WVDL Winter Newsletter

January 2026

Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Message from the Director

Happy New Year from WVDL! We hope you had a good holiday season and were able to spend time with family. I have to admit, I was not too sad to send the kids back to school after two weeks.

Thanks for taking the time to read our quarterly newsletter. I am very proud of the work our team accomplished last quarter, and we will be busy for the rest of winter. Surveillance programs for influenza will continue, and we are not far from migration season starting up again. Our variable winter weather has been hard on calves,

and we expect to see more samples come to WVDL. Please let us know if you need to restock testing media or shipping materials.

A few things I would like to highlight from this issue include price increases for FY27 starting in July 2026, changes to EIA submissions, the national milk testing strategy in Wisconsin (spoiler alert), and an interesting case study from Dr. Don Sockett.

I am looking forward to working with our stakeholders and clients over the next few months on state and federal advocacy, outreach, and clinical cases. Please reach out to our teams in Madison and Barron. We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Holiday Lab Closure for Martin Luther King Jr Day

WVDL (both Madison and Barron locations) will be closed this coming Monday, January 19, 2026, in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. Please plan accordingly for this interruption in shipping and testing. There will be no sample receiving or testing on Monday (1/19/2026). Regular business will resume Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

Important Information from DATCP

HPAI Submission Reminder

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (WVDL) want to remind veterinarians and poultry owners about the importance of proper laboratory submission. When submitting carcasses or samples to WVDL, it is important to choose the correct submission form and to contact WVDL prior to submission if there are any questions. Submission forms and supply forms may be found on our website: https://www.wvdl.wisc.edu/submission-and-order-forms/. When completing your submission form, please include all necessary and relevant information and ensure that the form is legible. When submission forms are not filled out completely, samples may be held as the laboratory works to gather the necessary information. This can cause a delay in testing and reporting.

A complete submission form should include:

- Accurate contact information in case additional information is needed
- Purpose of testing (i.e. routine health testing or disease investigation)
- A complete description of clinical signs, number of mortalities, and time frame of illness
- Number of animals in the herd/flock and their current health status
- Management practices including housing, environment, and rations
- Any vaccinations or treatments
- For veterinary submissions, an assessment of the case and differentials being considered
- Any additional information that is relevant to the case

This information is used to assess the likelihood for specific diseases and is used to determine the priority order for testing, and laboratory precautions to ensure safety of staff. By providing all requested information with your sample submission, you are giving the diagnosticians the best chance to obtain timely results that may in turn help to inform your treatment or management decisions.

To report clinical signs suspicious of foreign animal disease and/or significant increases in mortality, visit the DATCP Animal Disease Reporting website.

Client Services

WVDL has approved a 3.5% testing fee increase for fiscal year 2027, which starts on July 1, 2026. This fee adjustment will affect most of the WVDL test offerings and is based on increases in operational costs, including consumables, equipment maintenance, and shipping fees.

Fees for bottle necropsy and production animal necropsy testing were assessed and a need for cost adjustments above the 3.5% was identified to better reflect the costs of performing thorough

diagnostic workups under the cap charge structure. New pricing, as of July 1, 2026, will be as follows:

	Bottle Necropsy	Production Animal Necropsy
In-State	$145	$170
Out-of-State	$210	$255

All necropsy testing fees will continue to provide the same comprehensive workup, which includes gross evaluation, histopathology (H&E and special stains), and most in-house testing (fecal, culture, MIC, PCR).

All other pathology test fees will align with the 3.5% increase.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to the WVDL should you have questions about pricing and/or testing.

Bacteriology

Culture of Salmonella from Avian Environmental Samples at the Barron Laboratory

The Barron Laboratory is authorized by the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) to identify *Salmonella* in environmental samples. To ensure sample setup is completed within 5 days of collection, as defined by the NPIP Program Standards, **all samples should be sent directly to our laboratory at 1521 Guy Avenue, Barron, WI 54812**. We recommend utilizing WVDL's shipping program through UPS for discounted rates and reliable service. Additionally, the test methodology performed meets the FDA's Safe Egg Final Rule requirement for the identification of *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) in poultry houses. To provide salmonella surveillance to Wisconsin's entire poultry industry, both veterinarians as well as poultry owners are welcome to submit samples.

