

## Commonly Asked Questions and Answers

### A. Becoming a VSV NAHLN lab

#### **Who can conduct the VSV CF test on clinically ill horses in a NAHLN lab?**

- NAHLN personnel who have trained at NVSL and have passed NVSL proficiency panels that are provided on a regular basis.
- Initial training was limited to two personnel per lab.

#### **Do I need to order my proficiency panel?**

- No, laboratories will be notified by NVSL personnel when proficiency panels will be shipped and a deadline for reporting results.

#### **What happens if lab personnel don't pass a proficiency test?**

- If a person fails their first attempt at the proficiency panel, discussions will be held with NVSL personnel in order to attempt to identify the cause of the failure. A second proficiency will then be offered. Should a person fail their second attempt, they will not be allowed to do testing until they train at NVSL and pass a panel in their lab.

#### **How do more personnel in a NAHLN laboratory become trained?**

- A written request for additional training needs to be made by the NAHLN laboratory director and submitted to the NVSL NAHLN coordinator with a justification as to why additional personnel should be trained. Names of the specific trainees should be supplied in the correspondence.
- The decision to train additional personnel will be on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Can a train-the-trainer program be utilized for training additional personnel at a lab or for personnel at new NAHLN labs?**

- A train-the-trainer program is currently not in place for VSV training. Training must occur at NVSL.
- This type of program may be considered for use at a later date.

#### **What do we do if we no longer want to be a NAHLN lab for VSV?**

- The NAHLN lab director must submit in writing to the NVSL NAHLN coordinator a request for voluntary removal from the approved lab list for VSV.
- The NAHLN lab director will be notified in writing of the voluntary removal.

#### **Can our NAHLN lab participate in this program in the future if we declined the initial offer to NAHLN laboratories in VSV affected States to participate??**

- If your NAHLN laboratory was offered the opportunity to participate and you declined, your lab is still eligible to participate provided personnel are trained at

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NVSL and pass a proficiency panel. A written request to participate must be provided to the NVSL NAHLN coordinator.

- Per the April 2006 decision memo, if your NAHLN lab is not located in a state that was positive for VSV in 2004 (CO, NM, TX) or 2005 (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NE, NM, TX, UT, WY), your lab is not eligible to participate at this time.

### **B. Utilization of the CF / mCF / VN tests**

#### **What information do I need before I begin testing for VSV antibodies?**

- The purpose of the testing - movement or clinically ill animal
- The species of animal or animals being tested
- The location of the animal being tested
- This information needs to be known regardless of whether the lab is doing the CF, mCF, or virus neutralization (VN) test for movement purposes.

#### **When can the VSV CF test be performed?**

- The test can be used at any time for clinically healthy horses that are being tested for movement purposes provided the NAHLN lab director wishes to utilize the test for this purpose. Horses from any state can be tested by the NAHLN lab.
- The test can be used for clinically ill horses with VS compatible clinical signs only after the NAHLN lab has been activated to test ill horses. The NAHLN lab director will be notified by the NVSL NAHLN Coordinator when the lab has been activated and deactivated.
- At this time, only NAHLN personnel trained at NVSL and currently approved by passing a proficiency panel can perform the test on clinically ill horses.
- All clinically ill horses that are tested by a NAHLN lab must have a FAD number assigned to them. Contact your AVIC for a number if a case is submitted without a FAD number.
- Clinically ill horses tested once the NAHLN lab has been activated must be currently located in the NAHLN lab state at the time of testing. If the horse has moved into the state on a temporary basis for a show, rodeo, sale, etc. it is located in that state even though it normally doesn't reside in that state. The lab should test the sample from that horse.
- On occasion, duplicate FAD numbers may be assigned to two different cases. If a repeat number appears, compare information received from the previously submitted case to see if it appears to be a rebleed. Information to compare would be the submitter, the owner name, and horse ID. If it appears that the two cases with the same FAD number are not the same premises, contact the AVIC for clarification. Rebleeds are done in situations where the CF is negative on a clinically ill horse and VSV is strongly considered to be the cause of disease. See Appendix C regarding test sensitivity.
- If in doubt as to whether a sample should be tested by the NAHLN lab, contact the Section Head (or acting, if Section Head is not available) of the Bovine and Porcine Viruses Section of the Diagnostic Virology Laboratory at NVSL by calling 515-663-7551 for guidance.

