



## Serum Submittal Guidelines for the Sentinel Chicken Surveillance Program

The following collection and packaging instructions are intended to aid you in specimen collection and to ensure that an adequate quantity of quality serum is received for testing.

- The best sample is usually submitted in serum separator tubes that have been centrifuged according to the manufacturer's directions (for example BD Vacutainer SST with gel activator – Fisher brand catalog #02-683-94. If submitting serum samples in vials or ampules, please use Fisher brand catalog # 02-681-258 (2 ml graduated microcentrifuge tube with flat cap) or equivalent. Make sure the snap cap is tightly closed.
- Clearly label each tube or ampule with a dark waterproof marker with county, site and bird #. The use of computer-generated labels is recommended. Make sure the tubes are tightly closed; however, do not use tape to secure the lid or stopper.
- When packing specimens for shipment, please group the tubes by site. You can use a rubber band to bind them together or place all the tubes from a single site together in a small zip-lock bag. In order to expedite the processing of your specimens, please follow these guidelines:
  - Do not tape the tubes together.
  - Do not mix tubes or ampules from different sites in the same bag.
  - Do not wrap each tube separately with a paper towel and then tape the towel. A paper towel can be placed flat in each zip-lock bag with the samples to absorb any spills.
- Please submit a minimum of 500 $\mu$ l of serum for testing. Serum quality may deteriorate if the specimen is in transit too long in Florida's heat so please do not ship on Friday for Monday delivery. It is best to ship Monday through Wednesday overnight for next day delivery.
  - Do not submit specimens by Priority mail as it may take 3–4 days for specimens to arrive in the lab.
  - Frozen gel ice is only effective as a coolant for 1–2 days when placed in an insulated container such as a styrofoam box. A plain cardboard box or mailer bag will not keep samples cool.
- The lab cannot return individual shipping boxes due to the large number of shipments received each week. Specimens should be sent in a small Styrofoam cooler or alternatively, groups of serum tubes may be placed in aluminum mailer cans inside cardboard mailer tubes (Fisher brand catalog #03-520D). Multiple cans should be placed into a Fedex or DHL envelope or in a cardboard box for shipping as a unit.

Please ensure that the specimens are correctly listed on the packing slip as this enables the lab to provide you with timely and accurate results. Serology submittal forms with barcodes for each collection are generated by the specimen submitter using the [Florida Environmental Health Surveillance System](#) database. The barcodes contain information such as county name, site number, bird number, date collected and whether the bird is new or not. Please contact the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories-Tampa at (813) 233-2203 if you have any questions.