POLICY ON SPECIMENS ACCEPTED FOR TESTING AT DPI&F VETERINARY LABORATORIES AND SERVICE FEE EXEMPTIONS

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries veterinary laboratories provide the Queensland Government with specific and objective surveillance data on disease occurrence in commercial livestock. The State offers financial support for this task as the data is used to support Queensland’s participation in the national and international trade of animal products.

This policy has been developed to direct resources to areas that offer the most efficient means of gathering animal health surveillance data. Accordingly, preference will be given to investigating herd, flock or group disease problems affecting cattle, sheep, goats, horses, pigs, poultry, deer, fin-fish and shell-fish. Subject to the conditions outlined below this will be undertaken free of charge to the producer.

Samples from recreation or performance animals (eg greyhound and thoroughbred horses), companion animals (eg suburban dogs and cats) and non commercial “hobby farms” are regarded as low priority and, if accepted, will attract a service fee.

Note: Samples from any animal species will be accepted regardless of background if a disease incident is deemed to present an unacceptable risk to the health of either the community or commercial livestock. Subject to the conditions outlined below samples accepted under these circumstances will be processed free of charge.
Specimens accepted for processing

Acceptance of specimens and exemption from a service fee will be based on the following six criteria:

1. their public benefit component
2. the extent to which clinical history, epidemiological and other relevant information is provided
3. the appropriateness of specimens to the clinical history and disease(s) suspected
4. the duration of laboratory involvement in a long running investigation
5. the depth of laboratory investigation required in solving complex multifactorial diseases and
6. where specimens are not associated with disease and form part of health and export testing, certain accreditation schemes or are referred from other laboratories for testing.

1. Public Benefit component

A submission will be regarded as having substantial public benefit under the following circumstances and will NOT attract a service fee:

Clinical disease in one or more animals under the following categories:

A. Exotic disease
B. Notifiable disease
C. Specified diseases and approved government programs. This category includes:
   • Quarantine specimens (including those from zoological gardens)
   • High morbidity and / or high mortality outbreaks of disease
   • Diseases suspected of having public health significance eg Hendra virus etc
   • Progressive neurological disease in sheep, goats, and cattle over 2 years of age eg the National Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Program
   • Non-parasitic wasting and / or scouring in adult ruminants eg Johne’s disease.
D. New or emerging diseases include investigations considered by the duty pathologist to be likely to provide new information or an improved understanding of animal health in Queensland.
E. Other targeted endemic disease surveillance programs under annual review. These programs are based on clinical history linked to organ systems as follows: *(Specific guidelines for operation will be required to determine the limits before charges are applied eg mastitis (first ten free) and tick fever (no limit) etc.)*

- Gastrointestinal (eg neonatal diarrhoea in pigs and calves)
- Respiratory (eg pneumonia in intensively reared livestock)
- Nervous, including eyes and ear (eg clinical signs referable to the nervous system in species other than those covered by the TSE program)
- Urinary (eg causes of haemoglobinuria)
- Reproductive (eg mastitis, abortion)
- Skin (eg *causes of photosensitivity*)
- Musculoskeletal (eg causes of osteochondrosis in beef cattle)
- Haematopoietic (eg tick fever)
- Hepatic and biliary (eg *investigation of phytotoxins*) etc

Clients will be promptly advised if a submission under these categories falls outside DPI&F requirements and is subject to a service fee.

2. Incomplete information

A submission will be regarded as having incomplete information under the following circumstances and **will not** be processed or results withheld until relevant information is provided. Clients will be advised to this effect in compliance with NATA requirements.

- The information provided was insufficient to determine the public benefit component as described above.
- The information provided was insufficient to determine whether the specimens supplied were consistent with the clinical history and disease(s) suspected or
- Essential epidemiological data was not supplied.

3. Inappropriate specimens

A submission will be regarded as having inappropriate specimens under the following circumstances and **will not** be processed. Clients will be advised to this effect in compliance with NATA requirements.

4. Specimens are not consistent with the clinical history or disease(s) suspected
5. Specimens are sufficiently compromised by autolysis (either directly by hours after death at collection or indirectly through poor preservation in transit) as to render them of no relevant diagnostic use.
6. Hazardous presentation by way of specimen containment or external contamination as to render them unsuitable for processing.

4. **The duration of laboratory involvement**

When the laboratory is involved in the investigation of a major outbreak of endemic disease service fees may apply after the diagnosis has been established. The details of these fees and their application would be negotiated on a case by case basis.

5. **The depth of laboratory investigation required**

The laboratory may become involved in the investigation of complex disease syndromes that are either multifactorial in nature or require special expertise or an experimental approach. Depending on the consequences for the industry, these investigations could be given special project status. Alternate funding may be required under these circumstances to ensure proper design and costing for the project.

6. **Where specimens are not associated with disease**

Where there is no clinical disease the submission **will not** be exempt from fees. This would be expected with:

- Health and export testing
- Certain accreditation scheme testing and
- Tests referred from other laboratories.

The laboratories should be consulted for an up-to-date schedule of test charges.