Q: What types of organizations are accredited under A2LA’s Veterinary Program?
A: The goal of A2LA’s Animal Health Program is to promote animal health through the accreditation of veterinary and animal drug testing laboratories. A2LA-accredited veterinary laboratories include government, academic, and commercial organizations responsible for a variety of activities including disease surveillance and disease diagnostics for commercially- and privately-owned animals.

A complete listing of the currently accredited veterinary laboratories is available at https://www.a2la.org/dirsearchnew/searchbyspec.cfm?standpk=39&title=Veterinary%20Laboratory%20Accreditation%20Program.

Q: What standards are used to accredit laboratories under A2LA’s Veterinary Program and who recognizes this accreditation?
A: Veterinary laboratories are accredited to ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and OIE Quality Standard and Guidelines for Veterinary Laboratories: Infectious Diseases, 2008. The ISO standard is non-prescriptive and is flexible to the needs of the laboratory. This accreditation is accepted by the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) as one way to meet their evaluation criteria. Additionally, ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation is an internationally-recognized statement of competency and can be valuable when applying for government funding, importing or exporting animal products, or for use as a marketing tool.

Q: What areas of my laboratory will the assessor look at?
A: An A2LA laboratory assessment includes a thorough examination of the laboratory’s compliance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and the OIE Standard as well as its compliance with its own internal policies and procedures. Additionally, for each applicant to the A2LA accreditation program, a Scope of Accreditation is drafted. This document is a list of all of the tests for which the laboratory is seeking accreditation. A2LA assessors perform an assessment of the methods listed on the Scope to ensure that the laboratory is technically competent to perform them. It is important to note that this technical assessment is limited to activities directly related to the tests on the proposed Scope of Accreditation, allowing applicants to manage the areas they wish to have assessed. Organizations may apply for as many or as few tests as they wish.

Q: What does A2LA Accreditation cost?
A: The cost to obtain accreditation will vary depending on the size of the laboratory seeking accreditation, the number of tests on the proposed Scope of Accreditation, and the laboratory's readiness for assessment. Estimates are available at no cost for interested parties and discounts are available for multi-location organizations.
Q: What resources are available to aid in the accreditation process?
A: A2LA assigns a dedicated Accreditation Officer to every single applicant. This person is a point of contact for the laboratory for the lifetime of their accreditation, providing assistance and support throughout the accreditation process. Lauren Smith is the Senior Accreditation Officer and primary point of contact for A2LA’s Animal Health Program and is available at LSmith@A2LA.org and (240) 575 7482 to answer questions and to provide free estimates.

Additionally, to assist laboratories in preparing for accreditation, A2LA offers commercially available training courses on the preparation and implementation of a quality management system and specific aspects of the standard such as root cause analysis and corrective action. Please visit the A2LA Training Page at https://www.a2la.org/training/index.cfm for a list of upcoming courses.

Q: How is A2LA governed as an Accreditation Body?
A: A2LA is a signatory to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). This means that A2LA has been found to be compliant with ISO/IEC 17011, the standard by which accrediting bodies are to operate, and has been found to accredit laboratories to ISO/IEC 17025 in a manner consistent with other MRA signatory accreditation bodies around the world. A2LA is regularly evaluated by a panel of its MRA signatory peers to ensure continued compliance. Due to A2LA’s ILAC recognition, accredited laboratories find that A2LA maintains a process that ensures the ISO/IEC 17025 standard is applied fairly to all organizations without bias or inconsistent interpretations.