

## Collection and Submission of a Nasal Swab for Equine Herpes or Influenza Diagnostic Testing

### Purpose:

The proper swab specimens PCR or Virus Isolation must be submitted to rule-in/rule-out Equine herpesvirus or Equine influenza. Swabs must be kept cold and wet, virus is unlikely to survive if dry swabs are submitted. unlikely to survive if dry swabs are taken. Be sure to use only viral--not bacterial--transport media.

### Equipment and supplies:

- 16" (40 cm) cotton-tipped or dacron-tipped swab (note: a standard uterine swab can also be used).
- 5-10 ml plastic centrifuge tube (with leak-proof cap) containing sufficient viral transport media to cover the swab tip. Note—If no transport media is available, sterile saline (for contact lens wearers) will work as long as the specimen is kept chilled!
- Proper shipping bags and containers

### Collection procedure:

- Restrain horse.
- Collecting specimen: the swab should be passed at least ~8-10 inches via the ventral meatus of the left/right nasal chamber into the horse's nasopharynx, the swab rotated to pick up and absorb respiratory secretions. Make sure to avoid the false nostril in passing the swab.
- As a rule, only one nostril needs to be sampled.
- Aseptically cut or break off the end of the swab and submerge it in the transport medium.
- Submission-- Be sure to label your specimens clearly with the name of the horse, date of sampling and type of specimen. Fill out the accession form completely.
- Transport as soon as possible to the laboratory for testing. Sample must be sent with enough icepacks to keep it cool during transport.

### Notes:

- Care must be taken to avoid cross-contamination when taking multiple samples.
- Consider all waste material including gloves and swab stems as infectious waste.
- A swab can be used for detection of other equine respiratory pathogens as well such as equine adenovirus. Please be sure to indicate all potential pathogens you may suspect on the accession sheet.
- Use of viral transport medium is not recommended for swabs submitted for *Streptococcus equi* PCR due to the presence of antibiotics in the medium.
- Tips for success:
  - Make every effort to get the swabs on the first day of clinical signs
  - Use enough transport medium to keep the swab thoroughly wet during transport.