

## **Sampling Small Flock Poultry Houses (Fewer than 3,000 birds, All Subtypes of AI)**

### ITEMS REQUIRED:

- ❑ Clean clothing and other personal and biosecurity protection equipment.
- ❑ Viral transport kit containing a box of 20 (10 ml tubes) of VTM and accompanying swabs.
- ❑ Latex or vinyl gloves.
- ❑ Permanent marking pen.
- ❑ Cooler and ice packs, etc.

### SAMPLE COLLECTION:

Note: All samples must be taken by government authorized personnel (DAG, USDA, or their designated laboratory personnel. If a foreign animal disease (a reportable FAD, such as HPAI) is suspected, sampling can only be conducted by a certified FADD (Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician) or an authorized representative. Prior notification of USDA or DAG is required.

- ❑ A total of 10 tubes are collected per poultry house.
- ❑ Each tube contains 5 swabs for each specified site (for a total of 50 swabs in 10 tubes).
- ❑ Twenty additional swabs per house (5 swabs in each of 4 tubes) are taken if poultry are composted within the poultry house.
- ❑ Every building must be sampled.

### AREAS TO SAMPLE:

Note: Bias sampling to favor areas that are more likely to contain influenza virus.

- ❑ Interior of Buildings:
  - Floors: Within buildings, take 10 swabs (10 swabs, 2 tubes) representative of floors. Concentrate on any areas with organic debris.
  - Walls: Within buildings take 10 swabs (10 swabs, 2 tubes) representative of walls and pen structures (wooden gates, feeders, equipment).
- ❑ Exterior of Buildings: From the exterior of buildings, take 20 swabs (20 swabs, 4 tubes) representative of:
  - Poultry congregating areas,
  - Feeders, and
  - Any particular shallow pooled water, wet or muddy areas.
- ❑ Additional Samples: Select 10 additional discretionary swabs (10 swabs, 2 tubes). Suggestions include:
  - Areas with significant accumulation of manure.
  - Equipment, including coops and transport vehicles that are on the premise and that are used to transport poultry.
  - If poultry are reared entirely indoors, additional indoor areas.
  - If poultry are composted within the house, take 20 swabs (20 swabs, 4 tubes) from representative areas of the compost piles.
  - If the house contains nest boxes, take 10 swabs (10 swabs, 2 tubes) from representative areas of the nest boxes/nesting areas.

## Sample Collection and Submission:

Please Note: In collecting and submitting samples, identify the Premises precisely. All submission forms should include a Premises ID Number. If you do not know the number, request one from the RI DEM Division of Agriculture (DAG at 401-222-2781). If a Premises ID number is unavailable, on all submission forms record the street address where the samples were taken. (Note: That address may differ from the grower's mailing address.)

- ❑ Samples can be tested only at a USDA- or DAG-designated laboratory, normally the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (CVMDL) at the University of Connecticut. In accordance with USDA / APHIS NVS protocols, confirmatory testing/subtyping will normally be done at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa.
- ❑ Call the laboratory in advance to let them know when the samples will arrive:  
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory  
University of Connecticut , 61 N. Eagleville Rd., Storrs, CT 06269  
Phone 860-486-0837; Fax 860-486-3738
- ❑ To ensure the integrity of swab samples:
  - Check that viral transport medium (VTM) has not changed to a bright pink color (or that clear amber BHI has not turned cloudy) and has not passed the date of expiration.
  - VTM should be refrigerated at all times.
  - Saturate swabs with VTM prior to sampling and immediately following sampling.
  - Place 5 swabs in each tube after sampling.
  - Mark each tube and indicate which samples represent particular areas as detailed.
  - Use a separate submission form for each area.
  - Disinfect the exterior of tubes and box (including inside of lid) prior to transporting to laboratory.
  - Write the farm name and Premises ID on the bottom of the box of samples (not on the lid).
  - Keep the swabs in VTM on fresh ice packs until transporting to an approved laboratory (you may need to change ice packs at least every 24 hours).
  - If samples are stored in a freezer for more than 72 hours, place a leak-proof plastic bag around each box and seal to prevent drying of the VTM.
  - Place a completed copy of an AI Sample Submission Form in each box with the corresponding samples and a Premises ID.

The RI DEM Division of Agriculture reserves the right to amend the above mentioned requirements for Avian Influenza with the goal of any changes still being to prevent, contain and eliminate the disease. Changes to the general guidelines of the protocol may result from information including, but not limited to, virus strain, pathogenicity, morbidity and mortality, movement of birds and products, and additional epidemiological information obtained as a result of avian influenza investigations.