



Survey of western Canadian beef veterinarians regarding diagnostic laboratory use, 2021

Overview:

An online survey was conducted of western Canadian beef practitioners regarding their current laboratory usage, use of in-house diagnostic tests, and perceived barriers to additional uptake of laboratory diagnostics.

Table 1. Frequency of reported reasons for laboratory use by 31 beef western Canadian veterinarians, 2021

Reason for laboratory usage	Percentage of participants selecting
Unusual case	82%
Definitive diagnosis required	78%
Animal value	66%
Antibiogram required	64%
Herd size	64%
Body system	62%
Cattle type	56%
Zoonosis suspected	55%

The most frequent diagnostics reported performed in-house were fecal flotations for parasitology examinations, and serum chemistries. Reported barriers to additional usage of laboratory-based diagnostics were largely client-centred: clients did not perceive a value to diagnosis, or value veterinary services in general.

Table 2. Frequency of reported barriers to laboratory use by 31 beef western Canadian veterinarians, 2021

Barrier	% of Participants Selecting
Client resents expense	73%
Clients don't use vet	66%
Logistics: turnaround time	63%
Clients don't value diagnostics	60%
Logistics: distance to lab.	55%
No time for sample submission	41%

Preferred additional metadata to enhance value of beef surveillance data were particularly the age/class of cattle (e.g. pre-weaning calves, post-weaning calves, breeding herd) and sector of production (e.g. beef vs dairy).

Table 3. Preferred metadata for surveillance findings indicated by 31 beef western Canadian veterinarians, 2021

Item	Percentage of participants selecting
Age of cattle	81%
Dairy vs Beef	79%
Province of origin of samples	66%
RM or county of origin	57%

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