

# Veterinary Diagnostic Services

## General Services Information Manual



**Veterinary Diagnostic Services (VDS) is an animal health laboratory within Manitoba Agriculture. VDS provides diagnostic and surveillance testing for livestock industries, companion animals, wildlife and animal research.**

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## Contact Us

- Call us at 204-945-8220 in Winnipeg
- Email us at [vetlab@gov.mb.ca](mailto:vetlab@gov.mb.ca)
- Go to [manitoba.ca/agriculture/vds](http://manitoba.ca/agriculture/vds)

## About VDS

Veterinarians use information from VDS to diagnose animal diseases, to guide treatment plans and to monitor herds or flocks for disease. VDS also provides support to programs in animal health, animal welfare, food safety and public health.

Visit our website for more information on these programs: [manitoba.ca/agriculture/vds](http://manitoba.ca/agriculture/vds).

## Vision and Mission Statements

## Our Vision

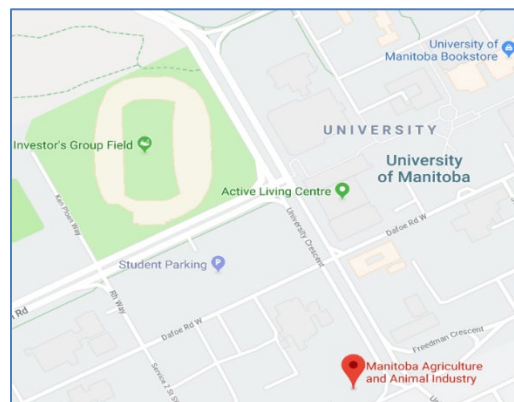
*To nurture a culture that has a commitment to clients, values staff and provides leading-edge veterinary diagnostic services.*

## Our Mission

*To protect and advance animal and public health through diagnostic excellence.*

## Location

VDS is located in the Agricultural Services Complex at 545 University Crescent on the University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus. On the map below, our building is referred to as Manitoba Agriculture and Animal Industry.



## Hours of Operation

Laboratory and Reception are open Monday to Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

## Quality Management System

A Quality Management System is in place to ensure a consistent, high quality level of service. This is accomplished by managing according to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 and ensuring all employees are familiar with the policies, procedures and quality documentation associated with their work areas. Management is aware, responsive and proactive to clients' needs and concerns, and will strive to continually improve the effectiveness of the Management System by ensuring:

- Personnel are qualified, trained, supervised and familiar with policies and procedures.
- Procedures are validated and incorporate adequate quality control. Stated methods are used. Equipment is functioning, meets specifications and records are kept.
- Continuous improvement remains an ongoing objective of VDS accomplished through meetings with clients and staff, and annual management reviews.

## VDS Clients

Our stakeholders include veterinary practitioners, producers, researchers, government agencies and departments. Services are available to all Manitoba livestock producers and companion animal owners **through private veterinarians**, and to universities and colleges, zoos and government agencies.

VDS may also provide testing of environmental samples for the purposes of surveillance to livestock associations participating in National On-Farm Food Safety Programs.

VDS does not perform testing on animal feed. If feed testing is required, please contact us to discuss referral laboratory options.

## VDS-Veterinarian-Owner Communication and Billing

Communication between the veterinarian and animal owner is essential for problem-solving and optimal use of laboratory services.

Veterinarians:

- provide a complete submission form that includes history
- ensure submission of high-quality specimens or carcasses that are appropriate for the specific animal health issue
- communicate results to their clients
- must contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) if a reportable foreign animal disease is suspected

Animal Owners:

- notify their veterinarian about animal health problems
- contact their veterinarian for laboratory results and interpretation
- should be prepared to provide a Premises Identification number

VDS:

- contacts the referring veterinarian when follow-up is necessary
- sends results to veterinarians; VDS does not send results to animal owners
  - results are sent via email or fax in the event email is temporarily not available
- bills the referring clinic; VDS does not bill animal owners
  - statements and/or invoices are sent via email or fax in the event email is temporarily not available

## Pricing Policy

The VDS fee schedule is available on our website: [manitoba.ca/agriculture/vds](http://manitoba.ca/agriculture/vds)

- Food animal pricing is set at 35% of cost recovery. Companion animal pricing is set at 100% of cost recovery.
- **All** out of province pricing is set at 100% cost recovery.
  - Veterinary clinics located outside of Manitoba that submit samples from clients residing outside of Manitoba are charged the Out of Province rate which is equivalent to companion animal pricing.
  - Food animal pricing is restricted to food animal samples from veterinary clinics within Manitoba or veterinary clinics located outside of Manitoba submitting samples on behalf of Manitoba residents.
  - Food animal pricing is applied to submissions from research animals and to wildlife submissions coordinated through provincial government wildlife programs.
- Researchers should consult VDS during the planning phase of projects.

## Payments

VDS only accepts payment by cheque or money order made payable to the **Minister of Finance**.