To ensure timely and appropriate testing, include a completed Avian Environmental Submission Form, with the appropriate testing selected, alongside all samples. The three test offerings are listed below in greater detail:

Test Request Options:

1.*Salmonella* Identification (isolation, grouping, serotyping); Complete *Salmonella* serovar identification includes:

- Test 1: *Salmonella* Culture - $20.74. If negative, no additional costs are accrued.
- Test 2: *Salmonella* "O" Grouping - $31.14, at minimum. If *Salmonella* spp. are isolated, NPIP Program Standards require somatic antigen identification of 3-5 colonies ($10.38/isolate).
- Test 3: *Salmonella* Serotyping - $32.82/isolate. If isolate morphology and grouping indicate the presence of multiple *Salmonella* serovars multiple serotyping charges will apply.

2. Salmonella Culture ONLY (isolation, grouping); Partial *Salmonella* serovar identification includes:

- Test 1: *Salmonella* Culture - $20.74. If negative, no additional costs are accrued.
- Test 2: *Salmonella* "O" Grouping - $31.14, at minimum. If *Salmonella* spp. are isolated, NPIP Program Standards require somatic antigen identification of 3-5 colonies ($10.38/isolate).

3. Egg Rule Monitoring (SE isolation, grouping); Complete *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) identification includes:

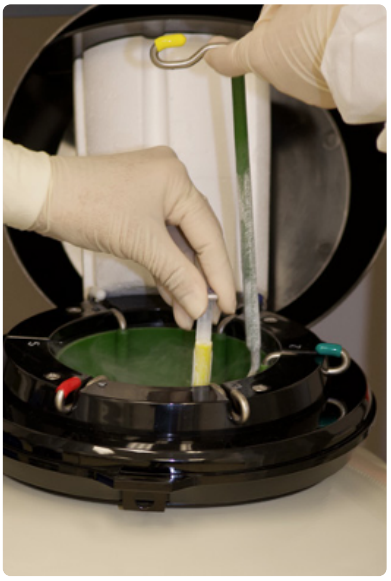
- Test 1: *Salmonella* Culture - $20.74. If negative, no additional costs are accrued.
- Test 2: *Salmonella* "O" Grouping - $31.14, at minimum. If *Salmonella* spp. are isolated, NPIP Program Standards require somatic antigen identification of 3-5 colonies ($10.38/isolate). If Group D *Salmonella* serovars are not identified, no further testing is necessary, and results will indicate that SE was not isolated.
- Test 3: *Salmonella* Serotyping - $98.46, at minimum ($32.82/isolate). NPIP requires all Group D *Salmonella* isolates (which includes SE) to be serotyped and a charge per isolate will apply.

*Note: Due to WVDL's adherence to the NPIP Program Standard Requirements ALL submissions, regardless of testing requested, will accrue *Salmonella* Serotyping charges for each Group D *Salmonella* isolated.

**For all test requests - identification may require confirmation by NVSL which may delay result reporting and accrue additional fees.

Please direct any questions to the Barron Laboratory at 715-637-3151. Note, the above prices and terms are the most current cost for testing but are subject to change. For the most current and up to date prices, please visit the WVDL "Test and Fees" webpage.

Molecular Diagnostics



Update to PCR Submission Requirements for Semen Samples - Effective March 1, 2026

What's changing to the submission procedures for PCR testing?

- Submissions requesting *Mycoplasmopsis bovis* PCR and additional PCR assays **no longer require separate submission forms or two sets of straws**.

Multiple PCR assays can now be performed on **the same set of straws**, regardless of the number of PCR tests requested per sample.

