

Resolutions of the 10th workshop of Microbiological NRLs for Bivalve Molluscs, 10-12th May 2011

Official controls

1. The workshop considered the EURL recommendations with respect to harmonisation of Codex Stan (292-2008) and EU hygiene regulations. The adoption of the Codex 3CP (n=5, c=1, m=230, M=700 *E. coli* MPN/100g) for products placed on the market was scientifically justified and should be supported.
2. The consequences of the above were considered for harvesting area monitoring in relation to class A designation. Generally, NRLs supported the adoption of the Codex criteria for monitoring of class A harvesting areas applied over time where, within a specified review period, no sample can exceed 700 MPN *E. coli*/100g and 80% of samples must be ≤ 230 MPN *E. coli*/100g.
3. The EURL agreed to conduct modelling to estimate *Salmonella* spp. compliance and the correlation between end products and monitoring compliance using the Codex criteria. To amend the paper (WS10/07) and circulate for comment prior submission to the Commission.
4. The workshop noted that practices regarding *Salmonella* spp. monitoring in Class A areas varied across Member States. The EURL advised NRLs of the Commission opinion that monitoring for *Salmonella* spp. in LBM production areas was not foreseen in the legislation.
5. The NRLs discussed a proposal regarding intensive purification of Class C LBM. The workshop agreed that, on the basis of data presented, monitoring of all batches for *E. coli* post purification would generally secure compliance with the microbiological criteria for *E. coli* (Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005). However, the data on virus removal did not demonstrate confidence in adequate control of this risk. NRLs considered that the potential public health risks associated with purification of Class C LBM were significantly greater than for purification of Class B LBMs.
6. The EURL reported on the continuing negotiations with the US FDA on trade of LBM and the initial audit of the UK. It was noted that the Good Practice Guide (<http://www.crlcefas>) had been forwarded to the FDA as a reference document.
7. In response to EURL request for information several NRLs reported additional risk control measures in LBM production areas including: seasonal classifications; prohibition of harbours; prohibition zones around sewage discharges and management actions based upon virus monitoring. It was noted that these controls were not harmonised.
8. The EURL noted the legal requirement for sanitary surveys contained within Commission Regulation (EC) No. 854/2004 and informed NRLs of the Commission opinion that this requirement applied to all newly classified LBM harvesting areas (since 2006) and to any area where the classification had changed (since 2006). NRLs provided updated information on sanitary survey coverage within their MS. The EURL

agreed to circulate a summary report for comment. The finalised report would be placed on the website (public domain).

9. The workshop noted the successful validation of both impedance and TBX methods for *E. coli* enumeration in LBM. The EURL proposed to discuss formal incorporation of these alternative methods into EU legislation with the Commission.
10. The EURL noted the responsibilities of NRLs under Article 33 of Commission Regulation (EC) 882/2004. It was identified that it was the responsibility of Competent Authorities to designate Official Control laboratories (Article 12, Regulation (EC) No 882/2004).
11. NRLs provided updated information on proficiency testing amongst Official Control laboratories in their MS. The EURL agreed to circulate a summary report for comment. NRL Spain agreed to present information on proficiency testing among Spanish Official Control laboratories at the 11th workshop.
12. The workshop noted the excellent performance of NRLs in PT for *E. coli* and *Salmonella* spp. Some NRLs requested a reduction in PT frequency. The EURL agreed that a minimum frequency of 2 distributions per year for satisfactorily performing laboratories was adequate, and would develop criteria for identifying satisfactory performance.
13. Several NRLs requested continuation of the whole animal (matrix) distribution to assist in requirements for ISO 17025 accreditation. The workshop agreed a continuing PT programme of PT distributions for *E. coli* and *Salmonella* spp. comprising EQA (of which participation in 2 distributions is mandatory) and a whole animal distribution (optional).
14. The workshop noted that official control laboratories should undertake proficiency testing using the method of analysis used for official controls.
15. NRLs agreed that in Member States where alternative methods for *E. coli* enumeration in LBM were used for official controls, the NRL should be competent in these methods and should take part in proficiency testing using these methods.

Vibrios

16. The workshop supported the introduction of molecular based identification for *V. vulnificus*, *V. cholerae* and toxigenic/non-toxigenic isolates of *V. parahaemolyticus* in order to enable rapid, less ambiguous identifications in the revision of ISO TS 21872-1 and 2. However, the need to retain the option for biochemical characterisation was noted.

Virus

17. Several NRLs presented data on norovirus from LBM production areas. In several Member States where studies had been undertaken the relatively high prevalence of norovirus was noted. It was noted that comparable data for hepatitis A virus was lacking.

18. The workshop noted the progress of EFSA working groups on food borne viruses and norovirus in oysters. The EURL agreed to circulate reports on publication and proposed discussion at the next workshop.
19. The workshop noted the need for standards for NoV and HAV to underpin accurate quantitation. The EURL agreed to explore possibilities for making these more widely available.
20. The workshop noted encouraging performance in virus proficiency testing. Further developments should focus on uptake of fully quantitative methodology and accuracy of quantitation. The EURL agreed to organise further proficiency testing distributions using matrix samples.
21. The workshop noted the agreement of EU funding for the validation of virus and *Vibrio* methods under mandate M/381. However, the extended nature of the funding model (78 months) was considered problematical for some laboratories. The EURL would communicate the terms of the validation studies to enable laboratories to confirm their ability to participate.

Date and time of next meeting

22. The next workshop would provisionally be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 24th, 25th and 26th April 2012.