WHAT'S NEW AT Q

The Official Newsletter of Q Laboratories, Inc.

November 2014
VOLUME XV ISSUE 3A

An ISO/IEC 17025 Accredited Laboratory

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As all of us in the food industry continue to closely monitor how the provisions of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) are applied and interpreted, we need to remain diligent in preparing for what will come next. One possible stipulation of FSMA is that all microbiology methods utilized must be proven to be proficient for your particular products. There are a multitude of methods available that have been validated as acceptable for use. Typically these methods/kits are validated through an organization such as AOAC International, MicroVal or AFNOR, either by an independent laboratory evaluation or a more stringent multi-laboratory study. Methods are also included in compendia developed and published by the FDA and USDA-FSIS. These methods are usually validated against a wide range of matrices such as, ground beef, chicken, leafy greens, peanut butter, non-fat dry milk and stainless steel environmental surfaces. The intention is to validate them against a large variety of products to demonstrate their versatility and adaptability. However your products may not fit into one of the matrix categories for which a particular method/kit has been validated. A targeted method verification study proving proficiency of a particular method for your product(s) can assure you meet FSMA and ISO 17025 requirements. A method verification will demonstrate the method achieves an acceptable level of precision and accuracy, and there are no matrix effects or interference when utilized for your product(s). The Q Laboratories, Inc. Microbiology Research and Development Laboratory can work with you to design a method verification study and then execute that study to verify a method/kit against your product(s).

David G. Goins

David G. Goins, President

MEET THE Q LABORATORIES' STAFF

Brandi Heiland is the Office Leader at Q Laboratories, Inc. Brandi is tasked with assuring all incoming samples are logged in and processed into the appropriate laboratory in a timely manner. She also manages the process of transferring laboratory results into report format and sending those results to clients.

O157 TRACEBACK

USDA-FSIS has proposed new expedited traceback procedures for ground beef that tests positive for E. coli O157:H7. They will now initiate an immediate traceback investigation on any presumptive positive result on a sample taken by a USDA-FSIS Inspector. Previously, a confirmation of the presumptive result, a process that takes 2 days, would have been required before the investigation would have proceeded. The investigation will involve the plant where the positive result was acquired as well as all supplier(s) that provided source materials.

TOXINS

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, a department of the National Institutes of Health, Mycotoxins are, "secondary metabolites produced by microfungi (molds) that are capable of causing disease and death in humans and other animals." Mycotoxins often enter the food chain through contamination of grains and other vegetation or as feed used by animals. These toxins have been detected in human food, pet food and animal feeds. Q Laboratories can test your products for several different Mycotoxins using USDA/GIPSA approved methodology. We can screen for Total Aflatoxin-(B1, B2, G1 and G2), a separate assay for B1, as well as Deoxynivalenol (Vomitoxin) and Ochratoxin.

ANTIBIOTICS

In order to prevent and treat animal disease in producing animals, many producers in the food industry utilize antibiotics on animals that produce milk, eggs and meat. Antibiotics are also used in feed animals to regulate reproductive cycles, increase size and feed efficiency. This can result in antibiotic residues present in food of animal origin and many of these residues are potentially harmful to humans and companion animals consuming these products. Antibiotic residues can effect gut microflora as well as contribute to antibiotic resistance. Q Laboratories, Inc. can test your food products for the presence of many antibiotic residues including: Tetracycline, Chloramphenicol, Nitrofurans, Sulfonamide, Oxytetracycline, Chlortetracycline and many others. Potentially effected foods include milk, eggs, meat, sausage, honey, liver, shrimp, fish, butter and other dairy products. Quantitative levels of ppb or even ppt can be reached for certain analytes and matrices.

PATHOGEN LEGISLATION

On June 25th of this year, H.R. 4966 - Pathogen Reduction and Testing Reform Act of 2014, was introduced to the US House of Representatives by Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, (D-CT). According to the text of the bill, the Legislation, "Amends the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act to revise the definition of "adulterated" to make explicit the Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) authority to issue a recall of meat, poultry, and egg products that contain microbial pathogens associated with serious illness or death or are resistant to two or more antibiotics critically important for human medicine. The bill would require the USDA to establish sampling protocols and testing procedures necessary to determine if meat, poultry, and egg products are adulterated under this Act and to prevent the entry, flow, or movement of those products into commerce."

FSMA ACTION

In September, the FDA proposed revisions to four proposed rules designed to help prevent food-borne illness. The proposed rules will implement portions of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).Two of the rules deal with produce safety, one dealing with agricultural water and another addressing safe use of natural fertilizers. The third revision addresses testing of products as well as the environment of producers of human and animal food, and the fourth revises the Foreign Supplier Verification Program.

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