

Kim, Sabrina

From: Kim, Sabrina
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2020 1:18 PM
To: Stickney, Matt
Cc: Caron, Zoe
Subject: FYI - Reagents from CFIA to AB

FYI – saw this in an article the other day: **“Agriculture Canada has been providing reagents to the provincial lab in Alberta as it waits for an order of the testing solution to arrive, said Alberta Health spokesman Tom McMillan.”**

Looks like a CFIA laboratory sent reagents to the Alberta Public Health Lab because they had a big testing backlog and needed help – the lab was then able to perform 500 tests.

Ag says this CFIA lab uses these kits to do animal health diagnostic tests & research and that “it seems CFIA stands ready to help should they have the capacity to do so” in so long as they have what they need to continue their “normal operations”.

I assume this is on peoples’ radars as something that we might be able to leverage but just wanted to let ya know in case it isn’t.

From: Comeau, Jean-Sébastien (AAFC/AAC) <jean-sebastien.comeau@canada.ca>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2020 1:51 PM
To: Kim, Sabrina <Sabrina.Kim@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>; Anderson, Oliver (AAFC/AAC) <oliver.anderson@canada.ca>; Caron, Zoe <Zoe.Caron@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Testing backlog linked to shortage of chemicals needed for COVID-19 test

Hi Sabrina,

Requests of this kind would be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure CFIA still has what it needs to be able to continue it's normal operations, but it seems to me that they stand ready to help should they have the capacity to do so.

With regards to this specific request:

- The CFIA Lethbridge laboratory uses these kits to do animal health diagnostic tests and research.
- The reagents sent to Alberta public health lab were sufficient to perform close to 500 tests.

Jean-Sébastien Comeau

Cabinet de la ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Agroalimentaire / Office of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

----- Original message -----

From: "Kim, Sabrina" <Sabrina.Kim@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Date: 2020-03-26 10:57 (GMT-05:00)

To: "Comeau, Jean-Sébastien (AAFC/AAC)" <jean-sebastien.comeau@canada.ca>, "Anderson, Oliver (AAFC/AAC)" <oliver.anderson@canada.ca>, "Caron, Zoe" <Zoe.Caron@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Testing backlog linked to shortage of chemicals needed for COVID-19 test

Okay thanks.

What does CFIA's research institute usually use these kits for, and how many did they send? Do they have the ability to share more with AB Public Health and are any of their other research institutes across the country doing similar things with other local / health authorities?

I ask because provincial and federal Ministers are trying to work with colleges / universities / a whole bunch of other partners to see if they could share medical supplies / equipment that they aren't using right now to address supply shortages.

If CFIA has things they might be able to share to support these efforts – would be great to know.

Thanks!
Sabrina

From: Comeau, Jean-Sébastien (AAFC/AAC) <jean-sebastien.comeau@canada.ca>
Sent: Thursday, March 26, 2020 10:26 AM
To: Anderson, Oliver (AAFC/AAC) <oliver.anderson@canada.ca>; Kim, Sabrina <Sabrina.Kim@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>; Caron, Zoe <Zoe.Caron@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Subject: RE: Testing backlog linked to shortage of chemicals needed for COVID-19 test

From AAFC's Science and Tech Branch:

- AAFC has not provided reagents to any provincial labs, including Alberta.
- However, our CFIA counterpart indicated that their Research Institute in Lethbridge has sent kits to Alberta Provincial Laboratory for Public Health in Edmonton.

CFIA's checking on their end.

Jean-Sébastien Comeau

Cabinet de la ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Agroalimentaire / Office of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

----- Original message -----

From: "Anderson, Oliver (AAFC/AAC)" <oliver.anderson@canada.ca>
Date: 2020-03-25 15:50 (GMT-05:00)
To: "Kim, Sabrina" <Sabrina.Kim@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>, "Caron, Zoe" <Zoe.Caron@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Cc: "Comeau, Jean-Sébastien (AAFC/AAC)" <jean-sebastien.comeau@canada.ca>
Subject: RE: Testing backlog linked to shortage of chemicals needed for COVID-19 test

Adding Jean-Sebastien who is looking into this

Sent from my Bell Samsung device over Canada's largest network.

