

# WVDL Spring Newsletter

May 2026



## Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

### Message from the Director

Greetings from WVDL! Spring planting is in full swing, and it is great to see the flowers blooming. Thank you for taking the time to read our quarterly newsletter. Our diagnostic and professional services teams are busy, and we continue to monitor global current events for their impact on the animal agriculture industries we serve.



Changes to USDA and DATCP testing requirements for highly pathogenic influenza in dairy cattle for interstate movement or movement to a show or sale will be important to note. Testing costs, or the lack thereof, will also change depending on the state of

origin for moving cattle. We are in the process of providing feedback to USDA and NAHLN to help shape surveillance testing logistics and will keep everyone posted. Speaking of surveillance, Wisconsin reduced the frequency of surveillance for the National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS) to all bulk tanks every other month. We don't yet have the medium- and long-term plans for NMTS, but we are providing feedback and maintaining capacity and readiness.

To pool, or not to pool? That is the question. I want to revisit this topic and give the most succinct answer possible: Unknown. Call WVDL for advice on a cost-effective strategy. The reason I say this, aside from enjoying regular calls with clients, is that we commonly see pooled testing requests for herds with unknown or suspected low prevalence of the disease du jour, which lead to multiple detections and the need for more testing. We also receive many requests for pooled testing that we have not validated, and we see frustrated clients when we need to put disclaimers on results or are unable to perform pooled testing. Validation for pooled or population testing is critical, so we know how to interpret a *negative result*. Detected is detected, no doubt about it, but pooling can drastically change a test's sensitivity, so it is difficult to know how to interpret a *negative result* in a non-validated pooled test. WVDL lives by our tagline, which includes "reliable results," so our diagnosticians are always very particular about our work to ensure submitters always have the best possible results.

Save the date! Thursday, December 3rd, 2026, for WVDL's Annual Bovine Germplasm Export Meeting.

Keith Poulsen, Director



## Memorial Holiday Lab Closure

The WVDL (both Madison & Barron locations) will be closed on **Monday, May 25th, 2026**, in observance of the Memorial Day Holiday. Please plan appropriately for this interruption in shipping

and testing. Regular business will resume Tuesday, May 26th, 2026. We wish you a Safe & Happy Memorial Day!



## Client Services

### Update on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Cattle

The following information came from a bulletin sent out by the *Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection* on 05/06/2026 12:15 PM CDT:



On May 1, 2026, DATCP notified dairy producers and veterinarians of updated guidance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Effective immediately, lactating dairy cattle moving interstate from states designated with Unaffected State Status under USDA's National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS) are no longer required to test for HPAI prior to interstate movement.

Wisconsin currently meets the criteria for Unaffected State Status through ongoing surveillance and testing activities conducted under the NMTS. As a result, lactating dairy cattle moving interstate from Wisconsin are not currently subject to the federal pre-movement testing requirements established under [USDA's April 2024 Federal Order](#).

Wisconsin also had a state order in place requiring individual cow HPAI testing prior to attending fairs and exhibitions in Wisconsin. This order has been rescinded. Lactating dairy cows attending Wisconsin fairs and exhibitions are no longer required to have an individual HPAI test unless they are coming from a state without Unaffected State Status under NMTS.

More information from this DATCP bulletin can be found here:  
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDATCP/bulletins/4154bc7>

### Safety First at WVDL

In April, four WVDL team members attended the annual Safety Day at Northwood Technical College in New Richmond, WI. Safety Day is a one-day conference dedicated to essential safety and health insights. Staff enjoyed general sessions aligned with the latest safety standards, along with breakout sessions covering practical, real-world workplace topics.

WVDL members in attendance (from L to R: Deb Hartley [WVDL Safety Specialist], Kristen Kaufman [Sample Receiving], Christian Bartholomay [Virology], and Alex Aviles [Serology])



## Bacteriology

### Plan to Exhibit Poultry this Summer?

All sexually mature poultry (turkey: 6+ months, non-turkey: 4+ months) must be tested within 90 days before arrival at a show.



