

## UKVDL Guidelines for Collection and Submission of a Nasal Swab for Equine Herpesvirus or Equine Influenza Virus Diagnostic Testing

### Purpose:

The proper swab specimens for PCR or Virus Isolation must be submitted to rule-in/rule-out Equine herpesvirus or Equine influenza. Swabs must be kept cold and wet; viruses are unlikely to survive if dry swabs are submitted. Be sure to use viral transport media. Gel, Amies, or charcoal media are not recommended. For Virus Isolation, the samples must be received by the lab within 48 hours of collection.

### Equipment and supplies:

- 16" (40 cm) Swab (synthetic swabs are preferred) (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 can be used.)
- Proper shipping bags and containers

### Collection procedure:

- Restrain horse.
- Collecting specimen: The swab should be passed about 8-10 inches into the ventral meatus of the horse's nasopharynx. Rotate the swab 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: 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. *Samples must be sent with enough ice packs 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 such as equine adenovirus. Please be sure to indicate all potential pathogens you may suspect on the accession sheet.
- Some Equine Influenza and Equine Herpesvirus types may not be easily cultured by virus isolation.
- Use of viral transport medium is not recommended for swabs submitted for culture of *Streptococcus equi* and other bacteria 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.