- **Partially extended as new semen specimen type,** in addition to **raw (undiluted), and extended semen**

Portal submissions: When creating a submission through the portal, select the correct semen specimen type—**Raw (undiluted), Partially Extended, or Extended**. This selection is important, as it determines the **processing method used by the laboratory prior to testing**.

- **Shipping for PCR testing may** now be shipped **overnight** either:
  - Frozen on **liquid nitrogen**, or
  - Frozen in a **shipping container with ice packs**

- If samples require referral testing; please bundle those samples separately from samples that have tested conducted at WVDL.

What remains the same

- Samples requiring **culture testing** (viral or bacterial) must still be submitted on **separate submission forms** with separate samples from samples requesting PCR.
- Semen straw requirements for processed (extended) semen:
  - Four---- 0.25cc straws or
  - Two---- 0.5cc straws

Please ensure all submissions comply with these updated guidelines starting March 1, 2026. If you have any questions regarding submission requirements or shipping, contact the laboratory for assistance.

Pathology

Abomasal Bloat in Dairy Calves

Recently, WVDL received tissue samples from 1–2-week-old dairy calves that died of abomasal bloat. Severe abomasitis was confirmed both grossly and microscopically. *Clostridium perfringens* type A was found in the abomasal contents of affected calves. The dairy operation milks ~2,300 Holstein cows and raises all its calves. The bloat issue started in June 2025 and has continued for the past seven months. Since June, 5-10% of the calves have developed abomasal bloat. Many of the affected calves (~50%) had recurrent bloat episodes. The case fatality rate was 50% even though calves were treated with oral procaine penicillin G and given I.V. flunixin meglumine.

The dairy feeds 2 quarts of first-milking colostrum (Brix score ≥25%) from a nipple bottle within 2 hours of birth followed by two additional 2-quart feedings given 10 and 18 hours after birth. Blood samples were collected from 2–4-day old calves with the serum evaluated for transfer of passive immunity (TPI) by Brix refractometry. The herd TPI results are better than the consensus national standards for TPI (1).

Calves are fed 3-quarts of a commercial milk replacer twice a day from a 3-quart bottle and nipple. The milk replacer contains no antibiotics, but it does contain lasalocid. The milk replacer is fed at 13.5% total solids. The WVDL has evaluated numerous colostrum and milk replacer samples and determined that the liquid feed diet was consistent (<1% variation in total solids) with total bacterial counts of less than 10,000 cfu/ml for both the colostrum and milk replacer solutions. A detailed cleaning and sanitation audit using an adenosine triphosphate (ATP) luminometer found no cleanliness issues with calf feeding and colostrum collection equipment as well as the calf raising pens. The milk replacer mixing and feeding temperatures were verified to be correct. Also, calves were fed at the same time each day with an interval of 12 hours between feedings. The dairy uses city, chlorinated drinking water that exceeds the minimal EPA standards for water quality. All the water hoses, mixing tank gaskets and valves, water buckets as well as the calf feeding nipples were replaced but this did not reduce the incidence of abomasal bloat episodes.

The dairy operation produces their own straw which is used for bedding material. Farm personnel had found straw in the reticulorumen from every calf that died of abomasal bloat (~20-25 calves). The abomasal bloat problem started in June when the dairy operation started using a different batch of straw for bedding. Bedding samples were sent to the WVDL for *C. perfringens* culture. *C. perfringens* was found in the straw bale samples and from straw harvested from the reticulorumen during on-farm necropies. Molecular diagnostics have determined that the *C. perfringens* isolates are type A. WVDL veterinarians have hypothesize that the reticulorumen fluid is the source constantly inoculating the abomasum with *C. perfringens* thereby providing the *C. perfringens* that led to the abomasal bloat problem. The dairy operation is exploring options which include a different source of straw, replacing straw as the bedding material, or feeding a probiotic that inhibits the growth of *C. perfringens* in the reticulorumen.

