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Please note: This procedure may be revised as needed.

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) is a partnership of state and federal diagnostic laboratories that provides investigational and surveillance testing for high consequence agricultural pathogens. In the event of an animal disease outbreak, early detection is critical to contain the disease as quickly as possible.

The FAD investigation period is defined as the time from when the Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) and State animal health official (SAHO) initiates a field FAD investigation until the time the FAD is ruled out or confirmed by the FAD field investigation, official National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) reference laboratory diagnostic testing, and/or by official VS case definitions.

NAHLN laboratories should refer to the most current version of the NAHLN Laboratory Guide for Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) Investigations (NVSL-MAN-0028); however, there are specific changes in the guidance for reporting and messaging of FAD investigations that include IAV-A testing during the ongoing Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak, [HPAI Messaging Guidance](#). General guidance is identified below:

## A. Initiation of an FAD Investigation

- Only initiated by AVIC, SAHO, or designated official:
  - Based on observations in the field.
  - Based on clinical history, necropsy examination, or other findings of a submission to a NAHLN Laboratory.
- Each FAD is assigned an FAD Investigation number (EMRS Referral Control Number)
  - **NOTE: FADI samples without an FAD Investigation number should not be tested** – contact your state’s AVIC, SAHO, or FAD Diagnostician to obtain one.
  - Format of all FAD Investigation numbers: FYST#### (last 2 digits of fiscal year, 2 letter state abbreviation, 4 numbers typically in numerical order of how many FADIs that fiscal year).

## B. Priority

- Priority 1 – High suspicion, Rapid/extraordinary sample collection and transport
  - **Test immediately**
  - The NAHLN lab director or designee must email the NAHLN Coordinator / Associate Coordinators when testing begins ([NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov](mailto:NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov))
- Priority A – Intermediate/low suspicion, Commerce adversely affected
  - **Test immediately**
  - The NAHLN lab director or designee must email the NAHLN Coordinator / Associate Coordinators when testing begins ([NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov](mailto:NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov))
- Priority 2 – Intermediate suspicion



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- Test as soon as possible within normal business hours (same day, following day, weekends as needed)
- The NAHLN lab director or designee is encouraged email the NAHLN Coordinator / Associate Coordinators when testing begins ([NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov](mailto:NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov))
- Priority 3 – Low suspicion
  - Test within routine accession order

### C. Submitting Samples for HPAI Confirmation

- All samples with non-negative results at a NAHLN laboratory must be submitted to NVSL for confirmatory testing.
- NVSL sample submission information should be submitted via the NCAH Portal.
  - Level 1 e-Authentication is required for access to the Portal.
- All shipments must include a hard copy 10-4 Form (packing slip from NCAH Portal).
- Email notification of the incoming shipment must be made the day before arrival to the NVSL Reference Laboratory and the NAHLN Coordinators with the information for the shipment. Include a scanned copy of the VS 10-4, FedEx or UPS tracking number, and your laboratory results if available. If results become available later, please forward results via email, including the Ct value, to the following email addresses. Additional guidance for the content of these emails can be found in your most recent NAHLN Weekly Update email, which is typically distributed on the first business day of each week.
  - [NVSL.AI.ND@usda.gov](mailto:NVSL.AI.ND@usda.gov)
  - [NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov](mailto:NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov)

### D. Reporting FADI Results

- All NAHLN labs are expected to message HPAI results and associated required data immediately after testing is completed.
- NAHLN laboratories may also issue a final report from their LIMS including the results of HPAI testing to appropriate parties as soon as testing is completed at their laboratory.
- NONNEG Results:
  - Samples must be forwarded to NVSL for confirmation and additional characterization.
- NDET (negative) Results:
  - Negative results will be actionable where the State agrees.
  - Samples do not need to be forwarded to NVSL for further testing unless requested by the state.



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## E. Funding and Billing

- NAHLN will reimburse labs for all FADI cases. The FADI number is required in the results message.
- NAHLN will reimburse labs for testing of domestic poultry (commercial, backyard flocks) associated with the infected premises, the associated control area, surveillance zone and trace-outs for the current HPAI incident. FAD number is not required for these cases.
- NAHLN does not pay for movement testing of poultry.
- NAHLN will not pay for wild bird testing.
- Questions on existing task orders or to request a new task order:
  - Urgent questions/Need a task order ASAP: [NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov](mailto:NAHLN.Coordinators@usda.gov) and [NAHLN@usda.gov](mailto:NAHLN@usda.gov)
  - General questions: [NAHLN@usda.gov](mailto:NAHLN@usda.gov)