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### **When can the VSV mCF test be performed?**

- APHIS-Veterinary Services doesn't currently regulate the mCF test for VSV.
- NAHLN lab personnel were not trained on the mCF by NVSL personnel and are not proficiency tested by NVSL.
- The CF protocol provided to NAHLN labs contains information on how to perform the mCF.
- Reagents can be ordered from NVSL.
- Incorporation of the mCF in a NAHLN lab is at the discretion of the NAHLN laboratory director.
- The test can only be used for clinically healthy domestic ruminants and swine for movement purposes. Clinically healthy animals from any state can be tested for movement purposes by the NAHLN lab.

### **When can the VSV VN test be performed?**

- APHIS-Veterinary Services doesn't currently regulate the VN test for VSV.
- NAHLN lab personnel were not trained on the VN by NVSL personnel and are not proficiency tested by NVSL.
- The VSV VN protocol is available to NAHLN labs by contacting the Section Head of the Bovine and Porcine Viruses Section of the Diagnostic Virology Laboratory at NVSL. Alternatively the protocol in the OIE Manual of Standards for Diagnostic Tests can be utilized.
- Reagents can be ordered from NVSL.
- Incorporation of the VN in a NAHLN lab is at the discretion of the NAHLN laboratory director.
- The test can only be used for clinically healthy equidae, ruminants, and swine for movement purposes. Clinically healthy animals from any state can be tested for movement purposes by the NAHLN lab.

## **C. Forwarding samples to NVSL or FADDL**

### **What is the urgency and notification procedure for forwarding samples?**

- Contact the AVIC if samples are being forwarded.
- Where possible, samples should be forwarded the same day received with next day arrival.
- If this is not possible, the next business day with overnight arrival should be used.
- The AVIC should provide guidance if shipment would occur on a Friday or the day before a holiday.
- Notify the recipient lab by phone (NVSL 515-663-7551, FADDL 631-323-3256 or 3206).

### When do I forward samples to NVSL?

#### Both Activated and Nonactivated Laboratories

- All equine samples from clinically ill horses that are not from animals located in your State should be forwarded to NVSL, even if the lab has been activated.
- All samples (including serum) should be forwarded to NVSL any time equine samples are submitted to a NAHLN lab for VSV and at least one sample for virus isolation (swab, tissue specimen, vesicular fluid) is included. It doesn't matter where the horse is located. This should occur even if the lab has been activated and the lab should not test the serum samples. The VS Form 10-4 should be submitted with the purpose of testing marked as FAD. Include the FAD number if available and a copy of the submitter's paperwork. It is not necessary for the forwarding lab to obtain a FAD number if it is not provided.
- On occasion a FADD will collect serum samples from clinically healthy non-equine species located on the same site as clinically ill horses for the purpose of assessing seroconversion in non-equine species. If samples from clinically healthy ruminants or porcines are submitted with samples from clinically ill horses, all samples should be forwarded to NVSL. The lab should not test the equine samples. The VS Form 10-4 should be submitted with the samples. The purpose of testing should be marked as FAD and it should be clearly marked that only horses are showing clinical signs. Include the FAD number if available and a copy of the submitter's paperwork.

