

The following information was provided by Keith Poulsen, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, Director, Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (WVDL):

Operations Update and Guidelines for SARS-CoV-2 Testing at WVDL April 15, 2020

WVDL remains open and operating at near-normal status at this time. Please contact us at 1-800-608-8387 with questions about testing and necropsy diagnostic testing.

WVDL is able to provide SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic testing in animal species on a limited, case by case basis using the information below.

WVDL may not be able to provide all testing requested.

**Contact us with questions or testing needs.
SARS-CoV-2 is an OIE reportable disease**

WVDL is accredited by the American Association of Laboratory Veterinary Diagnosticians (AAVLD). At this time, AAVLD does not recommend routine or blanket testing for SARS-CoV-2 of any animal species in North America. AAVLD strongly encourages adherence to the CDC/USDA guidelines ([link here](#)) for testing on an individual, case-by-case basis, as described below.

All AAVLD laboratories have limited resources to maintain core animal health capacities while assisting our human health peers respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in people. SARS-CoV-2 testing of animals in large numbers will compete for, and diminish, resources available for the United States and Canada to respond to the pandemic in people.

Purpose for testing, a key element in the validation of diagnostic tests that is to establish diagnostic sensitivity and specificity, has not been determined for SARS-CoV-2 testing in animals. Routine testing of sick animals is not warranted unless there is an epidemiologic need as outlined below.

Involvement of the State Animal and Public Health Officials is critical for authorization of testing of an animal of any species. Justification for testing should be communicated to those officials in each state for a collaborative and highly targeted testing, when needed. Justification for testing may include:

- Common causes of the patient's clinical signs have been ruled out and the history strongly suggests exposure to SARS-CoV-2.
- Atypical pattern of disease suggesting a novel pathogen in a mass care situation, such as an animal shelter. The request for diagnostics should include a preliminary rule out of common causes of illness.

- Atypical pattern of disease suggesting SARS-CoV-2 infection of recently imported animals. Appropriate diagnostic should be used for preliminary rule out of common causes of illness.
- Testing is part of approved research projects gathering scientific information to better understand if and how pets could be affected by SARS-CoV-2 and help clarify the role, if any, of pets in human COVID-19. The project should have approved biosafety and animal care and use protocols.

Further guidance for veterinarians: COVID-19 is an OIE notifiable disease and must be reported to DATCP (ATCP 10 Appendix A). All presumptive positive results require confirmation by the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratories. Because animal-to-human transmission has not been observed in the current outbreak, testing for SARS-CoV-2 should be limited to animals that meet one or more of the four criteria above. Routine testing without a defined purpose can hamper the national and international response and may cause harm (such as abandonment) to the welfare of pets.

- There is no specific treatment for animals diagnosed with a SARS-CoV-2 infection so testing will not alter clinical management.
- Human to animal transmission events are believed to be rare.
- There is no evidence, or belief by human and animal health officials, that animals play a significant role in infection of people with SARS-CoV-2.
 - Disease prevention measures appropriate for sick animals should be implemented regardless of the decision to test or if the animal is found to be infected. These are routine best practice for animals with a known or suspected infectious disease; owners should be educated to: Follow routine infection control practices (hand hygiene, appropriate waste disposal, etc).
 - Restrict movement of the animal outside the home while it is ill.
 - Minimize contact within the home to the ill animal.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and please contact us at 1-800-608-8387 with questions.