



## **SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19): Animal Testing and the Animal Health Laboratory**

### **AHL now offers a PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).**

AHL is now offering a PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). Testing must be pre-approved by the Office of the CVO of Ontario, as AHL is supportive of the CCVO and CFIA position statements on testing of animals for SARS-CoV-2:

### **The Council of Chief Veterinary Officers' Position Statement on testing of animals for SARS-CoV-2 states:**

- Public health testing must be the priority to protect human health.
- The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic is driven by person-to-person transmission with current data suggesting that the risk for human infection through animal contact is low.
- Testing animals for SARS-CoV-2 may consume the personal protective equipment and supplies needed for safe sampling and testing in people.
- In general, test results will not change the clinical management of the animal or change the recommended measures to manage the potential risks if an animal tests positive.
- There is the risk of stigmatizing animals that test positive for SARS-CoV-2 which could result in damaging the human-animal bond or threatening animal welfare.

### **Under the following circumstances, testing may be considered:**

- Testing is deemed to contribute to advancing the understanding of the epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 in animals.
- Testing will inform the need for public health and animal health disease control activities that may alter the current recommended measures to manage potential risks.
- There is an animal health concern based on clinical signs not explained by other etiologies as assessed by diagnostic procedures performed by a veterinarian, AND there is a need which will inform public health action.
  - The animal has had contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.
- In specific circumstances, an asymptomatic animal that could have been exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 virus may be tested if it is:
  - part of a cluster of animals showing compatible clinical signs
  - part of an endangered species
  - in a special situation such as therapy animals in close contact with vulnerable people.

If your need for SARS-CoV-2 testing meets one of the appropriate circumstances, please contact the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer of Ontario to discuss your request: **OMAFRA: 1-877-424-1300** [ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca)

Only after permission is granted can AHL proceed with testing for SARS-CoV-2. Please contact AHL ([ahlinfo@uoguelph.ca](mailto:ahlinfo@uoguelph.ca) 1-519-824-4120 ext 54530) to discuss the submission and transportation of the sample. Please note there are specific requirements for sending these samples to the laboratory that must be discussed

ahead of time. For the biosafety of all, AHL MUST know when these samples are to arrive (courier tracking number required).

Jim Fairles AHL Client Services. [ahlinfo@uoguelph.ca](mailto:ahlinfo@uoguelph.ca) 519-824-4120 ext 54530.

## References

1. Council of Chief Veterinary Officers Position Statement: SARS-COV-2 testing in animals:  
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/council-of-chief-vet-officers-p-s-testing-animals-sars-cov-2>
2. CFIA - Interim Guidance For Laboratories Testing Animals for SARS-COV-2  
<https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/update-interim-guidance-laboratories-testing-animals-sars-cov-2>