



# Standard Operating Procedure: Bovine and Equine Examination per Rectum

These SOPs were developed by the Office of the University Veterinarian and veterinarians at the VMCVM and reviewed by Virginia Tech IACUC to provide a reference and guidance to investigators during protocol preparation and IACUC reviewers during protocol review. They can be used as referenced descriptions for procedures on IACUC protocols.

However, it is the sole responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the referenced SOPs adequately cover and accurately represent procedures to be undertaken in any research project or instructional activity. Any modification to procedure as described in the SOP must be outlined in each IACUC protocol application (e.g. if the Principal Investigator plans to use a needle size that is not referenced in the SOP, simply state that alteration in the IACUC protocol itself).

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## I. Procedure Summary and Goal

Describes procedures for the thorough and systematic bovine and equine rectal examinations.

Considerations:

Rectal examinations can be completed during the physical examination. This can help to better assess the reproductive status of the animal as well as other organ systems. Care should be taken to be sure the procedure is done carefully in order to decrease the risk of iatrogenic problems. The animal should be monitored during this time for any signs of distress.

## II. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hygiene

- a. Ensure appropriate PPE is used to protect handler from accidental injury or exposure to blood and other body fluids.
- b. Rectal palpation is a potentially dangerous procedure.
  - i. The animal needs to be properly restrained using physical restraint and/or sedation. See appropriate SOPs.
  - ii. It is recommended to initiate the procedure from the side of the animal (displace tail and insert fingers or hand) to decrease risk of a kick injury.
- c. Always wash your hands after handling an animal.

## III. Supply List

- a. OB sleeve
- b. OB lube

## IV. Detailed Procedure

- a. Bovine Rectal Examination
  - i. The animal should be properly restrained during this procedure. Please refer to the restraint SOP.
  - ii. The rectal examination should be performed last if accompanied by a physical examination.
  - iii. Examine the perineal and tail area for any evidence of blood, mucus, discharge of feces.
  - iv. Lube the OB sleeve with an adequate amount and insert hand, beginning with tips of fingers, into the rectum. The arm should be inserted as far as needed in order to properly assess the entire reproductive tract and/or abdominal organs.
- b. Equine Rectal Examination
  - i. The animal should be properly restrained during this procedure. Please refer to the restraint SOP.
  - ii. Chemical restraint may be needed for this procedure based on the behavior of the horse. Please refer to the sedation SOP if needed.

- iii. The rectal examination should be performed last if accompanied by a physical examination.
- iv. Examine the perineal and tail area for any evidence of blood, mucus, discharge of feces.
- v. Lube the OB sleeve with an adequate amount and insert hand, beginning with tips of fingers, into the rectum. The arm should be inserted as far as needed in order to properly assess the entire reproductive tract and/or abdominal organs.

## **V. Variations**

The order of the rectal examination can be altered to accommodate the individual's preference as long as it remains systematic and thorough.

## **VI. Potential Adverse Effects, Mitigation, or Treatment**

- a. Trauma
  - i. Rectal tear indicated by blood on the sleeve
    - 1. Contact veterinary staff.
    - 2. Contact the Office of the University Veterinarian to inform about adverse event.

## **VII. Suggested Literature Search for Pain Category D and E Procedures**

Not applicable

## **VIII. References**

Rectal Examination." University of Pennsylvania Veterinary Medicine. N.p., n.d. Web.

"Equine Rectal Examination." University of Pennsylvania Veterinary Medicine. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Apr. 2017.

Southwood, Louise L. Practical Guide to Equine Colic. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. Prin