(1)Lombard, J. N., Urie, F. Garry, S. Godden, J. Quigley, T. Earleywine, S. McGuirk, D. Moore, M. Branan, M. Chamorro, G. Smith, C. Shively, D. Catherman, D. Haines, A.J. Heinrichs, R. James, J. Maas, and K. Sterner. 2020. Consensus recommendations on calf-and herd-level passive immunity in dairy calves in the United States. J. Dairy Sci. 103:7611-7624. https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2019-17955.

Clinical case correlate written by: D. C. Sockett DVM, MS, Ph.D. Diplomate ACVIM-LA

Serology

REMINDER: Changes to WVDL's Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) Services & Submissions

Starting in January of 2026, the cost for EIA test requests submitted via the paper Federal VS Form 10-11 is increasing to $11.22 per sample. Electronic submissions via Global Vet Link (GVL) or the APHIS Veterinary Services Process Streaming (VSPS) will remain at $9.22 per sample. Please contact the Barron Laboratory at 715-637-3151, if you have any questions.

The VSPS system provided by APHIS is free to use, please click here for more information: Using the VSPS System

To find more information on Global Vet Links (GVL) services, please click here: Streamlined Animal Health Compliance Solutions | GlobalVetLink

---

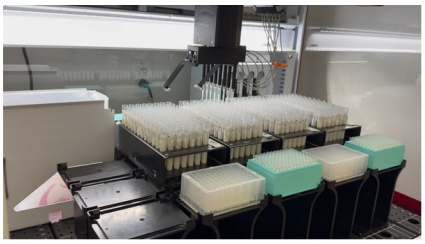
Virology

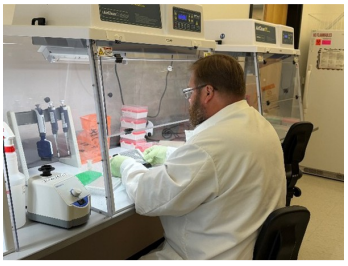
Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) WVDL Update

Since January 1, 2025, WVDL has tested over 1,124 avian and 38,396 mammal samples by IAV PCR and IAV antibody ELISA for bovine milk samples. The processing and testing of this high number of samples has been made possible by the collaboration of individuals and teams at WVDL. The Sample Receiving and Processing team sends out over 5,600 prelabeled tubes to Milk Quality Labs monthly to then return bulk tank milk samples to WVDL for testing. Once they arrive, samples are sorted, logged in and pipetted into 96 well plates for IAV PCR and ELISA testing utilizing an automated pipettor robot to pipette ~ 400 samples at a time.

Samples in 96 well plates are then extracted for RNA and run by PCR efficiently with the use of additional semi-automated equipment. WVDL teams embraced this growth opportunity to pave the way for long-term high-capacity testing for the state of Wisconsin.

On December 14, 2025, DATCP announced the first detection of HPAI in dairy cattle in Wisconsin. This was identified at WVDL through National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS) surveillance samples. No sick cows or sick people were reported. The strain was sequenced as D1.1, likely due to a wild bird introduction. More information is needed to determine the definitive source.
https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/HPAIDetectedWIDairyHerdDodgeCo.aspx





Contact US

Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory Providing You With Reliable Results and Exceptional Customer Service

Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory - Madison
445 Easterday Lane
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-262-5432
Toll Free: 800-608-8387
Fax: 608-504-2594

Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory - Barron
1521 E. Guy Avenue
Barron, WI 54812
Phone: 715-637-3151
Toll Free: 800-771-8387
Fax: 715-449-5052
Email: info@wvdl.wisc.edu
Website: https://www.wvdl.wisc.edu/

Location: 445 Easterday Lane, Madison, WI, USA
Phone: 1.800.608.8387
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinVeterinaryDiagnosticLaboratory/
Twitter: @wvdl_lab

WVDL

Please visit our website for more information: https://www.wvdl.wisc.edu/

Contact Subscribe