### Testing requirements for poultry and farm-raised game birds:

- **Turkeys:** *Salmonella pullorum-typhoid* and *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*.
- **All other Poultry:** *Salmonella pullorum-typhoid*.

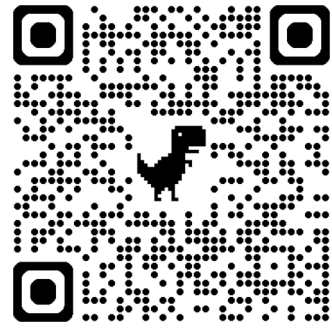
The WVDL Barron Laboratory accepts poultry samples submitted along with a [DATCP Wisconsin Individual Poultry Test Form](#) or a [DATCP Wisconsin Tested Flock Form](#). To ensure the submission of an adequate sample, please collect 0.5 - 1mL whole blood in tubes without additives (ie. red top tube) and allow the sample to clot at room temperature for 15-30 minutes prior to refrigeration/overnight shipment to the lab.

**WVDL is proud to serve as an authorized NPIP laboratory, supporting and protecting the health of poultry throughout the state of Wisconsin. We wish all exhibitors the best of luck this year!**

### Prototheca Mastitis in Dairy Cattle

*Prototheca*, a colorless, yeast-like microalgae, is an emerging pathogen associated with both acute and chronic mastitis in dairy cattle. *Prototheca* organisms can be ubiquitous in the environment on some dairy farms and are commonly found in soil, bedding material, cattle feces, milking equipment, and barn surroundings.

Currently, the prevalence of *Prototheca* mastitis in dairy farms across Wisconsin and the United States is not well understood. Of the 1,467 milk samples submitted to the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (WVDL) for *Prototheca* culture testing in 2025, 51 samples (3.47%) tested positive. By comparison, during the same period, 2.61%, 1.83%, and 17.02% of milk samples tested positive for *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus agalactiae*, and *Mycoplasma* species, respectively, all of which are recognized contagious mastitis pathogens. Although these samples do not represent a random population suitable for estimating statewide prevalence, they highlight the significance of mastitis pathogens, including *Prototheca*, in dairy herds.



Early detection and diagnosis of *Prototheca* mastitis can be challenging because infections are often subclinical. Infected udders may show only mild inflammation, accompanied by progressive loss of milk production and elevated somatic cell counts. Routine mastitis culture methods may fail to isolate and identify *Prototheca* because of overgrowth by other microorganisms present in milk samples. Therefore, the use of selective media is recommended for successful isolation of *Prototheca* species.

*Prototheca* mastitis does not respond to antibiotic therapy, and there are currently no approved treatments. Management of infected animals, including isolation and culling, when necessary, along with prevention of new infections within the herd and implementation of good overall farm hygiene practices, is essential for reducing disease incidence.

If you are interested in being included in an upcoming WVDL prototheca mastitis survey, we ask you to use the QR code attached to this article to sign up for future contact. Thank you in advance for your interest in participation.



## Pathology

### The Wisconsin Histology Society Visits WVDL

The Wisconsin Histology Society held its annual symposium on April 25th at the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (WVDL) in Madison, Wisconsin. The event was organized by Society President Tori Smith, Microbiologist at WVDL.

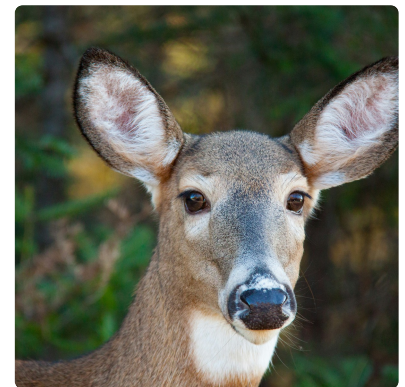
The event welcomed 35 attendees and featured five presentations delivered by fellow histotechnicians and pathologists' assistants, showcasing real-world expertise and best practices from within the profession. Vendor representatives were also in attendance, displaying the latest histology equipment and products for participants to explore. A highlight of the symposium was a hands-on wet lab held in the necropsy suite, where participants gained practical experience in tissue grossing and margin inking. The event provided an outstanding opportunity for histology professionals across the region to connect, learn, and advance their craft in a collaborative and engaging environment.



