Evaluation of Environmental Sampling and Culture to Determine Mycobacterium avium ssp. paratuberculosis Distribution and Herd Infection Status on US Dairy Operations. By Lombard et al., page 4163. One component of the National Animal Health Monitoring System’s Dairy 2002 study involved collection and culture of environmental samples for Mycobacterium avium ssp. paratuberculosis. Individual animal serum and fecal samples were used to classify herds as infected or not infected based on the presence of at least one test-positive animal in the herd. Environmental sample culturing is less costly than individual animal sampling and identified more than 70% of operations with one or more test-positive animals. Environmental sampling is another diagnostic tool that veterinarians and dairy producers can use to determine herd infection status for Mycobacterium avium ssp. paratuberculosis.