

Sample Collection

1. Collect 1-2 fecal balls.
2. Samples should be less than 12 hours old
 - a. It is important to identify the source of the feces.
 - b. Samples can be collected per rectum, preferred method, or fresh feces can also be collected from the ground if the horse was observed to pass that pile of feces. Also, if a horse in a stall by themselves the freshest pile can be taken for a sample. Make sure the sample is less than 12 hours old. Take the sample from the freshest pile of feces available, and collect sample from the middle of the pile. If collecting off the ground ziplock bags work well - just turn the bag inside-out, pick up one or two manure balls, flip the bag right-way out, and seal
3. Squeeze out all the air from the bag and seal. Label the bag with the horses name.
4. Place the samples in the refrigerator or keep in a cooler with ice packs. If kept cold, FEC can be performed at your (or the diagnostic lab's) convenience over the next week, although it is recommended to do the FEC as soon after collection as is practical. If the feces become warm and the air has not been completely removed from the bag then the eggs will hatch and accurate counting can no longer be done.
5. Alternatively, if all air is removed from the sample it can be shipped at room temperature without ice packs. This is best achieved by using a Reynolds Handi-Vac® (battery operated vacuum sealer) with accompanying vacuum sealer bags. Once all air is removed, place a piece of tape over the valve to prevent air leakage. Alternatively, it is possible to just squeeze all the air out of the palpation sleeve or plastic bag, but this is more risky, because there is a greater likelihood of error. This method works best when feces are relatively wet. If feces are on the dry side, it is recommended to refrigerate samples.
6. When shipping fecal samples with ice packs, always be sure to cool the feces in the refrigerator (or other cooler) prior to placing in the insulated shipping box.
7. Also, place enough freezer packs in the shipping box to ensure that the samples will stay cool until received by the laboratory. If sending samples from more than one farm/stable in a single shipment, please place all samples from a single farm in a separate bag.