

FAQ's for the Cervid Dual Path Platform (DPP) VetTB Assay® tests for bovine tuberculosis (June 2020)

Q. What is the DPP test?

A. The DPP® Antibody Test is a serologic test used to test for bovine TB antibodies in captive cervids.

Q. Is there a comprehensive Veterinary Services Guidance document describing the specific use of the DPP including detailed collection and submission instructions?

A. Yes, the guidance document can be found at [DPP guidance Document](#)

Q. Which cervid species can I use the DPP test on?

A. The DPP test is approved for use in elk, red deer, white tail deer, fallow deer, and reindeer. A pilot project is also being implemented to evaluate the test in Mule and Sika deer. [Pilot Project - Mule/Sika](#)

Q. What type of sample is required for the test?

A. For each cervid tested, at least 2 ml of refrigerated serum must be submitted in a blood serum collection tube such as a red top tube. The whole blood in the original tube is allowed to clot and centrifuged so the serum can be transferred to a separately labeled clean tube. If a serum separator tube is used it also needs to be centrifuged and the serum transferred to a new clean tube.

Q. Who is authorized to collect and submit samples?

A. Only *Designated Accredited Veterinarians* who have received supplemental training on TB testing and the DPP testing are authorized to collect and submit samples.

Q. I am an accredited veterinarian, but have not been trained as a Designated Accredited Veterinarian. May I submit samples using the DPP test?

A. No. You must be a *Designated Accredited Veterinarian* who has received supplemental DPP test training in order to collect and submit samples using the DPP test on cervids.

Q. How can I become a Designated Accredited Veterinarian?

A. Contact your local APHIS Veterinary Services Area office to receive information on the supplemental DPP test training and to become a Designated Accredited Veterinarian. A list of area offices can be found at: [AVIC List](#)

Q. If I am a Designated Accredited Veterinarian, may I choose either the SCT skin test or the DPP test to assess the status of TB in cervids?

A. Yes, either the DPP or the SCT may be selected by the veterinarian. Animals that are non-negative on the DPP will be retested after 30 days with the DPP. Animals that are responders on the SCT will be retested with the Comparative Cervical Test (CCT).

Q. Why is additional training needed if the test only involves submitting a blood sample?

A. In order to perform bTB testing of any kind (skin testing, serological testing, etc.) in cervids, a veterinarian must be knowledgeable not only in technique, but also in the regulations under the National bTB Eradication Program. Additionally, many tests that are performed must adhere to additional requirements such as for import/export and establishing and maintaining accredited cervid herds. The additional training provides this information.

Q. Can I send the serum sample to any laboratory for testing?

A. No. Serum samples must be sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa. Be sure to obtain permission from the APHIS VS Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) in your State to submit the sample(s) to NVSL prior to sample shipment. The AVIC list is [AVIC List](#)

Q. When do samples need to be received by NVSL?

A. Samples must be received by NVSL within 5 days of collection. Samples must be received Monday through Friday and must not be shipped to arrive at NVSL on weekends or holidays. Samples received on the weekend will be considered to have been received on the following Monday. Samples received on a federal holiday will be considered received the following day and classified invalid if this exceeds 5 days from collection.

Q. Will the test be conducted on samples received more than 5 days after collection?

A. Samples received after 5 days will be processed at NVSL and user fees will be collected for this service. However, the test results will be classified as invalid.

Q. Do all States and Countries accept the DPP as an official bTB test for cervid herd accreditation and import purposes?

A. You must verify with the State of residence of the animals, the importing State, or the importing country to determine if their animal health regulations allow the use of the DPP as an official testing method for cervids.

Q. If I am also testing a cervid for brucellosis, may I collect one blood sample and have it tested for both bTB and brucellosis?

A. No. When also testing a cervid for brucellosis, an additional tube of whole, clotted blood must be collected and submitted to an approved brucellosis testing laboratory accompanied by the official brucellosis testing chart VS Form 4-33,.

Q. What happens if the DPP test result is positive?

A. If the DPP test has a positive result, the animal will be subject to quarantine and a second DPP test will be performed no sooner than 30 days later. Animals testing positive on the second test will be classified as reactors.

Q. Can cervids that respond to the SCT skin test then be re-tested with the DPP?

A. No. The TB skin test and serologic tests cannot be used in combination or interchangeably. Cervids classified as responders by testing positive on the single cervical skin test (SCT) must be retested by regulatory veterinarians using the comparative cervical skin test (CCT).

Q. Can accredited veterinarians or producers obtain the DPP test for their own use as an “unofficial test”?

A. No. Any tuberculosis test conducted in species under the National TB Eradication Program is an official test as defined in the Title 9 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77. All results must be reported to State animal health officials within a specified time after the test was administered.

Q. Is specificity affected by exposure to other mycobacterial antigens known to cross-react in bovine TB tests, such as *Mycobacterium avium* or in herds infected with Johne’s (*Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*)?

A. The antibodies detected by the DPP do not cross-react to antibodies for *Mycobacterium avium*, *M. paratuberculosis*, or most environmental mycobacteria. However, *M. kansasii* has certain common antigens with *M. bovis*, therefore, animals exposed to *M. kansasii* may have a DPP false positive test result. The final culture results on the animal tissues will determine which Mycobacteria is present. An animal is classified negative to bTB when Mycobacteria other than *M. bovis* are cultured.

Q. May I perform the DPP test on animals that have only producer tags as identification?

A. No. Official identification recognized by APHIS must be present on each animal tested with the DPP. Identification numbers must be recorded on the VS 10-4/10-4a and VS 6-22 to correspond to the sample submitted for testing.

Q. How can I receive a DPP test kit?

A. Designated Accredited Veterinarians may submit blood samples using their own compliant shipping container using 24-hour delivery service. The US Postal Service does not deliver directly to NVSL. You may also order a DPP test kit that consists of written instructions, a VS 10-4/10-4a Laboratory Submission Form, an ice pack, and a paid shipping label to NVSL. For more information on how to order a DPP test kit or on compliant shipping boxes, please contact NVSL at (515) 337-6200 or email at NVSL_userfee@aphis.usda.gov

Q. What is the NVSL laboratory charge to conduct the DPP test?

A. NVSL fees can be accessed through our catalog at [NVSL Catalog](#) or contact NVSL by email at NVSL_userfee@aphis.usda.gov

Q. How are payments made to NVSL for the DPP test.?

A. The Designated Accredited Veterinarian submitting the sample will be responsible for test payment. NVSL accepts the following payment methods

- Check, money order, or bank draft (US dollars) -- make payable to USDA
- Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover) -- include the credit card number and expiration date on the submission form
- Bill to USDA Account -- write the account number in the designated area on the submission form

Contact NVSL at (515) 337-6200 for more information. [User Fee Payment](#)

Q. When will I receive the test results?

A. Results will be reported to the submitting Veterinarian within 5 business days after samples are received by NVSL.

Q. How will the test results be reported?

A. Test results will be provided to the submitting Veterinarian by email, FAX, or mail. Veterinarians may specify preferred methods for receiving results on the submission form or when they set up their account with NVSL.