DNA FAQs

What lab should I use for DNA testing?
The only ASA approved lab for DNA testing is Neogen. Only results from Neogen will be entered into the DigitalBeef registry.

Can I use Zoetis cards?
No you cannot use Zoetis hair cards when testing samples through Neogen. The Zoetis cards contain an adhesive that inhibits the PCR reactions thus reducing the quality of data and increasing failure rates. If samples are submitted on non-Neogen cards, the lab will charge an additional $2 fee to clean the sample and re-card.

How do I request DNA cards?
DNA cards can be requested two ways. The quickest way is to fill out the online order form at on the website. Cards can also be requested by calling the office.

Blood cards from Zoetis, AGI, etc. are acceptable and will not be charged any additional lab fees.

What are acceptable forms of DNA?
Acceptable forms of DNA include: blood card (preferred), thawed semen straw, ear punch or hair follicles from the **tail switch**. **Blood cards** from Zoetis, AGI, etc. are acceptable and will not be charged any additional lab fees.

How do I pull a quality hair sample?
All hair samples should be pulled from the tail switch and no other place on the animal. Do not cut the hair as the hair root contains the DNA material needed for testing. The best way to pull the hair sample is to wrap the hair around a pencil or your finger and pull up. Please include 30-40 hair follicles for testing and make sure the sample is free of debris and manure. Place the hair root in the middle of the collector and close the plastic cover over the sample. Finally trim off any excess hair extending from the collector.

How do I send a straw of semen?
Semen does not have to be frozen. The best way to ship semen is inside of an ink pen, with the cap taped on. This will prevent the semen straw from breaking while in transit to the office. It is also a good idea to place a piece of scotch tape over the end of the semen straw that contains the plugs, sometimes as the semen thaws the plugs will come out and all of the semen will be lost.

How long can DNA samples be stored once they are pulled?
Blood and hair cards can be stored forever if they are stored in a cool dry place.

How can I start my on-farm DNA library?
As DNA testing becomes more and more the norm in today's beef industry it may be a good idea to start building your own on farm DNA library. A good habit is to start pulling hair samples at a minimum on all natural service sires and potential donor cows. Once the hair sample is pulled place the hair in a sealed envelope and label the envelope with the animal's registration number, tattoo and name and store in a cool dry place. Starting the library ensures that you have a readily available sample if you ever need to do any DNA testing or if the animal unexpectedly dies.

Should my animal be registered before it's tested?
No, animals do not have to be registered to be tested, a good rule of thumb is to have each animal registered or recorded as an unregistered calf in the registry. This gives the animal a unique identification number that allows the ASA to record and track results through the registry system.

I have my samples pulled, now what?
Submit all DNA samples, DNA Submission Forms and payment directly to the American Shorthorn Association office. Please accurately fill out the submission form including membership number, contact information, registration numbers and test requests. Samples submitted without a DNA Submission Form will be charged an additional $5. Any hair samples sent without a hair card will be charged $5 per head, as well as any semen straws sent will be $5 each (these are fees that the lab charges the ASA).

What information should be included on the DNA Card?
The most important thing to include on the DNA sample is the animal's registration number and tattoo. The registration number is the most unique identification number the ASA can provide and traces to that individual only. If the animal is not registered or recorded list at minimum a tattoo number and name that coincides with the paperwork you submit to the ASA. Please remember to label the DNA samples and the DNA Testing Form with the same animal IDs!

What tests need completed on my AI Sire or Donor Dam to register calves?
AI Sires and Donor Dams need the following tests in order to register the resulting progeny – DNA Genotype (SeekSire), TH, PHA and DS test. Neogen offers a bundle price of $80 per head to complete the AI Sire and Donor Dam requirements.

How long will testing take?
Testing may take up to 8 weeks, but typical turnaround time has been 4-6 weeks once the lab receives your DNA sample. If you are planning to print DNA results in a sale catalog, it would be a good idea to submit samples ***at least*** 3 months in advance to account for mail time, failed samples, etc.

I don't know who the sire of my calf is now whats?
This happens more than most of you realize, so don't feel bad! To verify parentage, we will need a DNA sample on the calf in question and a DNA sample on at least one of the potential sires or dams. Fill out the ASA Parentage Testing form with the potential sires or dams and select the SeekSire test for parental verification. If the calf is the result of AI or ET the ASA should already have a DNA genotype on file to use. The cost of the SeekSire test is $35 per head.

Why do I need to re-submit a new sample on an animal if they previously had a DNA profile on file?
Animals that were tested previous to May 1, 2014 will have a microsatellite DNA profile. With the switch to Neogen the ASA will be using SNP-DNA profiles. If parental verification is needed it may be necessary to produce a new profile to verify the calf.

How do I receive my results?
Results are emailed to the email address on file at the association or a paper copy is mailed if there is not an email address on file. The DNA results will be loaded into the Digital Beef Registry once the final results have been sent to the breeder.