

WOAH Reference Laboratory Reports Activities 2025

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LABORATORY INFORMATION

*Name of disease (or topic) for which you are a designated WOA Reference Laboratory:	African horse sickness
*Address of laboratory:	The Pirbright Institute, Ash Road, Woking, GU24 0NF
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Website:	https://www.pirbright.ac.uk/
*Name (including Title) of Head of Laboratory (Responsible Official):	Prof Bryan Charleston, Institute Director
*Name (including Title and Position) of WOA Reference Expert:	Dr Carrie Batten, Head of Non Vesicular Reference laboratories
*Which of the following defines your laboratory? Check all that apply:	Research Institute

TOR1: DIAGNOSTIC METHODS

1. Did your laboratory perform diagnostic tests for the specified disease/topic for purposes such as disease diagnosis, screening of animals for export, surveillance, etc.? (Not for quality control, proficiency testing or staff training)

Yes

Diagnostic Test	Indicated in WOA Manual (Yes/No)	Total number of test performed last year	
		Nationally	Internationally
Indirect diagnostic tests			
ELISA	Yes	333	14
Direct diagnostic tests			
Real time RT-PCR	Yes	15	275

TOR2: REFERENCE MATERIAL

2. Did your laboratory produce or supply imported standard reference reagents officially recognised by WOA?

No

3. Did your laboratory supply standard reference reagents (nonWOAH-approved) and/or other diagnostic reagents to WOA Members?

Yes

Type of reagent available	Related diagnostic test	Produced/ provide	Amount supplied nationally (ml, mg)	Amount supplied internationally (ml, mg)	No. of recipient WOA Member Countries	Country of recipients
AHSV-5 reference strain	PCR	Provided	1ml	0	1	UNITED KINGDOM,
AHSV-7 reference serum	ELISA	Provided	0	2ml	1	FRANCE,
AHSV-8 reference serum	ELISA	Provided	0	1ml	1	FRANCE,
AHSV reference serum 1-9	ELISA	Provided	0	9 x 1ml	1	HONG KONG,

Carrie Batten - - UNITED_KINGDOM

AHSV reference nucleic acids 1-9	PCR	Provided	0	100ul of each	1	HONG KONG,
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4. Did your laboratory produce vaccines?

No

5. Did your laboratory supply vaccines to WOAHA Members?

TOR3: NEW PROCEDURES

6. Did your laboratory develop new diagnostic methods for the designated pathogen or disease?

No

7. Did your laboratory validate diagnostic methods according to WOAHA Standards for the designated pathogen or disease?

No

8. Did your laboratory develop new vaccines for the designated pathogen or disease?

9. Did your laboratory validate vaccines according to WOAHA Standards for the designated pathogen or disease?

TOR4: DIAGNOSTIC TESTING FACILITIES

10. Did your laboratory carry out diagnostic testing for other WOAHA Members?

No

11. Did your laboratory provide expert advice in technical consultancies on the request of an WOAHA Member?

Yes

Name of the WOAHA Member Country receiving a technical consultancy	Purpose	How the advice was provided
GHANA	advice around a research grant application	virtual and email
HONG KONG	choice and procurement of reference materials	email
SAUDI ARABIA	access to PT schemes for a private laboratory	email
AUSTRALIA	access to PT schemes	email
ECUADOR	discussion re diagnostic provision	email

TOR5: COLLABORATIVE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL STUDIES

12. Did your laboratory participate in international scientific studies in collaboration with WOAHA Members other than the own?

No

13. In exercising your activities, have you identified any regulatory research needs* relevant for WOAHA?

No

TOR6: EPIZOOLOGICAL DATA

14. Did your Laboratory collect epidemiological data relevant to international disease control?

No

15. Did your laboratory disseminate epidemiological data that had been processed and analysed?

No

16. What method of dissemination of information is most often used by your laboratory? (Indicate in the appropriate box the number by category and list the details in the box)

a) Articles published in peer-reviewed journals:

1

Jorge Morales; María José Ruano; Cristina Tena-Tomás; Antoinette van Schalkwyk; Eleni-Anna Loundras; Marta Valero-Lorenzo; Ana López-Herranz; Marco Romito; Carrie Batten; Rubén Villalba and Montserrat Agüero 2025. Modification and Validation of a Reference Real-Time RT-PCR Method for the Detection of a New African Horse Sickness Virus Variant. *Microorganisms*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/microorganisms13122684>

b) International conferences:

0

c) National conferences:

1

Equine vector-borne disease event, 22nd May 2025
Newmarket, UK

d) Other (Provide website address or link to appropriate information):

0

TOR7: SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

17. Did your laboratory provide scientific and technical training to laboratory personnel from other WOA Members?

No

TOR8: QUALITY ASSURANCE

18. Does your laboratory have a Quality Management System?

Yes

Quality management system adopted	Certificate scan (PDF, JPG, PNG format)	
ISO/IEC 17025	UKAS	UKAS 4025 16June2025.pdf

