



April 22, 2020

Hello ASV Members,

Yesterday IDEXX announced availability of their IDEXX SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) RealPCR™ test to veterinarians. Testing shelter animals for COVID-19, a reportable disease, could have significant impacts. Prior to testing animals for COVID-19 veterinarians should contact their state public health veterinarian or designated health official. Ensuring that a positive COVID-19 test in a shelter animal will not encounter a forced closure of the shelter or euthanasia of the animal is important to verify with your state public health official(s) before considering any COVID-19 testing in your shelter population.

The CDC's guidance page "[Evaluation for SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Animals](#)" or/and consultation with a university shelter medicine program (U. Wisconsin, U. California-Davis, Cornell U., U. Florida) are helpful resources for shelter veterinarians.

Current recommendations for shelters housing an animal that tests positive for COVID-19:

1. Animal is sheltered in isolation until 14 days after resolution of the clinical symptoms.
2. Staff must wear appropriate PPE including face mask, gloves and wash hands before and after handling animals.
3. Animal is provided appropriate supportive medical care.
4. The shelter facility is to remain open for other essential services.
5. Euthanasia should not be a requirement.

As indicated by IDEXX, prior to submitting a test for COVID-19 in an animal, the following are needed:

1. Consultation with a public health authority (for example, a state public health veterinarian in the United States)
2. The pet must meet these three specific criteria:
 1. Pet is living in a household with a human who has COVID-19 or has tested positive for the virus
 2. Pet has already been tested for more common infections, that a veterinarian has ruled out
 3. Pet (especially cats and ferrets) is showing clinical signs consistent with COVID-19

As with any test, consideration of how the test results will impact the treatment or management of the animal is important to determine if and when a test is indicated. Thus far, COVID-19 infection in animals has been rare, the clinical course of this virus in the few animals infected has been mild/self-limiting and pets do not serve as a source of infection for people. Therefore, in general, broad testing of pets for COVID-19 is not recommended or necessary at this time. We will continue to monitor and share adjustments to recommendations during this evolving situation.

Sincerely,

ASV COVID-19 Crisis Response Task Force

The mission of the ASV is to advance and support the practice of shelter medicine in order to improve community animal health and well-being.