----- Original message -----

From: "Kim, Sabrina" <Sabrina.Kim@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Date: 2020-03-25 15:38 (GMT-05:00)

To: "Anderson, Oliver (AAFC/AAC)" <oliver.anderson@canada.ca>, "Caron, Zoe" <Zoe.Caron@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Subject: FW: Testing backlog linked to shortage of chemicals needed for COVID-19 test

Hi friends – just seeing this in a CP article from earlier today and am wondering if you have any more info? Also wondering if you've heard any specific concerns from business re: CFIA food inspectors on concerns re personal protective equipment shortages?

Agriculture Canada has been providing reagents to the provincial lab in Alberta as it waits for an order of the testing solution to arrive, said Alberta Health spokesman Tom McMillan. The lab is also working with the University of Calgary, University of Alberta and the University of Lethbridge to find any available supply.

"If the reagents run critically low, there are testing contingencies in place that will ensure we do not have to slow or halt COVID-19 testing," he said in an email.

Thanks!
Sabrina

From: News / Nouvelles (PCO/BCP) <News-Nouvelles@pco-bcp.gc.ca>

Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 7:38 AM

To: Kim, Sabrina <Sabrina.Kim@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Subject: CP: Testing backlog linked to shortage of chemicals needed for COVID-19 test

CP: Testing backlog linked to shortage of chemicals needed for COVID-19 test

Testing backlog linked to shortage of chemicals needed for COVID-19 test

Kelly Geraldine Malone
The Canadian Press
Published Wednesday, March 25, 2020

Regions across Canada are ramping up efforts to identify people with COVID-19 but some labs are facing a backlog due to diminishing supplies of essential chemicals needed for tests.

"We all would want more tests," Canada's chief public officer Dr. Theresa Tam said Tuesday.

The World Health Organization has said expansive testing is the way to curb the pandemic, but global demand has outpaced the supply of reagents -- the specific chemicals needed by laboratories to complete the tests.

The Center for Disease Control in the United States has also said that important reagents are "now are in short supply," a worry echoed by medical associations around the world.

They are all looking for the chemical solutions at the same time and, as a result, some Canadian health authorities and labs are seeking alternative supply chains.

Nearly 120,000 Canadians have been tested for the novel coronavirus -- an average of 10,000 a day.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford on Monday linked that province's huge testing backlog to a lack of reagents. He said health officials were doing everything they could to get more of the chemicals.

Agriculture Canada has been providing reagents to the provincial lab in Alberta as it waits for an order of the testing solution to arrive, said Alberta Health spokesman Tom McMillan. The lab is also working with the University of Calgary, University of Alberta and the University of Lethbridge to find any available supply.

"If the reagents run critically low, there are testing contingencies in place that will ensure we do not have to slow or halt COVID-19 testing," he said in an email.

Manitoba's chief public health officer, Dr. Brent Roussin, said this week he couldn't quantify the shortage in that province but noted it is a major factor in slowing down tests.

"Right now the major roadblock is the reagent and that is worldwide."

Manitoba's provincial lab is working on a solution, Roussin added, which may involve manufacturing its own reagents.

Health Canada is also exploring alternative COVID-19 tests and the national lab in Winnipeg is working to determine their efficacy.

Certain groups are being prioritized for testing in Canada, including anyone in long-term care facilities, patients who are already hospitalized and health-care workers.

"This virus has spread unbelievably quickly," said Jason Kindrachuk, a research chair in emerging viruses at the University of Manitoba.

"We didn't appreciate how quickly it would be spread across the globe."

He said when the novel coronavirus began to emerge in early January, some countries purchased significant amounts of important supplies. Those countries, including Australia, South Korea and Singapore, have been able to do expansive testing and have had success in mitigation and containment.

The pandemic has also resulted in critical shortages of personal protective equipment, ventilators and the swabs used in testing.

Kindrachuk said he saw similar supply issues when he was leading diagnostic efforts in Liberia during the Ebola outbreak in 2014.

Not everyone who should have been tested was, he said. The most important shift in that fight was getting people to keep distance from one another, he said.

"When we talk about physical distancing, this is not only keeping six feet away from people when you are out getting essentials. But this applies to everything that you do.

"All the short-term sacrifices will help us in the long term."

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