Protocol for Blood Smear for Babesia cytology:
Available for exports only

Test available at VBDDL: Babesia cytological examination of Giemsa stained blood smears.

Some countries require certification of health for companion animals entering/leaving the country (ie Australia, New Zealand, S.Africa, S.Korea). In addition to proof of rabies vaccination, serology tests may be required for Babesia, Ehrlichia, and Leishmania with testing performed and documented on samples collected within prescribed timeframes (16-30 days) before travel dates. IFA for these genera is offered by the VBDDL. For Babesia, cytological screening for intraerythrocytic trophozoites of Babesia by light microscopic examination of thick or thin smears of peripheral blood is part of the requirements for importing animals into some nations. Microscopically, the species of Babesia involved can be determined morphologically, but expertise is required.* B.canis (subspecies include B canis canis, B canis vogeli, and B canis rossi) and B gibsoni differ in size with B.gibsoni being a much smaller parasite. Blood smear examination can detect patient parasitemia approximately two weeks from tick exposure and is highly specific but, because parasitemia is highly variable, cytology can lack sensitivity. The VBDDL recommends molecular PCR assay as a more sensitive and specific method for the diagnosis of babesiosis in non-export canine patients.

To request a Babesia spp. Giemsa Blood Smear Examination for Export:

1) Select “Blood Smear” Test option on the VBDDL Test Request Form.

2) Include required Microchip Number at the top of the form for reporting purposes.

3) Submit 2mls of EDTA whole blood (lavender top tube) on ice packs overnight.

*All smears are prepared freshly and undergo a minimum of 30 minutes of microscopic evaluation by qualified personnel.

Reports for exports are specially prepared in Portable Document Format (PDF) to include all required data including date of collection, date of receipt and date finalized as well as full identification of animal and individual Microchip Number. Full descriptions of the test method(s) utilized are spelled out to prevent confusions that may delay transport of companion animals.