

### ***Ovary Harvest and Transport Protocol***

IMPORTANT: Please stress to clients that a stallion semen choice must be made at the time of harvest or before if possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made to have semen (either cooled ideally, or frozen) to the lab the day after ovaries are received. (freezing oocytes is not an option at this time)

- *Time is of the essence!* There is no exact cut-off point after death regarding removal and transport of ovaries but the sooner the better—within 12 hours is ideal but the best results have been less than 6 hours.
- **BEFORE EUTHANSIA!** Ideally, ovaries are removed prior to euthanizing the mare (before euthanasia solution—pentobarbital is given) and mare is anesthetized or heavily sedated. If this is not an option, ovaries should be removed as quickly as possible after death of the mare.
- **Ovary removal:** Using sterile sleeves and a sharp scissors or blade, the veterinarian should make a flank incision on the mare's right side, identify the right ovary, clamp and cut, leaving as much mesovarium as possible. Through the same incision, the left ovary is located and removed. Alternatively, ovaries would be removed via abdominal incision, for example in a colic surgery situation using the same principles.
- **Keep clean.** Contamination should be avoided at all costs, including dirt, manure and other debris. Wear sterile sleeves with sterile gloves if available. If the mare has a breach in GI tract and there is gross abdominal contamination, thorough and repeated rinsing is necessary (see below).
- **Maintain moisture:** Ovaries need to be kept in fluid and prevent drying and lengthy exposure to air. Use embryo flushing solution if on hand, if not use lactated ringers or saline, to thoroughly rinse the ovaries once removed (wash until all fecal material and blood and any other contaminants are completely gone). This fluid needs to be warmed to body temperature—98F/37C—before using to rinse ovaries. Place rinsed ovaries in sterile sleeves for transport and fill with solution warmed to body temperature just enough to submerge the ovaries. Double-sleeving is ideal to prevent leakage.
- **Temperature considerations:** Temperature of the ovaries during transport is very important—a slow drop to room temperature (70-75F) is ideal. For transport, place the ovaries in body temperature solution in sterile sleeves (ideally double sleeved) between saline bags warmed to room temperature (approximately 70 degrees Fahrenheit) in an Equitainer OR Styrofoam box with cover to occupy empty space. Ovaries should be in the middle (to be buffered in temperature by the room temperature saline bags). **Do not use any cooling cans or frozen gel packs.**
- **DON'T DELAY!** If within driving distance, a courier service can be arranged for reception of the lab during or after hours.
- Alternatively, ship as soon as possible through same-day or earliest next day service FedEx with **instructions to hold for pickup by Drs. Joy Altermatt/LF Campos at the following location:**  
FedEx Ship Center  
705 Fiero Lane  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
- If being sent on an airline, use appropriate service for end destination at San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport