



Canadian Poultry Consultants Ltd.  
30325 Canary Court, Abbotsford, B.C. 604-854-6600

## Post-Mortem Submission Protocols

The careful and thoughtful selection of birds for post-mortem examination is essential for obtaining an accurate diagnosis. Below are some guidelines for humanely and economically submitting birds for effective post-mortem examination:

- **Choose birds that represent the problem in the barn. For example:**
  - If the problem is mortality, choose FRESH dead birds
  - If the problem is lameness/leg issues, choose live, lame birds. These birds can be humanely euthanized on-farm or submitted live.
- **“Cull” birds should not be submitted for serology (blood sampling).**
  - For broilers – blood can be collected at the plant (most economic) or on-farm at the end of the cycle
  - For breeders and layers – blood should be collected on-farm
- **Submit a reasonable number of birds for examination (enough to get an accurate diagnosis but not too many to avoid extra charges for incineration). For example:**
  - Baby chicks – approximately 20
  - Broilers – 6 to 12
  - Breeders and layers – 4 to 8
- **If submitting dead birds, ensure birds are as FRESH as possible**
  - A diagnosis cannot be made if birds are too autolysed (rotten)
  - Intestinal tracts can become too difficult to analyze as soon as 4 hours after death
  - Do not submit dirty birds covered in litter
- **If submitting live birds, ensure that they are transported and submitted in a well-ventilated box or cage and are not over-crowded. Do not submit live birds if it cannot be done both humanely and biosecurely.**
  - Do NOT submit live birds in plastic bags, feed bags, etc. This is a welfare concern and can create ‘false’ clinical signs which could impair attaining an accurate diagnosis.
- **Ensure that all samples for submissions are collected and received using proper biosecurity procedures**
  - All mortality should be treated as if it is potentially infectious.
  - If Avian Influenza (AI) is suspected contact your veterinarian immediately. Do not transport birds or other samples off of the farm.