

Key Points for DNA Sampling

The American Hereford Association (AHA) requires DNA testing to be done on any sire born after Jan. 1, 2011, being used to register calves out of, as well as on any dams being flushed and having embryo transfer calves registered to them.

DNA submission forms can be obtained from the AHA before sending the samples into the lab. DNA requests can be made online through MyHerd or by calling or emailing the AHA Customer Service department. Samples received by the lab without the proper AHA paperwork will not be processed.

Follow these tips for obtaining each DNA sample type:

Hair

For a hair sample, collect the hair from the tail switch of the animal. Be sure to pull the hair sample. You'll need to collect 80-100 hairs to make sure the lab is able to get a result. Try to make sure the hair is clean and not contaminated with manure, mud, bodily fluids, etc. It is best to wait until the animal is at least weaning

age before taking the sample. Hair samples taken from young calves generally don't have a lot of follicles which will hinder results.

Blood card

Blood cards can be purchased from the AHA for \$0.50 each, with a minimum order of 10. Blood can be drawn by any method deemed desirable. Fill the blotting paper section of the blood card with blood and saturate the section enough to fill the circle but not enough to make the card soggy. Insert the blood card lid into the top slit so there is room for air to get in. Leave the card in a clean area to dry at room temperature. Blood card samples can be collected at any age.

Semen straw

Straws do not need to be shipped in anything refrigerated. They can be room temperature. However, semen straws break easily. When shipping, be sure to put the straw in something protective. An easy way to keep straws from breaking is to use an ink pen.

Simply pop the top off of an ink pen, pull the ink tube out and then slide the semen straw down into the pen. It's also best to use a padded envelope to send a sample, even if you've put the straw in a pen or some other protective casing.

Tissue sample unit (TSU)

TSUs are a great way to take a sample but, like all samples, are not fail proof. You will need to order tissue sample tubes and a tissue sampling applicator, or gun from Allflex or through the AHA by filling out the order form found on the website and emailing it to eartags@hereford.org. Tissue samples are great for obtaining samples on calves at any age.

The sample should not be taken immediately after birth. The calf could still have fluids on it that will contaminate the sample. Give the calf at least a few hours to dry off. Be sure to wipe the ear clean with a dry cloth or paper towel. Do not use any cleaning products to clean the ear, as these could contaminate the sample as well. Try to collect the sample from a

portion of the ear that doesn't have a tattoo because the ink can contaminate the sample. Be sure the white cap is pressed down firmly on the tube, ensuring none of the sample liquid can escape. TSUs should not be sent in a regular envelope, as they can puncture the envelope and then fall out, causing the envelope to show up at the lab with a submission form but no sample. Be sure to send them in a padded envelope or some other form of protective casing. **HW**

Laura Loschke is the records supervisor and education and information service coordinator of the American Hereford Association. She can be reached at lloschke@hereford.org.

DNA test prices:

- **Genomic profile: \$42**
- **Full package** (Genomic profile plus horned/polled test): **\$58**
- **Add on horned/polled test: \$30**
- **Mandibulofacial Dysostosis (MD) testing: \$20** for stand alone, **\$13** if done in combination with a profile
- **TSU credit: \$4**