



## **Instructions for Drawing Blood Samples**

\*Whatever means of restraint is used it should cause minimal distress and should be quick and safe for both the animal and the person drawing the blood.

Blood can be collected from the jugular vein in all ages of cattle and from the tail vein in older cattle. A “Red Top” Vacutainer is the preferred tube for collecting samples.

### **Jugular bleeding: (3 ml's needed)**

- Restrain the animal with the head elevated and pulled to the right or left to expose jugular groove on either side. A halter can be used to pull the animals head to the right or left to gain better control of the head and better access to the jugular groove.
- The jugular groove is a depression in the lower 1/3rd of the neck that extends from the head to near the shoulder. Applying pressure in this groove closer to the shoulder will cause the jugular vein to fill with blood and raise above the point at which you have applied pressure, allowing visual access to the vein.
- Insert the needle through the skin and into the vessel at about a 20 degree angle with the needle pointing towards the head and withdraw the blood sample.
- Remove the needle and apply pressure to stop the bleeding.

### **Tail bleeding: (3 ml's needed)**

- Restrain the animal to prevent it from moving away during the procedure.
- Raise the tail vertically with one hand until it is horizontal with the ground and wipe the underside of the tail to remove any manure present.
- Approximately 150 mm (6 inches) from the base of the tail locate the groove lying in the midline underside of the tail.
- Midway along the body of a tail vertebra, insert a 16-20 gauge needle (attached to a 6-12 cc syringe) perpendicularly to the surface of the skin to a depth of a few millimeters and withdraw the blood sample.
- Alternatively, use a blood collection needle inserted as described above and then slide the “Red Top” Vacutainer on the needle and allow the suction to draw the blood into the tube. This method requires experience and there is the danger of loss of vacuum in the tube in which case a syringe must be used to draw the blood.
- Apply pressure to the site of the venipuncture after withdrawal of the needle, to stop the bleeding.



\* *Iowa State University*

### **Packaging and Shipping Blood Samples**

1. It is preferable that blood samples be cooled to room temperature (74 deg. F.) and allowed to clot before shipping. Do not agitate the samples and do not place them immediately into refrigeration as this may cause hemolysis (breaking of the cells) and render the sample unusable.
2. Samples should be shipped with a single ice pack to keep cool. Enclose the ice pack in a Ziploc bag before shipping to prevent leakage.
3. Tubes should be kept in their original box if possible, or wrapped in a manner that will prevent breakage – such as bubble wrap – and then placed inside a sealable bag to prevent leaks. This bag, along with the ice pack in a separate Ziploc bag, should be placed inside a sturdy box and padded so that there is NO movement of the items inside. The box should then be carefully sealed with packing tape.
4. Usually it is not necessary to ship the sample by an overnight service within the US. The sample can be shipped US First Class or Priority Mail or by any other 2-3 day service provided that the sample won't arrive on the weekend or a holiday. If you use the U.S. Postal Service, you can obtain a free box marked for Priority Mail at your post office that is ideal for this shipment. If you use FED EX, they require the outer rigid package to be at least 7 x 4 x 2 inches in size. If it is smaller, it must be inserted into a plastic "Diagnostic Specimen Envelope" provided by them.
5. Address to one of the **Gold Standard Labs** listed below:

**205 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 103  
Hereford, TX 79045  
806-363-1702 (fax)  
806-363-1700**

**2785 Hwy 90A West  
Shiner, TX 77984  
361-594-3845 (fax)  
361-594-3737**

**2820 E. Schulman, Unit A  
Garden City, KS 67846  
620-275-6000  
620-275-6002 (fax)**

**Capitol Livestock  
4651 E. FM 487  
Schwertner, TX 76573  
254-527-3342**



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Hereford, Texas 79045  
Office (806) 363-1700  
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www.bvd-pi.com

**1990 Louisville Rd., Unit 6  
Bowling Green, KY 42101  
270-846-2073  
270-846-2074 (fax)**

**70924 US Hwy 183  
Alma, NE 68920  
308-928-2411  
308-928-2124 (fax)**

**1409 East Loop 301  
Sulphur Springs, TX 75482  
903-885-6551  
903-885-3036 (fax)**