

## Animal Health Trust

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Redmark Surgical Cradles

Tuesday, 17 December 2013

Thank you for your letter enquiring about my continued experience with the Redmark surgical cradles as used for radiographic positioning of small animals. I am very happy to provide this letter of commendation for you. As you know, I began working with the Redmark cradles in October 1987 when I was a radiologist at Cambridge University Veterinary School, and they quickly became indispensable in our policy of non-manual restraint of small animals for radiography. As you know, in 1992 I have moved to the Animal Health Trust and one of my first actions was to order a set of Redmark cradles for use in radiography here, too. In fact the original set, which are now over twenty years old, are still in perfect condition, and were joined some time ago by a second set. As a former Radiation Protection Adviser to about 50 veterinary practices I also found them to be very widely used for radiography and surgery in general practice.

My specific comments about them are as follows:-

- a) Radiolucency: they are radiolucent except for a faint radio-opaque band around the periphery. This is not a serious disadvantage as the animal may be positioned so that this artefact is not over the area of interest (e.g. for hip dysplasia assessment only the front half of the animal needs to be in the cradle).
- b) Lack of manual restraint: small animals are never held for radiography unless too ill to sedate (these usually lie still anyway!) or in severe respiratory distress. Perfectly-positioned hip dysplasia radiographs are easily performed under sedation or general anaesthetic. The animal's thorax and cranial abdomen are within the cradle, and the hind end protrudes. The hind legs are extended using tapes looped around the hocks and tied to hooks on the table end. A third tape around the stifles holds the femora parallel. A sandbag is placed over the sternum behind the elbows, to ensure that the front end of the dog is stable. The dogs remain still once positioned, allowing time for the radiograph to be obtained and examined, and the animal's position can then be adjusted if necessary.
- c) Ease of use: the cradles are lightweight and easy to use. The three sizes will support most animals – in narrow animals additional foam pads can be pushed down the sides. They are also deeper than other types of cradle, and hold the patient securely so they are less likely to struggle.

- d) Durability and hygiene: the cradles are very durable, having been dropped without chipping. They are easy to clean and despite intensive use look as good as new.
- e) Elimination of ties: ties are still needed in some cases, for instance if the hindlimbs need to be extended. In other cases we rely simply on sandbags if extra restraint is needed, although this is not always necessary.
- f) Efficiency: on the whole, the cradles are an invaluable part of our equipment without which we could not perform radiography so easily.

I am happy to recommend the Redmark cradles as they are an invaluable aid to radiation safety.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth Dennis".

Ruth Dennis MA VetMB DVR MRCVS DipECVDI  
*RCVS and European Recognised Specialist in Radiology*  
Head of Diagnostic Imaging, Centre for Small Animal Studies, AHT.