A case of severe malnutrition in a dog after two years of vegan feeding

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1. Because of persisting and recurring pruritus since puppy age, the first vet suspected a food allergy and recommended an animal protein free diet (=vegan diet) based on a blood allergy test, which the dog had been fed for two years. Recommended diet was composed of cooked potatoes (1 kg), carrots (750 g) and olive oil (3 tbs) without further mineral or vitamin supplementation (CP 8.5 g, EE 9.1 g, NFE 69.5 g, CF 4.3 g, Ca 134 mg and P 249 mg in % DM).

2. Additionally the dog had received 5 mg of prednisolone each day since about 9 months, before being presented to another vet.

3. Skin scrapings and trichoscopy: negative for dermatophytes and parasites
   Cytology: neutrophil granulocytes, macrophages and coccidoides bacteria
   Blood: low urea and leucocytes, increased triglycerides and calcium

4. Drugs:
   - Antibiotics for skin infections
   - Corticosteroids were tapered quickly (within 4 wks)

5. Dietary recommendation
   CP 41.1 g
   EE 13.1 g
   NFE 38.3 g
   CF 1.7 g
   Ca 585 mg
   P 460 mg
   (all in % DM)

   115 kcal ME/kg BW0.75

   Normal defecation, no more diarrhoea!

6. Pruritus slightly persisted, therefore protein sources (beef meat and eggs) were changed to fish two months after initial diet change and an additional desensitization was done (Rush therapy). Pruritus improved and up to now Abby is still in an overall very good health condition.

7. To conclude, feeding an unbalanced vegan diet to a predominantly carnivorous animal has severe negative impacts on health and body condition.
   Apparently, there is still a need for providing information on general nutritional requirements and recommendations for the correct management of food allergies and elimination diets.