**Processing Stool Samples for 16S Amplicon Sequencing**

1. Begin by collecting fecal droppings using a sterile spatula.
2. Combine the collected fecal samples into a single sterile 1.5 or 2ml microfuge tube.
3. Weigh the contents of the tube to record the fecal sample's weight.
4. Prepare sterile PBS with 5% cysteine stock approx. 100ml in two 50ml culture tube.
5. In a 15ml culture tube, suspend the fecal sample in sterile PBS with 5% cysteine. The dilution rate should be 1:5, meaning for every 1 gram of sample, add 5ml of PBS along with cysteine.
6. Vigorously vortex the 15ml culture tube for 2-3 minutes to ensure thorough mixing and homogenization.
7. Transfer 1 ml of the homogenized fecal suspension into a 1.5ml microfuge tube.
8. Store the aliquoted tubes in a freezer at -80°C for preservation.
9. When shipping samples for 16S sequencing, send only one of the prepared Eppendorf tubes.