

## General Collection and Handling of Fecal Samples

1. Preferably, fecal samples should be collected from the rectum. If material is collected from the ground it should be from the top of a freshly passed deposit. Avoid deposit areas in contact with the ground. Care must be taken with samples collected from the ground to avoid doing fecal exams on neighbourhood or stray animals. It is advisable to collect only those samples which can be positively identified as relevant to the animal in question.
2. A minimum sample size is 5 g. Preferably, submit a "golf-ball" size sample in a plastic bag or a container that is airtight, watertight, and suitably robust.
3. All containers must be clearly and completely labelled: name, species of animal, date of collection.
4. Store the specimens in a refrigerator until shipping. **DO NOT FREEZE FECAL SAMPLES.** Samples should be at the laboratory within 12 hours if possible.
5. In cases involving a herd problem, ideally, every animal in the herd should be sampled. However for a reliable evaluation of a herd, sample 10-25% of individuals. When samples of individuals cannot be identified, such as in a feed lot situation, take random samples and clearly label them as such.
6. **PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT COMPOSITE SAMPLES.**
7. Most parasites (excepting some protozoans) will still be detectable and easily identifiable in fecal samples examined 2 to 3 days after collection, if the samples have been refrigerated in the meantime. If more than 2 to 3 days may elapse between collection and examination (or the samples cannot be refrigerated), mix equal parts of 5% formalin and feces. This will prevent parasite development, especially the hatching of eggs. This procedure should not be used if the diagnostic technique depends on living parasites, such as the Baermann technique.