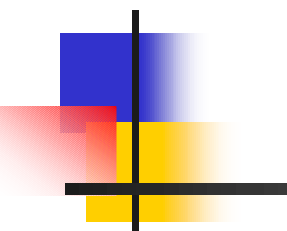
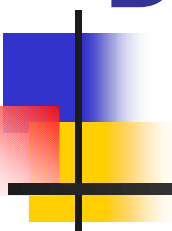


The Myth About Vaginal Cultures

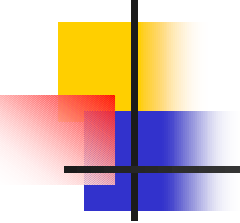


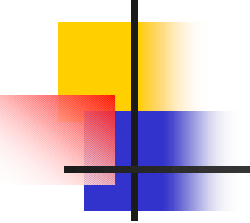
Frances O. Smith DVM, PhD

Diplomate American College of
Theriogenology



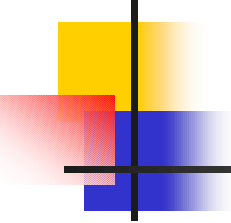
When is a vaginal culture useful?

- 
- During investigation of reproductive failure
 - To identify bacteria present in a vaginal discharge during any portion of the reproductive cycle of the bitch



What is known about bacteria isolated from the bitch vagina?

- Approximately 60% of normal bitches harbor aerobic bacteria in the cranial vagina
- Approximately 90% have aerobic bacteria in the caudal vagina



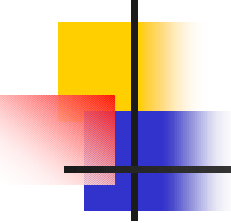
What is known about bacteria isolated from the bitch vagina? (cont.)

- Numbers of bacteria isolated during proestrus and estrus are higher than at other times
- Anaerobic bacteria are also isolated from the canine vagina including Bacteroidaceae and Clostridium

Mycoplasma and ureaplasma are similarly found in many bitches.

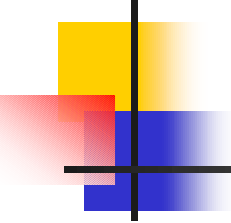


- Slightly higher percentages of infertile bitches culture positive for the above than did fertile bitches
- 80.5% of bitches with reproductive diseases cultured positive
- 51.3% of clinically healthy bitches test positive



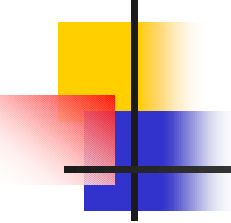
How to culture:

- Use guarded swabs
- Culture anterior vagina
- Uterus not readily accessible to culture per vagina



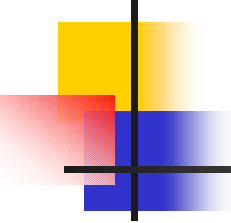
When to culture:

- In proestrus or estrus
- After whelping
- In presence of vaginal discharge



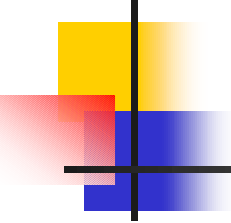
Interpreting Cultures

- I report culture results as normal vaginal flora or no growth
- A pure culture with a purulent discharge present or a history of infertility may be significant



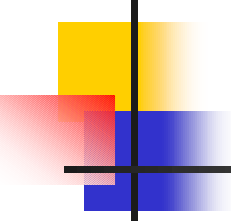
What about VD?

- *Brucella canis* is the only proven bacterium demonstrated to cause infertility



Remember:

- Brucella can be transmitted both venereally and orally



Finally...

- Often stud owners request a culture prior to mating-- remember stud dogs harbor the same organisms as bitches