

Building an Integrated Laboratory System to Advance the Safety of Food and Animal Feed

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF YEAR THREE PROGRESS REPORT

September 1, 2014 – August 30, 2015

The Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) continue to work towards meeting the goals of a 5-year Cooperative Agreement with FDA to support food and feed testing laboratories seeking to achieve, maintain and enhance their accreditation to the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 standard. Improvement in the operations, efficiency and effectiveness of laboratories via accreditation to the ISO 17025 standard is integral to building an Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS). This Executive Summary captures the successes achieved in Year 3 of the Cooperative Agreement (projecting through Aug 30, 2015). Workgroup involvement continues to be very robust, with over 70 individuals actively contributing. The activities listed below support all governmental laboratories that are seeking accreditation to the ISO 17025 standard:

- Hosting the [Governmental Food and Feed Laboratories Accreditation Meeting](#) Mar 9-12, 2015 in San Diego, CA. The presentations, discussions and exercises provided training for laboratories working to achieve ISO 17025 accreditation. Site selection has begun for a meeting to be held concurrently with MFRPA in early February 2016.
- Publishing 11 peer-reviewed articles as a Special Guest Editor Section on Sampling Food/Feed in the March/April 2015 issue of the [Journal of AOAC INTERNATIONAL](#) (JAOAC)
- Offering one day sampling workshops at AAFCO and MFRPAAlliance meetings.
- Offering targeted assistance to 14 unfunded laboratories identified by FDA, including on-site visits, conference calls, and review of quality manuals, SOPs, methods, and document control efforts.
 - The Arizona Department of Health Services will have their first audit June 17-18, 2015. They are seeking accreditation for methods in their FERN chemistry and microbiology programs.
 - The Nebraska Department of Agriculture Laboratory applied for accreditation in May 2015. Their first audit will take place in August 2015 and will focus on their chemistry section.
- Continued hosting of a Food and Feed Laboratory Accreditation [Discussion Board](#), an on-line forum for the exchange of information related to becoming accredited to the ISO 17025 standard. Of the 71 registered participants, 63 are from 43 different state and local laboratories.
- Updating [web pages](#) to support Food and Animal Feed Testing Laboratories seeking Accreditation, including a [repository](#) of ISO/IEC 17025:2005 resources such as best practices, standard procedures and work plans. As of May 21, 2015, 234 documents are posted under 16 categories.
- Developing a National Plan for achieving Laboratory Accreditation, to include the benefits of accreditation, the value-added for both the accredited laboratory and the customer, the support available through FDA and the Associations, examples of successful use of data from accredited laboratories, the status of state laboratory accreditation and a plan for sustainability.
- Updating a spreadsheet of [currently available ISO/IEC 17025:2005 training](#) every six months. FDA and the Associations ensure effective coordination of training efforts to avoid duplication of effort.
- Developing and delivering three webinars:
 - A two-part webinar on change management entitled, “Managing Change Rather than Change Managing You.”

- o A webinar on document control entitled, “ISO/IEC 17025 Section 4.3 Document Control ‘One Lab’s Journey.’”
- Developing guidelines that will facilitate the acceptance of laboratory data by local, state and federal agencies regardless of accreditation status.
- Drafting an APHL position statement endorsing implementation of the measures in the Partnership for Food Protection’s document, “Food/Feed Testing Laboratories Best Practices Manual (Draft)”
- Gathering feedback on eLEXNET upgrades via the National Users Group and through demonstrations provided to APHL’s Food and Feed Testing Subcommittee and at the [Governmental Food and Feed Laboratories Accreditation Meeting](#).
- Drafting a plan entitled “eLEXNET Training & Value-Added Services for State Food-Testing Laboratories” to provide individualized on-site eLEXNET training to state laboratories and epidemiologists.
- Maintaining a [Subject Matter Expert \(SME\) Registry](#) hosted on the AFDO website to include food and feed laboratory professionals. As of May 20, 2015, the registry includes 56 Food Laboratory SME’s.
- Maintaining AFDO’s [web based information portal](#) to expand data collection and integrate both public and protected tools for effective sharing of resources for improving the food/feed safety systems with respect to laboratory accreditation.
- Completing level 2 and 3 competencies for Entry Level Content Areas E1-E18 in the Governmental Food and Feed Laboratory Curriculum Framework; the workgroup is now addressing Level 4 and 5 competencies. DHRD is willing to fund this work, pending a charge from the PFP Governing Council.
- Delivered a four-day workshop on the Theory of Sampling to a primarily FDA audience in Irvine, CA in July 2015. A second workshop will be offered on the East Coast in Sept 2015. DHRD has indicated willingness to fund course development, pending a charge from the PFP Governing Council.
- Staffing a Laboratory Managers Steering Committee, which collaborates closely with the Manufactured Foods Retail Programs Alliance in order to promote integration between regulatory and laboratory partners. The LMSC has provided input into recommended changes to MFRP Standard 10, Laboratory Support.
- Finalizing and circulating a draft of the GOODSamples (*Guidance On Obtaining Defensible Samples*) document intended to ensure consistency in the collection and handling of food and feed sampling materials to improve data quality and accuracy.
- Providing food and feed testing laboratories access to [AAFCO’s accredited PT programs](#) that meets ISO/IEC accreditation requirements for FSMA critical tests in feed, food and pet food. The [Pet Food Program](#) is experiencing a great third year and the [Mycotoxin Contaminants Program](#) continues to expand while a Minerals Program was initiated.
- Updating a list of [relevant proficiency testing providers](#) for food and feed laboratories.
- Creating a series of [electronic informational brochures](#) that describe the work under this Cooperative Agreement. Newly created in year 3 is a brochure on Training and Mentoring activities.

The collaborative efforts of APHL, AFDO and AAFCO continue to facilitate and expedite ISO 17025 accreditation of governmental food and feed testing laboratories. The resources provided through this cooperative agreement will endure long after the 5-year funding period, assisting laboratories as they attain and maintain ISO accreditation for years to come. In Year 4, we will turn our focus to sustainability of accreditation in state laboratories should federal funding decline. The cumulative impact of these efforts will be realized in an increase in the number of ISO 17025 accredited governmental food and feed testing laboratories utilizing the resources, training, tools and services provided by this cooperative agreement. The partnership among federal, state and local agencies has already assisted in the building of a truly unified food safety system and advancement US public health.