

COLLECTION OF SWAB SAMPLES FOR AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI) SURVEILLANCE

Please Note: In collecting and submitting samples, identify the Premises precisely. All submission forms should include a Premises ID Number. If you do not know the number, request one from the RI DEM Division of Agriculture (DAG at 401-222-2781). If a Premises ID number is unavailable, on all submission forms record the street address where the samples were taken. (Note: That address may differ from the grower's mailing address.)

- ❑ The preferred specimens for the real-time RT-PCR (rRT-PCR) assay and virus isolation are tracheal or oropharyngeal swabs from gallinaceous birds, such as chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, pheasants, quail, etc. For other birds, such as ducks, geese, etc., cloacal swabs are preferred. Cloacal swabs may be tested by rRT-PCR or by virus isolation.
- ❑ The preferred types of swabs are cotton tipped swabs with wooden sticks or dacron polyester tipped swabs. Do not use calcium alginate swabs as they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing. Swabs should be placed in brain-heart-infusion broth (BHI) tubes or viral transport media.
- ❑ Swabs can be pooled as follows:
 - Tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs: 11 birds/tube
 - Cloacal swabs: 11 birds/tube
 - DO NOT POOL cloacal and tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs together.
 - Swabs from multiple avian species must be collected and pooled separately.
- ❑ Each swab should be vigorously swirled to dislodge contents into the medium, and the swab should be squeezed against the walls of the tube before removal. The specimens should be kept chilled (wet ice or cold gel packs) and shipped to the laboratory by overnight courier. If samples cannot be sent until the following day, keep them refrigerated overnight. Do not place them in a freezer.
- ❑ If differential diagnosis is desired for diseases such as infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) or *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, the following tissues should be collected and shipped on wet ice or cold gel packs:
 - Lung
 - Spleen
 - Brain
 - Trachea
- ❑ Pack specimens in a bag or other container to prevent leakage. Use absorbent material.
- ❑ Put samples in a sturdy outer container (box) for shipping. It does not have to be a certified shipping box.
- ❑ Write the farm name and Premises ID on the side of the box of samples (not on the lid).
- ❑ Submit a completed submission form which includes a Premises ID.

The RI DEM Division of Agriculture reserves the right to amend the above mentioned requirements for Avian Influenza with the goal of any changes still being to prevent, contain and eliminate the disease. Changes to the general guidelines of the protocol

may result from information including, but not limited to, virus strain, pathogenicity, morbidity and mortality, movement of birds and products, and additional epidemiological information obtained as a result of avian influenza investigations.