

QUESTION: Why do some veterinary clinics report such low canine sperm motility recoveries after thawing for an insemination compared to much higher rates observed in the ICSB semen laboratory at the time the semen was frozen?

By Professor Carrol Platz, Jr., Founder
International Canine Semen Banks, Sandy, Oregon

Here are a few reasons why this may have been reported:

Less than 1 percent of the veterinarians we ship frozen semen to for artificial inseminations report low sperm recoveries after thawing. Almost all of the veterinarians that we work with report thaw recoveries close to the post-thaw motility that we see in our laboratory. We have seen that those few clinics that report such low recoveries do not follow the retrieval and thaw instructions that are shipped with the frozen semen. These instructions have been developed from our laboratory research results and represent over 40 years of trial and error testing to provide the optimum conditions for sperm recovery from the frozen state. Some of the errors that we have encountered at these clinics that report such low recovery rates are:

- 1. Thaw temperatures are set either too low or too high.**
- 2. Failure to use the thaw media provided in the shipment**
- 3. Failure to thaw the semen correctly in the thaw bag provided**
- 4. Substituting other-than-ICSB thaw media**
- 5. Second guessing ICSB procedures and accompanying media**
- 6. Failure to handle the frozen semen in a timely manner**

The ICSB retrieval and thawing procedures are very straightforward and quick. It is essential that thaw temperatures be correct and attention is paid to the thawed semen specimen. If the semen is transferred too slowly or sits for too long prior to the evaluation and insemination, a lowered sperm motility will occur.

We recommend and refer only veterinarians with whom we have worked that have shown thawing results that are within the expected range. We ask that each veterinarian send us a post-thaw report that allows us to evaluate the results of the retrieval and thawing. We also offer a short training workshop in retrieval and thawing of frozen semen showing the correct procedures. We can be reached at (503) 663-7031.