

Request for Information for U.S. Laboratories Engaged in the Testing of Animals for SARS CoV-2

The United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services division is seeking information on diagnostic laboratories in the United States actively testing animals or planning to test animals for infection by SARS CoV-2 that causes the disease COVID-19 in humans. USDA APHIS seeks to identify U.S. laboratories including but not limited to public (e.g. university), private (e.g. commercial), or institutional (e.g. governmental) facilities performing testing for SARS CoV-2 in any animal species for nucleic acid, antibody, viral antigen, or any other means of determining infection by this agent.

If a laboratory intends to publically report the findings of the detection or susceptibility of SARS CoV-2 in an animal species or is testing animals for SARS-CoV-2 other than subsequent to an intentional exposure as part of a controlled research study in a laboratory, then the laboratory should respond to this request for information.

The emergence of SARS CoV-2 as a public health threat and its subsequent ability to infect select animal species has raised concerns among both public and animal health authorities. SARS CoV-2 may also possess zoonotic potential, making reporting its detection of even greater importance to public health. USDA APHIS Veterinary Services is compelled to report initial detections occurring in the United States in new animal species not previously reported to the OIE (*Office International des Epizooties* now known as the World Organization for Animal Health), an intergovernmental organization coordinating, supporting and promoting animal disease control. Moreover, detection of novel disease agents in animal species may have impact on the trade status of the United States. Importantly, detections of SARS CoV-2 in novel animal species should be confirmed by the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory before results are released to the public. Release of such information should be closely coordinated with State Animal and Public Health Officials, Federal Animal Health Officials, industry officials who may be affected, and the OIE.

UDSA in collaboration with other governmental agencies seeks to provide laboratories with clear and concise guidance on testing for SARS CoV-2 in animals, including a case definition, accepted experimental protocols, test reporting notifications to State and Federal officials, and other general guidance and opportunities relating to testing for this agent.

USDA is asking laboratories to provide the following information:

- The laboratory or laboratories physical address at the site of testing.
- The physical mailing address, email address, and telephone number for a point of contact for the laboratory.
- The type(s) of SARS CoV-2 testing being performed, including but not limited to:
 - PCR for viral nucleic acid;
 - Viral antigen;
 - Host antibodies generated against the virus;

- Viral culture; or
- Any other means of determining the presence of the viral nucleic acids or antigens such as gene or proteome arrays.
- A spreadsheet will be provided to each laboratory to submit the species and number of animals tested, the state of origin and the types of tests performed.

Please submit all responses electronically to Dr. Christina Loiacono at Christina.M.Loiacono@usda.gov

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0579-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 0.10 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collected.