

What's new at the Texas State-Federal Lab?

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As you all have probably noticed, there have been quite a few changes in the TAHC State-Federal Lab system recently. The "Bangs Lab," as we were known for many years, continues to adapt and change with the goal of providing high-quality animal health testing.



One recent change is where samples should be sent for testing. With the closure of our satellite labs in Palestine and Lubbock in August 2011, and the Fort Worth lab in August of this year, we have consolidated all lab activities to the Austin lab. After almost 20 years in our current Austin location, we will also be moving to another location in Austin in 2014. We hope to keep the same P.O. Box so that many customers notice no disruption. We will publicize our new physical address when the time comes, for those who hand-deliver samples or use a carrier other than USPS.

Another big change, as many of you know, is that we began charging fees for certain lab services in June 2011. This was a big transition from the way our lab had always done business. Our billing system has taken some time to mature, and I truly appreciate each veterinarian who has shared their feedback with me on how we could make that system better. This fall we began sending out monthly statements to make it easier to keep track of your total balance. More of you are starting to use our online payment system through texas.gov as well. By the end of this month you will be able to pay online by electronic check, in addition to the existing credit card options. Of course, you can still mail us a check and not incur the online convenience fee. I know some of you have run into the issue that if you have a large number of unpaid invoices, you cannot pay online. We are working to resolve that with our third-party provider. We strive to make sure our billing is clear and understandable, and give you as many choices as possible for payment.

Our primary focus is on the health of Texas livestock. But as other states have scaled back lab capacity for programs such as Cattle Tuberculosis and Brucellosis, we have been able to support additional testing on a regional level through partnership with USDA. We are also proud to have met the requirements to be included in the National Animal Health Lab Network since 2012.

If you haven't talked to us at the lab recently, give us a call sometime! If you have, then I'll just say thanks for your continued partnership in assuring livestock health.

Animal Health Programs supported by the State-Federal Laboratory in Austin include:

- Cattle Brucellosis (Slaughter Surveillance; voluntary market, private treaty, export and other testing for samples submitted by private practitioners; Brucellosis Milk Testing; Milk and Tissue Culture; Testing for herd certification)
- Swine Health - Brucellosis and Pseudorabies (Surveillance of high-risk and transitional swine across the state; Testing for herd certification)
- Brucellosis in goats for herd certification & milk permits, and various minor species for export purposes
- Cattle Tuberculosis (Gamma interferon confirmatory testing for caudal fold reactors)
- Tick and other ectoparasite identification (Call the lab for free, postage-paid collection vials)