

Date: November 14, 2011

To: Public Health Inspectors, Environmental Health Officers, Medical Officers of Health,
Alberta Health and Wellness

From: Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab)

Re: Investigation of Food and Non-Clinical Samples Associated With Sporadic Illness or
Outbreaks of Human Enteric Foodborne Bacterial Infection

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Messages:

ProvLab supports investigation of enteric foodborne disease by processing food and other non-clinical samples as appropriate that are associated with sporadic illness or outbreaks of human enteric foodborne bacterial infection.

ProvLab will process samples that meet specified acceptance criteria:

- Food for human consumption that is collected from a patient's residence, a restaurant or from a banquet
- Food for animal consumption that has been opened and exposed to humans associated with enteric bacterial infection
- Pet feces if associated with human enteric bacterial infection

Samples MUST be:

- Associated with human case(s) or investigation(s) (may or may not have an EI# at time of submission) related to human infection

AND

- Submitted by a Medical Officer of Health (MOH) or designate (eg. PHI, EHO).

Why this is important:

Clearly defined acceptance criteria insure that all samples receive the highest level of standardized testing. Provisions have been made to accommodate unusual test requests that would not normally be processed by ProvLab, after consultation with the public health inspector or designate.

Action Required:

Consultation with the Microbiologist-on-Call PRIOR to submission of samples if they fall OUTSIDE the parameters of current acceptance criteria is required to insure prompt referral to an appropriate certified testing agency.

Processing of non-clinical samples is centralized at the Calgary ProvLab site. Questions related to the status of samples previously submitted for testing may be directed to the Bacteriology Section – Phone: 403-944-1208

Refer to ProvLab Guide to Services, Food Sample section at <http://www.provlab.ab.ca/guide-to-services.pdf>

For additional questions contact:

Edmonton Site – Phone: 780-407-7121 (ask for Microbiologist-on-Call)
Calgary Site – Phone: 403-944-1200 (ask for Microbiologist-on-Call)

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by Dr. Marie Louie, Acting Medical Director