



Interim Veterinary Guidance on Companion Animal Coronavirus Testing in Texas

Note: The scientific name of the new strain of coronavirus is SARS-CoV-2. In people, the disease caused by the virus is commonly referred to as COVID-19. Because we are addressing the virus itself in the context of animal health, we refer to it as SARS-CoV-2.

KEY POINTS

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not know the exact source of the current outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person to person.
- The CDC and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced first case of an animal testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 in the United States was a tiger at a zoo in New York City. Since that time, the virus has been confirmed in a small number of pets in the U.S., including cats and dogs, mostly after close contact with people with COVID-19. Should other animals be confirmed positive, USDA will post the findings at https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/SA_One_Health/sars-cov-2-animals-us.
- At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The CDC does not have evidence to suggest that imported animals or animal products pose a risk for spreading SARS-CoV-2 in the United States.
- Further studies are needed to understand if and how different animals could be affected by SARS-CoV-2.



WILL ANIMALS BE TESTED FOR CORONAVIRUS?

At this time, routine animal testing for SARS-CoV-2 is not recommended. Because the situation is ever-evolving, the Department of State Health Service (DSHS) State Public Health Veterinarian and the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) State Veterinarian may decide and authorize, out of an abundance of caution, to test certain animals.

USDA is aware of private veterinary laboratories that are conducting SARS-CoV-2 testing on animal samples. Any positive samples require confirmation testing at USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL). In accordance with international reporting guidelines, collecting additional samples and background information may be required to complete confirmatory testing of cases from private laboratories. Contact [NVSL](#) for more information.

CRITERIA TO REQUEST TESTING

Only animals exhibiting clinical signs of illness compatible with SARS-CoV-2 infection, including respiratory symptoms, will be considered for testing.

Veterinarians requesting SARS-CoV-2 for an animal must have first performed a thorough and systematic diagnostic evaluation with appropriate testing to rule out common causes based on the patient's clinical signs.

At this time, the following animals and situations will be considered for testing:

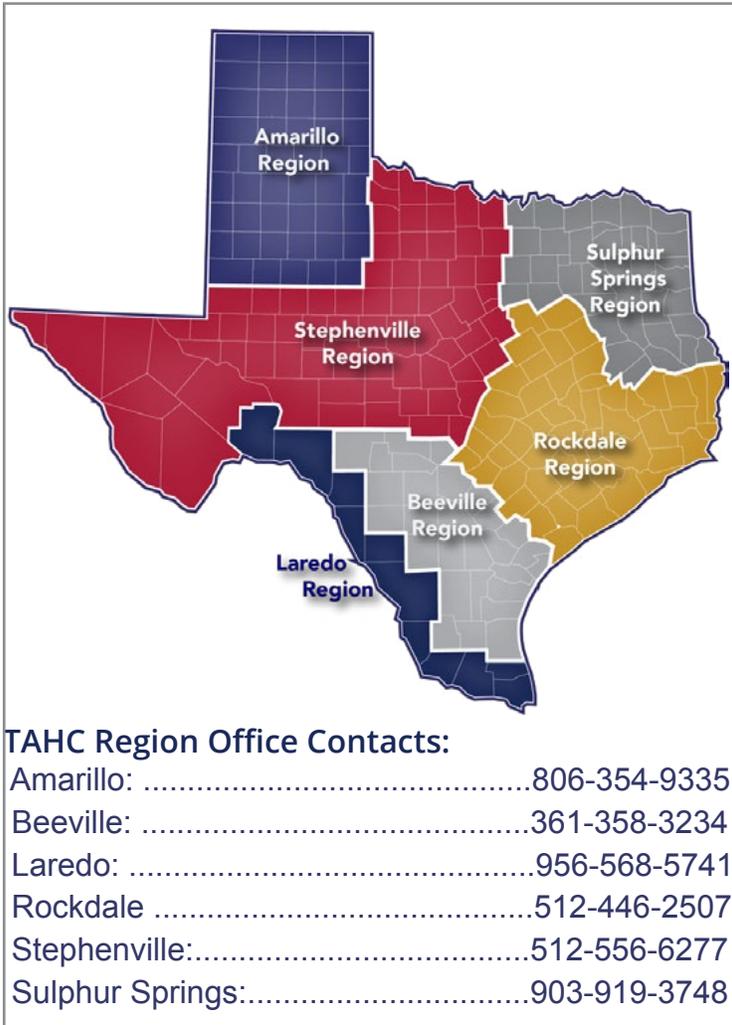
- Animals that have been in a household with a confirmed or suspect human COVID-19 case.
- Threatened or endangered non-human primates or other species in zoos or other facilities.
- Recently imported animals exhibiting an atypical pattern of disease suggesting a novel pathogen.
- Animals that are part of a validated research project.



TEST APPROVAL

Testing of animals for SARS-CoV-2 requires approval by the DSHS State Public Health Veterinarian and the TAHC State Veterinarian.

If you are a veterinarian who would like to request approval to test a pet for SARS-CoV-2, please call your [TAHC region office](#).



Once approved, the TAHC will coordinate with the requesting veterinarian to ensure proper sampling and media are used for submission to the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL). The requesting veterinarian must implement proper public health standards when conducting the test: <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/covid-19-keeping-veterinary-teams-healthy>.

CONFIRMATION OF RESULTS

All positive results on initial testing will be confirmed at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratory; presumptive results will be reported to the TAHC and DSHS.

In addition, any SARS-CoV-2 confirmation in animals will be reported to the appropriate federal and international authorities.

TAHC, USDA, DSHS, and the CDC will work collaboratively with the submitting veterinarian on any necessary response.

RESOURCES

TAHC Website: <https://www.tahc.texas.gov/covid-19.html>

DSHS Website: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>

CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html>

AVMA Website: <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19>

TVMA Website: <https://www.tvma.org/Resources/COVID-19-Resources>