#### Nonactivated Laboratories

- Regardless of the test used (CF, mCF, SN), if a laboratory has an antibody positive response (defined as positive at  $\geq 1:5$  on the CF or mCF or  $\geq 1:8$  on the SN) and the lab has not been activated, the sample (regardless of species) should be forwarded to NVSL for confirmation testing. The VS Form 10-4 should be submitted with the sample. The purpose of testing should be marked as surveillance and the lab should request confirmation testing and provide their test results. At this time there is no charge for confirmation testing. A FAD number is not required for this testing. Once the lab has been activated, only positive samples from horses located outside the state and from nonequine species (regardless of state location) should be forwarded to NVSL.
- Equine samples should be forwarded to NVSL if the purpose of testing is evaluation of a clinically ill horse and the NAHLN lab has not been activated. It doesn't matter where the horse is currently located. The VS Form 10-4 should be submitted with the sample. The purpose of testing should be marked as FAD and any clinical signs reported should be included on the form. Include the FAD number if available and a copy of the submitter's paperwork. It is not necessary for the forwarding lab to obtain a FAD number if it is not provided.

#### Activated Laboratories

- If the NAHLN lab is activated and they have a VN positive test result from movement testing on a horse located in their state, the sample should be treated as a FAD investigation (obtain FAD number from AVIC) and tested on the CF. If the horse is not located in their state, the sample should be forwarded to NVSL.

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The forwarding lab does not need to obtain a FAD number when forwarding the sample.

### **When do I forward samples to FADDL?**

- Testing of clinically ill non-equine species can only be conducted at FADDL, regardless of the activation status of the lab.
- If samples are submitted for clinically ill non-equine species and the submitter includes samples from equine species (clinically ill or healthy), all samples are forwarded to FADDL. The lab should not test the equine samples.
- Contact FADDL personnel at 631-323-3256 or 3206 for shipping instructions.

## **D. Reporting**

### **How do I report test results?**

- Activated labs will be provided with an excel spreadsheet for reporting information until such time that a more automated method of reporting (web based) is available.
- If a FAD Reference Control Number (RCN) is not provided on the submitted paperwork, it is the responsibility of lab personnel to contact the AVIC and obtain a FAD RCN if the samples are being tested by the activated lab. If samples are being forwarded to NVSL, it is not necessary for the forwarding lab to obtain a FAD RCN. If a FAD RCN is not assigned, test the samples and note in the FAD column that a number was not assigned by the AVIC.
- Care should be taken not to fill in the columns reserved for NVSL.
- The footer date needs to be changed daily. This will result in a printed report showing the current date of report and will show the print date.
- One person should enter test results in the spreadsheet and a second person should verify results before submitting the spreadsheet.
- The spreadsheet will be sent each business day for which there is lab activity (samples received and/or test results available).
- Samples received should be logged into the spreadsheet the day they are received even if no test results will be available so that personnel receiving the spreadsheet are aware of samples submitted.
- Results will be reported to NVSL and to specified personnel in the state and/or region. The specific reporting chain will be provided by the NVSL NAHLN Coordinator at the time a lab is activated.
- If it is identified that a mistake was made in the spreadsheet after final results have been sent, the incorrect information should be changed to reflect the correct information and the corrected square background should be changed to yellow to reflect a change was made after final test results were reported. The change should be noted in the body of the e-mail when the spreadsheet is sent.
- If samples are forwarded to NVSL or FADDL, it is recommended that the lab report via their normal method to the submitter that samples were forwarded to avoid phone calls requesting test results.

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- If samples are forwarded to NVSL or FADDL, record FAD number (if available), lab accession number (if assigned), submitter, animal IDs, and receipt date. In the CF test results column, indicated “forwarded to” and the name of the lab (NVSL, FADDL).
- The CF is not a definitive test for VSV. If samples are collected early in the course of infection, the horse may not have seroconverted and may be reported as negative on the CF. If the submitter believes the horse in question truly is infected with VSV, a rebleed sample is recommended approximately 7 days after the initial bleed. If a rebleed occurs, note in the spreadsheet in the box under the new accession number the old accession number (“see XXXXX”) as a means of cross referencing multiple submissions from the same premises.