## Live Animal Submissions

VDS does not accept live animals except piglets under 15 kg, poultry and fish. **Live animals must be transported humanely.** Questions regarding humane transport should be directed to the [Animal Welfare Program](#). Refer to the Useful Links on our website for information and contacts. VDS cannot house live animals overnight.

In the event that inappropriate live animals are received, the Animal Welfare Program may require the referring veterinarian to redirect the animals to a private veterinary clinic. VDS will not cover any costs associated with this.

## Submissions – Forms and Required Information

- A completed submission form(s) must accompany all samples.
  - Submission forms can be found on our [website](#).
  - These forms are fillable PDFs which can be completed and submitted electronically as well as printed and saved for your records.
  - For details regarding required information, please refer to Instructions for Completing Submission Forms provided on our website.
- Ensure writing is legible. Missing or unreadable information may result in delays.
- Information on federally reportable diseases is available here:
  - [inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/eng/1303768471142/1303768544412](https://inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/eng/1303768471142/1303768544412)
- Information on provincially reportable diseases such as [rabies](#) and [anthrax](#), and the Manitoba small flock program can be found on our website under Useful Links.
- When anthrax, rabies or certain other zoonotic diseases are suspected, VDS will not proceed with other testing until the status is determined.
  - Ensure the submission form clearly indicates suspected zoonotic pathogen and any supporting clinical signs.

## Specimen/Sample Rejection

VDS is committed to providing reliable and timely results. To ensure high quality results and staff safety, VDS reserves the right to reject samples.

The following **will be rejected**:

- Specimens that cannot be safely processed.
  - Specimens with needle attached.
  - Specimens in containers with improper chemical labels.

The following **will result in a delay** and **possible rejection**:

- Improperly collected or packaged specimens.
  - Leaking samples. For example, submission form in contact with specimen or contaminated.
  - Specimen collected or stored in incorrect container or preservative, for example, feces in a glove.
  - Specimen type or source is inappropriate for the requested test.
  - Specimen transported at incorrect temperature. For example, frozen blood for CBC or frozen formalin-fixed tissue for histopathology.
- Unlabeled/Improperly labeled specimens
  - Identifiers on sample container do not match the submission form.
  - Missing or illegible information. For example, no identification on the sample to trace it back to a specific animal and owner.
- Insufficient information on the submission form.

## Tips for Avoiding Rejection or Delays

- Avoid contamination of submission forms by packaging them separately from samples.
- Label samples with two identifiers such as animal information and owner to ensure traceability.
- Label containers with proper chemical labels, e.g., formalin containers must be labeled as such.
- Refer to our Instructions for Completing Submission Forms.
- Refer to our Virology, Clinical Pathology and Microbiology manuals for information related to sample collection, shipping and storage.

## Turnaround Time

Turnaround time (TAT) is the approximate time, based on normal working days, for test results after samples and complete submission forms are received. Normal working days do not include statutory holidays. Refer to our fee schedule for TATs.

## Rush Samples

Rush requests should be received prior to submission. VDS staff will assess if a shorter than usual turnaround time is feasible. Clients will be informed when a rush request cannot be accommodated.

- For Clinical Pathology to provide same day CBC/Chemistry or Fluid Analysis results, samples and complete submission forms must be delivered no later than 2 pm.
- For Post Mortem, carcass and complete submission form must be delivered no later than noon.
- For Microbiology and Virology tests, provide a history when the rush request is related to a disease occurrence. Consultation with VDS about appropriate testing is recommended. Testing required for animal or semen shipment must be arranged in-advance.

A fee of **\$30.00 per test** will be applied when the rush request is accommodated. For example:

- If rush testing is requested for PRRSV and *Mycoplasma hyopneumoniae*, two rush fees will be applied (\$60 total).
- If rush testing is requested for necropsy, a rush fee will be applied to each carcass. Rush fees will also be applied to any additional tests (e.g., PCR) that are expedited.

## Reflex Testing

Desired tests must be clearly indicated on the submission form.

VDS does not perform reflex testing. For example, “do urinalysis if culture results are negative.” To minimize issues with sample integrity and prevent delays, both tests will be done.

Veterinarians always have the option of requesting additional tests on samples in our possession.

## Cancellation Policy

If testing has not been initiated prior to the cancellation request, no charges will be applied. However if testing has been initiated prior to the cancellation request, full charges will apply.

## Disclosure of Results

Results are reported to the submitting veterinarian. Results will only be sent to third parties with approval from the veterinarian.

All suspected reportable diseases are reported to the CFIA and/or Manitoba Chief Veterinary Office (CVO) as appropriate. Samples may be forwarded to CFIA for confirmatory testing.

## Ownership of Submitted Materials

Specimens submitted to VDS and any information or intellectual property identified by or arising from such specimens, belong to VDS unless other arrangements are made in writing at the time of the submission.

On request, VDS will forward samples to referral laboratories with appropriate containment levels.

VDS reserves the right to reject the release of samples following completion of a risk assessment.

## Remains to Owners

We do not release remains to owners or clinics under any circumstances. A request for cremation of companion animals may be made at the time of sample submission.