



Footrot - collection of samples for laboratory diagnosis

Materials required

Contact the laboratory to arrange testing and the supply of transport media.

- Footrot Transport Medium - the medium is a semi-solid gel. Do not use if the medium is blue in colour.
- sterile swabs

Selecting animals for testing

Select animals in the early stages of infection.

Number of animals to be tested

At least 6 lame animals from each flock should be tested to maximise the recovery of the organism (*Dichelobacter nodosus*).

Sampling procedure

1. Examine the affected foot. Remove debris to expose inter-digital lesion and / or pare hoof to expose area of under-running.
2. Using a sterile swab, scrape material from the active footrot lesion.
3. Insert the swab as far as possible into the transport medium before breaking off the stick. (Ensure a small length of the stick remains above the surface of the medium.)
4. Use a new swab, and new transport medium for each foot sampled.
5. Replace the lid of transport medium and screw down firmly. Label the bottle.

Note: If the Footrot organism is isolated, it may take up to four weeks to determine elastase activity

Elastase activity determines whether the footrot organisms isolated are virulent, intermediate or benign.

Interpretation of elastase activity. (incubation time):

- Virulent strains degrade elastin within 12 days
- Intermediate strains degrade elastin within 12-21 days
- Benign strains may degrade elastin in greater than 21 days

Note: More than one strain may be present in a flock.

Transporting samples

Pack in an esky **without** ice and ensure samples arrive at the Animal Health Laboratory as soon as possible (within 24 hours of collection).

For more Footrot information:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/animal-health/sheep/lameness-in-sheep-and-goats>

For more information about the Animal Health Laboratory: www.nre.tas.gov.au/AHLabs

Submitting Samples

Submit samples to:

Animal Health Laboratory
NRE Tas

165 Westbury Road

Prospect TAS 7250

Phone: 03 6777 2111

Email: specimenreception@nre.tas.gov.au