## TSE Lab Update

### Summary of samples tested in the TSE Laboratory between 7/1/2025 and 4/30/2026

It is another busy year in the TSE Testing Lab! So far this fiscal year, we have tested 94,118 samples. See Table 1 for a summary of the number of animals tested, number of animals that tested positive, and the percentage of animals that tested positive per test type. Table 2 shows the break down of results per sample for Captive Cervid IHC - CWD (2 samples per animal). There were 2,302 animals tested resulting in 4,604 total results for obex and lymph nodes.



Each year the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) calculates the average turnaround time for all animals that are tested for CWD from harvest date to the time the result was reported to hunters. The average turnaround time for FY26 was 8 days with 3 of those days accounting for the testing performed at the WVDL. The WI DNR has a great website that is full of information about CWD, and resources that can be accessed with this link:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/cwd>.

For more information about the Farm-Raised Deer Industry in Wisconsin, visit the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection website:

[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/FarmRaisedDeer.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/FarmRaisedDeer.aspx).

**Table 1:** Summary of animals tested in the TSE Lab in FY26.

Test Type	Animals Tested (n)	Animals Positive (n)	Animals Positive (%)
Captive IHC - CWD	2,302	176	7.7%
Captive ELISA - CWD	114	0	0.0%
Wild IHC - CWD	24,792	71	0.3%
Wild ELISA - CWD	57,845	3,104	5.4%
Scrapie IHC	1,887	0	0.0%
BSE ELISA	5,484	0	0.0%
Wild IHC – CWD (Suspect or Confirmatory)	1,583	1,434	90.9%
Wild IHC RAMALT - CWD	110	45	40.9%
Total	94,118	4,830	5.1%

**Table 2:** Summary of sample (obex and lymph node per animal) results for Captive CWD IHC in FY26.

Test – Time Period	Not Detected	Positive	Unacceptable Tissue	Unsuitable Tissue	Location	No Sample Received
Captive IHC - FY25	77.20%	9.20%	0.48%	0.33%	3.75%	9.08%
Captive IHC - FY26	83.43%	6.46%	0.83%	0.37%	6.63%	2.26%

**Test Result Interpretation Guide:**

- A result of “**Unacceptable tissue**” is applied when the tissue received cannot be identified grossly or microscopically and cannot be interpreted due poor quality (*i.e.* severe autolysis that renders tissue unrecognizable).
- A result of “**Unsuitable tissue**” is applied when no lymph node/lymphoid tissue is present in the jar (*i.e.* thyroid or salivary gland is submitted rather than lymph node).
- A result of “**Location**” is applied when the CNS tissue received by the submitter does not include the dorsal motor nucleus of the vagus nerve (DMNV).



# Serology

## Q Fever Complement Fixation (QF CF) Test

All required reagents for Q Fever Complement Fixation (QF CF) testing for *Coxiella burnetii* are now in stock, and the current testing backlog has been resolved. All other Q Fever testing can be performed using the Q Fever ELISA.

The laboratory plans to discontinue the Q Fever Complement Fixation test in the near future due to the anticipated unavailability of test reagents. A definitive discontinuation date will be communicated to laboratory clients in advance.





## 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](mailto:info@wvdl.wisc.edu)

**Website:** <https://www.wvdl.wisc.edu/>

**Location:** [445 Easterday Lane, Madison, WI, USA](#)

**Phone:** [1.800.608.8387](tel:1.800.608.8387)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinVeterinaryDiagnosticLaboratory/>

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