



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
COMMISSIONER NICOLE “NIKKI” FRIED

**Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)
and Florida Department of Health (FDOH)**

SARS-Cov2 (COVID-19) Animal Testing Guidance

April 24, 2020

Dear Practitioner:

Currently, there is no evidence that pets or livestock can transmit COVID-19 to people, and routine animal testing is not recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), nor the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) concur with these national recommendations and do not recommend general screening tests for the companion animal population.

In rare circumstances, an animal may be tested with authorization of the FDACS State Veterinarian, in concurrence with the FDOH Public Health Veterinarian, and the USDA. Testing of an animal at any laboratory requires prior approval, and will be considered under the following conditions:

- The test is requested by an attending veterinarian for a cat, dog or ferret,
- The animal has been in a household with a confirmed human case of COVID-19 and is showing clinical signs consistent with an upper respiratory infection (coughing, nasal discharge, respiratory signs, or other unexplained illness), and
- The animal has been tested and found negative for common causes of the presenting illness

In addition, threatened or endangered nonhuman primates or other species in zoos or other facilities will be considered for testing on a case-by-case basis.

Researchers enrolling animals in coronavirus2 studies should follow standard protocols and coordinate with the FDACS State Veterinarian and FDOH State Public Health Veterinarian.

Veterinarian Authorization:

- Once the decision is made to test, the State Veterinarian and Public Health Veterinarian will authorize and designate a state-appointed veterinarian, USDA accredited veterinarian, or Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician (FADD) to collect the sample using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) consistent with recommendations from: <http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendiaVet.html>.
- Sample collection methods will be verified with guidance on the sample submission.

Veterinarians should consider these actions at their facilities:

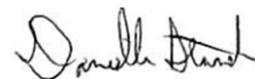
- Curbside medicine: The building is closed to clients who remain in their cars while pets are taken in and out by staff, and discussions about care are conducted over the phone.
- Consider telemedicine appointments for established clients with valid veterinarian-client-patient-relationships, when medically appropriate.
- Using temporary measures to mark out 6-foot distances to follow CDC guidelines on [How to Protect Yourself](#) in the lobby or exam rooms.

For further information or to see if a case qualifies to be tested, please contact the State Veterinarian's office at (850) 410-0900 or RAD@FDACS.gov, or the Florida Public Health Veterinarian Office at (850) 245-4117 or (850) 245-4401.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Short, D.V.M
State Veterinarian/Division Director



Danielle Stanek, D.V.M
Public Health Veterinarian
Florida Department of Health

Useful References

FDACS:

- [Bronson Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory Testing Procedures](#)

United States Department of Agriculture FAQ on companion animal testing:

- https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/one_health/downloads/faq-public-on-companion-animal-testing.pdf

AVMA:

- <https://www.avma.org>
- <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/testing-animals-sars-cov-2>.

University of Florida:

- <https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/2020/03/30/new-important-covid-19-information-for-animal-shelters/>;
- <https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/covid-19-resources/>.

FVMA:

- <https://fvma.org/>
- <https://fvma.org/coronavirus-and-your-practice/>

CDC:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#covid19-animals>;
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/animals.html>;
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/interim-guidance-managing-people-in-home-care-and-isolation-who-have-pets.html>.