The small intestine was empty. The large intestine was mostly empty except for very small amounts of green, thick, and pasty feces that was mostly hair. There were no significant lesions in the trachea, esophagus, thyroid gland, lungs, heart, liver, pancreas, mesenteric lymph nodes, adrenal glands, kidneys, urinary bladder, skeletal muscle, or brain.

## HISTOPATHOLOGY

There is advanced postmortem decomposition in all of the organs examined.

There are multiple variably sized ulcers of the buccal mucosa. The lamina propria and submucosa beneath the ulcers contain variable amounts of nuclear debris, edema, fibrin, and degenerate leukocytes.

There are small numbers of mineralized tubules in the medulla of the kidneys.

There are no significant microscopic lesions in the trachea, lungs, heart, liver, spleen, thyroid gland, adrenal glands, skeletal muscle, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine, pancreas, mesenteric lymph nodes, urinary bladder, or brain.

## FINAL COMMENTS

There was no evidence of an infectious disease, trauma (intentional or accidental), neoplasia, or toxicosis that could have lead to death. However, the severe postmortem decomposition (also called autolysis) could have obscured subtle changes in the organs. The provided history indicates the dog was "found dead in home with 2 owners". If the dog was in a confined space without access to food or water, the dog most likely died of dehydration/starvation. The mineralization of the tubules in the medulla of the kidneys can be seen with dehydration. The blood in the mouth was probably the result of the oral ulcers. The oral ulcers were likely due to irritation from the dog biting/chewing on something hard, but the possibility that they could have been the result of metabolic abnormalities such as uremia (severe accumulation of nitrogenous waste products removed by the kidney) resulting from severe dehydration cannot be ruled out.

Dogs fairly commonly get neoplastic and nonneoplastic masses in their spleen, which require removal of the spleen. Gastropexy (suturing the stomach to the ventral body wall) is a common surgical procedure to correct and prevent gastric-dilatation volvulus (GDV or bloat). The dog recently had surgery with incisions in the small intestine. The reason for the surgery could not be determined due to the severe autolysis.

## CASE DIAGNOSIS

AUTOLYSIS

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Veterinary Pathologist

**Confidential report intended for individual/organization addressed. Results apply to samples as received.**

**End of Report**