

## SAMPLE COLLECTION FOR FINFISH DIAGNOSTICS

### Procedures:

**The very first step is to telephone pathology laboratory staff for a consultation to determine whether samples are necessary and what type of samples are required.**

Generally, live fish are preferred for diagnostic samples. At least 6-10 **moribund** fish should be placed in one or more large leak-proof plastic bags containing hatchery or rearing water. Seal the bags so **space** for air remains and leakage will not occur. Label bags with fish status (moribund or healthy) and incubator or raceway number. If oxygen is available, add to bags before sealing. Addition of an oxygen tablet to each bag is recommended, particularly for samples that must be shipped. Again, if the fish are large fingerlings or smolts, the amount of fish per bag should be adjusted accordingly.

If no moribund fish are available, enclose 6-10 freshly dead fish with a damp paper towel in a smaller dry plastic bag. Do not add water. This can also be done in addition to moribund fish, so if live fish do not survive transport, then the "dry" fish, which will have undergone less deterioration and contamination from the water and its bacterial flora, will be processed instead.

If viral screening **only** is desired, fish need not be live but should arrive refrigerated at the lab within 24 hours of sampling.

### Sample Shipment Instructions:

1. Pack samples in a small ice chest made of plastic or sturdy styrofoam, which will not be damaged in transit. Ice chests (other than styrofoam) will be returned to the sender. Add pre-packaged ice substitutes. To prevent freezing, separate the samples from the ice with newspaper or other insulating material. Place completed Sample Submission Form(s) for each stock sampled within a waterproof plastic bag and enclose in ice chest.
2. Close, seal, and label the ice chest with appropriate instruction for the type of sample enclosed (i.e., "Live Fish – Do Not Freeze" for live samples, "Refrigerate but do not freeze" for virology . . .) Label with mailing address, laboratory telephone number and the name of the person contacted in the lab. The shipping addresses for the pathology labs in Anchorage and Juneau are:  
  
Fish Pathology Lab  
ADF&G, CF Division  
333 Raspberry Road  
Anchorage, AK 99518-1599  
907-267-2244  
  
Fish Pathology Lab  
ADF&G, CF Division  
3333 Glacier Highway/PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526  
907-465-3577
3. Ship via express air or air freight (if you know it will not get bumped off the flight) as soon as possible. Instruct the airline to refrigerate the sample upon its arrival. If sent early in the week, fewer air freight and delivery problems are encountered. Avoid shipping on Fridays. Usually, diagnostic samples will be picked up by laboratory staff to expedite diagnosis. We must have arrival information to pick up samples. We need the airline, airbill number and arrival time. Be certain the lab contact number is on the outside of cooler: **Fish Pathology Section in Anchorage (267-2244) or in Juneau - (907) 465-3577**. Do not assume that the samples will be adequately delivered or picked up if you do not specifically talk to a pathology staff person prior to sending samples. Unless special circumstances dictate otherwise, clients are expected to ship samples such that they will be received by the lab and therefore, processed during regular hours.