

Q Laboratories, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio, has been selected as the independent laboratory to conduct the AOAC Research Institute's (AOAC-RI) new Emergency Response Validation (ERV) Program for peanut butter.

The AOAC -RI, a subsidiary of AOAC INTERNATIONAL, has launched the new ERV program, which is designed to respond immediately to emerging food contamination crises by rapidly evaluating candidate methods once a crisis is identified.

The ERV program is based on the Performance-Tested Methods<sup>SM</sup> (PTM) program operated by the AOAC Research Institute. Candidate test kit methods will be evaluated using blind coded samples and the results reviewed by the AOAC General Referee for Microbiology. Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency have agreed to participate in the project and will compare analytical results between the FDA Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) method and the Health Canada method for the detection of Salmonella.

On January 30, 2009, eight companies submitted 12 test kit methods for evaluation. Samples are now being prepared by Q Laboratories, Inc. The evaluation of the candidate methods is scheduled to start on February 23, 2009. The review of the laboratory test results is scheduled for completion on March 4, 2009. A list of test kit methods validated for the detection of Salmonella species in peanut butter will be posted to the AOAC Research Institute website on or about March 25, 2009.

PTMs approved for Salmonella species in peanut butter will receive a special Certificate of Validation and will quickly become trustworthy tools for investigators, food regulators, and the industry.

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Meghan McDonough has been promoted to Microbiology Group Leader at Cincinnati-based testing laboratory, Q Laboratories, Inc. Ms. McDonough has worked as a Microbiologist at Q Laboratories, Inc. since February 2007. As Microbiology Group Leader, Ms. McDonough will be responsible for organizing and scheduling the work load of the section, and assuring that projects are accomplished in a timely and scientifically sound manner. Other responsibilities will be to monitor quality control records, assure that proper records are maintained and studies are conducted in compliance with established standard operating procedures.