

## SARS-CoV-2 (causative agent for human COVID-19) Testing in Animals

This document describes procedures and criteria for testing pets, livestock, and other animals for SARS-CoV2, the viral agent of COVID-19, in California. These protocols have been jointly developed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Animal Health Branch (AHB) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Veterinary Public Health Section (VPHS) to provide guidance for veterinarians considering SARS-CoV2 infection in patients. These protocols are consistent with the positions of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). At this time, the available empirical evidence does not support domestic animals as a source of SARS-COV-2 infection for humans. Therefore, *testing of animals for SARS-CoV2 may be conducted only under specified circumstances in order to conserve resources for human testing.*

### Animal Testing Guidance:

- Routine testing of animals for SARS-CoV-2 is not informative or recommended (see references below)
- Testing may be considered under the following circumstances:
  - A. In consultation with local public health when **all** the following occur:
    1. The animal has current signs of clinical illness, including a documented fever, and
    2. The animal had direct contact with a symptomatic confirmed COVID-19 case-patient in the two weeks preceding the animal's onset of illness, and
    3. The animal's test results have direct implications for potential ongoing risk of disease transmission to susceptible humans.
  - B. To confirm positive results from tests conducted at private, academic, or other unofficial laboratories
    1. Laboratories and submitting veterinarians should report results to the CDPH Veterinary Public Health Section ([vetph@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:vetph@cdph.ca.gov), 916-552-9740) within one working day to coordinate confirmatory testing.
  - C. When in the opinion of local, state, or federal public health officials the animal presents a unique opportunity to gain further insight into SARS-CoV2 epidemiology
- Official sampling of animals approved for testing will be performed by a trained State or Federal veterinarian or USDA accredited veterinarian per USDA guidelines: [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/one\\_health/downloads/faq-sapho-on-companion-animal-testing.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/one_health/downloads/faq-sapho-on-companion-animal-testing.pdf). Front-line testing of such samples will occur at the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory (CAHFS) with duplicate samples going to the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory. The CAHFS laboratory will report results to CDFA, which will inform CDPH-VPHS and help with the interpretation of the results.
  - Any animal for which official testing yields a positive result will be subject to isolation and management under the direction of the local public health officer, appropriate animal control agency, and the State Public Health Veterinarian.
- Veterinarians who wish to discuss possible testing for a patient under their care should contact the Communicable Disease program at their local public health department to initiate consultation <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCLHO/Pages/LHD-Communicable-Disease-Contact-List.aspx>

**Related References:**

United States Department of Agriculture:

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/one\\_health/downloads/fag-public-on-companion-animal-testing.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/one_health/downloads/fag-public-on-companion-animal-testing.pdf)

Centers for Disease Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/interim-guidance-managing-people-in-home-care-and-isolation-who-have-pets.html>

American Veterinary Medical Association:

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19>

IDEXX:

<https://www.idexx.com/en/veterinary/reference-laboratories/idexx-sars-cov-2-covid-19-realpcr-test/>