

Submitting Samples to the UMN VDL for 'Elitest' ELISA Testing

High quality samples and carefully completed paperwork will help to ensure fast turnaround.



SPECIMEN TUBES:

For collecting blood samples, use silicone treated glass tubes with red or mottled red/grey rubber stopper caps. (Be aware that the latter, often called "tiger-tops," are serum-separator tubes which must be centrifuged prior to submitting to the lab.) The 13 x 100 mm size (1/2" diameter, 4" long) works whether collecting with a syringe or directly into the tube using a Vacutainer needle and holder. For submitting the serum, tubes can be either glass or plastic. Falcon™ brand 12 x 75 mm (3" long) polystyrene tubes are nice for serum as these have caps that are easily and quickly snapped open while holding the tube in one hand. Please do not submit samples in slim (pencil diameter) tubes or those less than 3" in length.

BLOOD DRAW:

A 3 ml draw is adequate and can be done using a disposable syringe or a double-ended Vacutainer needle with holder. In either case, use a new, sterile needle/syringe and specimen tube for each animal. If collecting with a syringe, blood must then be transferred immediately and carefully into a tube by inserting the needle through the rubber cap. While transferring, be aware that the tube has a vacuum and you want to avoid "splashing" which can cause red blood cells to burst. So try to direct the needle toward the inside wall of the tube, allowing blood to flow gently down the side. If red blood cells do burst, and this may be unavoidable, your serum will be pink or red. That's OK, but straw colored serum is the goal.

SERUM ONLY:

No blood clots! Submit only serum separated from clotted blood (1 ml is adequate). Your veterinarian can spin samples in a centrifuge to separate the clots, which must then be removed unless samples have been collected in serum-separator tubes. Alternatively, blood can be allowed to clot at room temperature in the red-top tubes (tubes upright) and then serum poured into a fresh tube. Serum may be refrigerated or frozen. *If samples have been frozen, be sure to note this on your submission form.*

LABELING:

Using a permanent marker so the ink won't smear when wet, number tubes 1 through XXX. This number should be dark, written with care so it's easy to read, and placed at the very top of the label (nearest the rubber stopper/cap) while the tube is held upright. Then, turning the tube on its side (horizontal), write the date drawn, the individual animal ID, and your last name. Organize tubes in numerical order, matching the sequence noted on your submission form.

PAPERWORK:

Use the "Ruminant Health Test Chart" submission form available at www.vdl.umn.edu. The form is screen-fillable, or you can print a copy from the website and complete it by hand. All information on the form must match the labels on the tubes, and the completed form should be placed in a Ziploc bag separate from the sample tubes. Submit under your veterinarian's name, noting whether blood was drawn by you or by the veterinarian. If no vet, leave that section blank. Do not include payment; the lab will bill you.



PACKING/SHIPPING:

Pack tubes carefully in a strong carton to avoid breakage ('Blood Tube Mailers' are available at no charge; see lab's website), enclosing absorbent material inside a leak-proof inner wrap. Tubes may be shipped in a horizontal position but be sure to keep them in numerical order. For highest quality samples, ship with a frozen gel pack and mail early in the week to avoid weekend layover. U.S. Priority Mail is fast and economical. Mark box with the words "Exempt Animal Specimens" and address to:

**University of Minnesota
Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
1333 Gortner Avenue
St Paul, MN 55108-1098
612-625-8787 — 800-605-8787**

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