

## Submission guidelines

- Collect the correct samples – if in doubt, check the test requirement lists on this site or call the laboratory.
- Label samples – identify all tissues and organs sent.
- Supply a history – information on species, breed, age, sex, morbidity, mortality is essential for an accurate diagnosis. Use the submission forms provided.
- Provide contact information – who, where and how to ensure minimal delays in reporting. Actual email addresses to report to are very, very useful.
- All submissions received by the Virology Division are assigned a unique case number (the SDG number), which is preceded by either GVir/ or AVir/. This can be found on the top rightmost corner of all reports issued. Quote this number when contacting the laboratory regarding reports. If linking submissions ie paired blood samples, etc, please quote the original SDG number when making a second linked submission.
- When more than ten samples are being sent (herd screens, etc), use the [excel-log-in](#) form and email it ahead of the samples, to [virology@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:virology@agriculture.gov.ie) - doing this allows us to plan testing schedules and provide better, more informative reports.
- Use permanent ink. Water soluble inks smear then become unreadable smudges when moisture condenses on cool tubes.
- Tube numbers should be easily distinguishable from animal ID numbers (title, underline, circle, or use different colour ink for tube numbers). Write legibly to avoid a zero looking like a six, a four looking like a nine, etc.
- Pack carefully. Samples may not be processed if contamination/damage of the packaging poses a risk to personnel. See packing guidelines.
- Send samples to laboratory promptly. Samples begin to deteriorate immediately once extracted / collected. “Old” samples give more inconclusive, spurious or plain incorrect results. This process is exacerbated when postal services are delayed, such as Christmas, and over hot bank holiday weekends.



- All serum should be fresh, clear, unhaemolysed, virtually odourfree and uncontaminated. For serology, if a single sample is sent, it should be taken from a convalescent animal. Acutely ill animals have virtually NO antibody against the particular disease-causing organism.
- Do not let whole blood freeze and protect from direct sunlight and high temperatures.
- Label very clearly on the SUBMISSION form if sample(s) are part of surveillance schemes and other projects. This will avoid charging and reporting errors later.

No anti-coagulant:	plain or red-top tube
EDTA anti-coagulant:	lavender-top tube
Heparin anti-coagulant:	green-top tube
Citrate anti-coagulant:	blue-top tube

### Packaging guidelines

- Clearly address all submissions. Use a contact name if one is given.
- If multiple cases are submitted in one box, package each case individually so that all appropriate samples are assigned to the correct case.
- Do NOT package loose blood tubes singly in crumpled paper, etc. Use boxes with dividers to separate tubes from one another i.e. “brucellosis boxes”.
- Use tied plastic bags to wrap containers if there is even a small possibility that they might leak during transport.
- **ALWAYS** remove all needles and other sharps used during sample collection from submission boxes before sending. Reception staff can refuse to deal with hazardous submissions.

**Packaging also serves to protect the samples within from extremes of temperature, humidity and sunlight. Poor packaging means poorly protected samples, which leads to less consistent and less reliable test results.**