19. Is your quality management system accredited?

Yes

Test for which your laboratory is accredited	Accreditation body
ELISA	UKAS
real time RT-PCR Agüero	UKAS
real time RT-PCR Guthrie	UKAS
Virus Isolation	UKAS

20. Does your laboratory maintain a "biorisk management system" for the pathogen and the disease concerned?

Yes

All our management systems are built around UK legislation, some is based on WHO and WOA, but not directly translatable as it's updated into UK law before it's applied. All facilities have their operational risk assessment and specific activity risk assessments where required. We have a process in place for reporting incidents relating to biorisk, including an investigation process and lessons learned. There is also an inspection and audit programme which monitors compliance with Biorisk related legislation including SAPO, COSHH (where it relates to human pathogens), and GM (contained use). We are inspected by the HSE as part of a proactive intervention plan, where parts of our biorisk management system are scrutinised and sampled to check compliance and we are also visited and inspected by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) to ensure any 'dual-use' materials are being held securely.

TOR9: SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

21. Did your laboratory organise scientific meetings related to the pathogen in question on behalf of WOA?

No

22. Did your laboratory participate in scientific meetings related to the pathogen in question on behalf of WOA?

No

TOR10: NETWORK WITH WOAHO REFERENCE LABORATORIES

23. Did your laboratory exchange information with other WOAHO Reference Laboratories designated for the same pathogen or disease?

Yes

24. Are you a member of a network of WOAHO Reference Laboratories designated for the same pathogen?

No

25. Did you organise or participate in inter-laboratory proficiency tests with WOAHO Reference Laboratories designated for the same pathogen during the past 2 years?

Yes

Purpose of the proficiency test:	Role of your Reference Laboratory (organiser/ participant)	No. participating Laboratories	Participating WOAHO Ref. Labs/ organising WOAHO Ref Lab
Harmonisation of diagnostic methods	Participant	42	LCV Spain - organiser OVI South Africa - participant

26. Did your laboratory collaborate with other WOAHO Reference Laboratories for the same disease on scientific research projects for the diagnosis or control of the pathogen of interest?

Yes

Title of the project or contract	Scope	Name(s) of relevant WOAHO Reference Laboratories
Modification of Aguero real time RT-PCR Primers and probes	To ensure the Aguero et al real time RT-PCR is able to detect all African circulating strains	LCV Spain OVI South Africa Pirbright UK

TOR11: OTHER INTERLABORATORY PROFICIENCY TESTING

27. Did your laboratory organise or participate in inter-laboratory proficiency tests with laboratories other than WOAHO Reference Laboratories for the same pathogen during the past 2 years?

Yes

Purpose for inter-laboratory test comparisons ¹	Role of your reference laboratory (organizer/participant)	No. participating laboratories	Name of the test	WOAHO Member Countries
Harmonisation of diagnostic methods	Participant	42	ELISA	ALGERIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, CANADA, CROATIA, CYPRUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HONG KONG, HUNGARY, IRELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, MALAYSIA, MALTA, MOROCCO, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SERBIA, SINGAPORE, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SOUTH AFRICA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, THAILAND, THE NETHERLANDS, TUNISIA, TURKEY, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, UNITED KINGDOM,
Harmonisation of diagnostic methods	Participant	42	real time RT-PCR	ALGERIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, CANADA, CROATIA, CYPRUS, CZECH REPUBLIC, DENMARK, FINLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HONG KONG, HUNGARY, IRELAND, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, MALAYSIA, MALTA, MOROCCO, POLAND, PORTUGAL, ROMANIA, SERBIA, SINGAPORE, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SOUTH AFRICA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, THAILAND, THE NETHERLANDS, TUNISIA, TURKEY, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, UNITED KINGDOM,

TOR12: EXPERT CONSULTANTS

28. Did your laboratory place expert consultants at the disposal of WOAHO?

Yes

Kind of consultancy	Location	Subject (facultative)
Ad Hoc Group on revamping WOAHO Register of	Virtual	Dr Carrie Batten was appointed as chair of the AHG.

Carrie Batten - - UNITED_KINGDOM

Diagnostic Kits

29. Additional comments regarding your report:

Yes

There has been little AHSV activity outside of Africa this year, hence no diagnostic submissions, however we do perform post import testing on behalf of 2 WOAHA members. African countries affected by AHSV have a tendency to use the South African reference laboratory due to the cost of international shipments..

We continue to take enquiries for reagents, which we supply as soon as all import permits etc are in place.

Internally we have reviewed our AHSV serotyping real-time RT-PCR assays to ensure they detect all known circulating strains.

The Pirbright has active orbivirus and entomological research groups, who regularly publish in high impact journals, this information is directly relevant to aspects of AHSV control.

We have set up an orbivirus interest group (monthly calls) with the BTV WOAHA reference laboratory in Australia, where we discuss common research interests into orbiviruses and culicoides, this is attended by numerous group leaders from Pirbright, led by the reference labs.

For question 27 some countries had more than one laboratory participate

An SLA has been put in place for the WOAHA reference laboratory to provide diagnostic support for AHS should the need arise to Ecuador.