

FAECAL COLLECTION PROTOCOL

Proper Identification

- The most important requirement for any sample collection protocol is that that you know **which animal the sample came from**.
- The best approach is to separate animals at night to properly identify faecal samples.
- Otherwise you must observe the animal defecating and collect the sample as soon as possible.
- It is also possible to mark the faecal samples by feeding a marker (i.e. food colouring)

Frequency of Collection

- The second most important requirement is you are able to collect samples with a frequency that will provide useful and meaningful data.
- The frequency of sample collection is species dependant and is also dependent on the question you would like to answer.
- Please contact us and we can help you determine what frequency you should be collecting samples

Contamination

Things to be careful of:

- The faeces are not contaminated with urine
(*Urine has hormones too and this interferes with measurements of faecal hormone concentrations*)
- The faeces are not contaminated with another individuals sample (*faeces or urine*)
- Try to collect samples as soon as possible. (*hormone concentrations in samples left exposed to environment for extended periods will increase the risk of incorrect values*)

Collection

- Once you have properly identified the sample, collect sample into zip-lock baggies
- Do not collect the entire faecal sample. Instead (*as 'pockets' of hormone concentrations can be found in the faecal sample*) turn bag inside out and collect several (3-4) 'sub' samples from the same faecal sample
- Try to minimize the amount of debris (hair/bones/hay) you collect, obviously the more faecal material present the better
- Label the bag using a waterproof permanent marker (*i.e. Sharpie® pen*) with:

Animal's Name

Species

Date (day/month/year)

Time Collected

Storage

- Store sample **ASAP** in freezer at -20°C
(*Hormones concentrations will degrade if samples are left out too long*)

For more information please contact:

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