



European Community Reference Laboratory for monitoring
bacteriological and viral contamination of bivalve molluscs



CEFAS Laboratory, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8UB, UK

WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CRL FOR BACTERIOLOGICAL AND VIRAL CONTAMINATION OF BIVALVE MOLLUSCS, 2006

LEGAL FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

The functions and duties of the CRL are specified in Articles 4 and 5 of Council Decision 1999/313/EC (Official Journal of the European Communities No L 120 of 8.5.1999).

In the 2006 work programme year 25 Member States and 4 candidate countries are considered eligible for CRL assistance and invited to participate in CRL organised training programmes, ring trials/external quality assessments schemes etc. The full integration into the European Union of new Member States continues to be a priority area, and is facilitated via the provision of additional training and assistance.

WORK PROGRAMME, 2006

1. Scientific advice and support

- 1.1. Assist DG Sanco in developing and implementing Community food legislation (scientific advice, participation in working groups, etc). In particular during 2006 the CRL plans to:
 - Lead on development of an EU good practice guide on microbiological monitoring of shellfish harvesting areas.
 - Research methods and approaches for sanitary surveys for training NRLs and for potential inclusion in the good practice guide (in collaboration with the FDA).
- 1.2. Assist DG Sanco with specialist assistance in relation to veterinary inspections of MS, Accession Countries and Third Countries and with other trade issues (eg equivalency negotiations) as they arise.
- 1.3. Assist DG TAIEX with training of new Member States and Candidate Counties.
- 1.4. Participate in relevant EU and International scientific committees (EU SVC, WHO/FAO, ISO/CEN, etc). In particular during 2006 the CRL plans to:
 - chair and co-ordinate the activities of the CEN/TC 275/WG6/TAG4 developing a CEN standard for detection of norovirus and hepatitis A in foodstuffs
 - participate in the ISO/TC34/SC9 working groups progressing methods for marine vibrios
 - participate in an FAO/WHO expert meeting on the development of risk management strategies for *Vibrio vulnificus* in bivalve molluscs
 - participate in an ISO/CEN working group on validation of alternative methods



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- 1.5. Undertake CRL missions in support of the above activities.
 - During 2006 missions are foreseen in relation to the annual meetings of ISO and CEN (up to 2 missions); the CENTAG4 working group on Viruses in Food (2 missions); and up to 3 missions in support of NRLs and DG Sanco activities.

2. Co-ordination of activities of NRL network and provision of technical assistance and training

- 2.1. Participate in annual CRL Directors co-ordination meeting and other CRL co-ordination meetings/workshops as appropriate
- 2.2 Organise, host, and participate in the fifth annual NRL workshop, produce resolutions and other workshop outputs (March 2006, Weymouth). To include CRL administrative assistance.
- 2.3 Undertake CRL activities and commitments agreed in resolutions of 2005 and 2006 annual workshops (as posted on www.crlcefass.org).
- 2.4 Report on proficiency testing activities in MS national laboratories in respect of monitoring production areas for *E. coli* and *Salmonella* (see resolution 19, 3rd workshop and 2, 4th workshop).
- 2.5 Develop proposal for auditing maintenance of sanitary protection during intra-community trade shipments of class B and C molluscs (see resolution 6, 4th workshop)
- 2.6 Maintenance of CRL laboratory competence and expertise on analytical methods for monitoring bacteriological contaminants of bivalve molluscs (*E.coli*, *Salmonella* spp., FRNA bacteriophage, marine vibrios).
- 2.7 Maintenance of CRL laboratory competence and expertise on analytical methods for monitoring virological contaminants of bivalve molluscs (Norovirus and hepatitis A virus).
- 2.8 Supply specialist information and advice on above bacteriological and viral methods to NRLs (particularly new MS NRLs and CCs), testing laboratories, and third county laboratories. This includes assistance on implementation of methods, accreditation to ISO17025, provision of CRL SOPs and transfer of other technical information.
- 2.9 Provide specialist training and/or training courses to NRLs and CC NRLs in relation to analysis of *E.coli*, *Salmonella*, *Vibrio* spp., FRNA bacteriophage, Norovirus and hepatitis A virus.



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2.10 Organise specialist workshop or training courses for NRLs and MS specialists in conducting sanitary surveys - in accordance with the requirements of 854/2004 on official controls.

2.11 Maintenance of CRL website (www.crlcefas.org) as primary means of dissemination of information to NRLs and others.

3 Ring trials, comparative testing and quality assurance

3.1 Organise comparative testing for *E.coli* and *Salmonella* spp. in bivalve molluscs among NRLs through the CRL/HPA shellfish EQA scheme (see resolution 1 of 4th workshop). Analyse results and produce report and recommendations (by March 06).

3.2 Organise Norovirus and hepatitis A ring trials (see resolution 4 of 4th workshop). Planned distributions in 2006 are faecal material for NoV and tissue culture HAV, and then bioaccumulated oysters to assess laboratory and method performance for the mollusc matrix. Analyse results and produce report and recommendations (by March 06).

3.3 In collaboration with FDA and others, establish a reference strain bank of *Vibrio* spp. with emphasis on fully characterised isolates of potential human health consequence for use in method validation and comparison study.

3.4 Undertake *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* ring trials on (molecular) methods for enumeration of pathogenicity genes (*tdh* and *trh*). Analyse results and produce report and recommendations (by March 06).

3.5 Develop proposals for epidemiological study to progress issue of interpretation of virus positive PCR data (see resolution 5 4th workshop) in order to facilitate risk assessment for viruses in shellfish.

3.6 Undertake limited FRNA bacteriophage proficiency testing. Extend provision of EQA material, methods of analysis etc to national testing laboratories if required by NRLs.

3.7 Delivery of proficiency testing programme for March– Dec 2006 as agreed in Resolutions of the 5th workshop in March 2006. Currently projected to include further ring trials for *E.coli* in shellfish homogenate/whole animals, FRNA bacteriophage, human pathogenic *Vibrio* spp. HAV, and Norovirus.

4 Confirmatory testing

4.1 Contribution to costs for maintenance of CRL ISO 17025 accreditation for tests for *E.coli*, *Salmonella* spp, and *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* in bivalve molluscs.



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- 4.3 Contribution to costs for progressing and establishing CRL ISO 17025 (EN 45000) accreditation for test for Norovirus in bivalve molluscs.
- 4.4 Contribution to costs for maintenance of CRL capability to perform analysis for marine vibrios in bivalve molluscs other than *V. parahaemolyticus*.
- 4.2 Performance of above tests on outbreak material or on occasion of disputed test results (on request of DG Sanco).

5 Development of analytical methods (undertaken at CRL)

- 5.1 Prevalidation laboratory activities in support of the development of a standard CEN/ISO method for the detection of viruses in food (CEN/TC 275/WG6/TAG4).
- 5.2 Laboratory activities to support development of the ISO 21872 – Horizontal method for the detection of pathogenic *Vibrio* spp. part 1- detection of *V. cholerae* and *V. parahaemolyticus* part 2- other than *V. cholerae* and *V. parahaemolyticus*.
- 5.2 Participation in activities on validation of alternative impedance methods for analysis of *E. coli* in bivalve molluscs (ISO TS 16649-3 is the EU reference method).
- 5.3 Further development of stable hepatitis A virus, Norovirus and pathogenic *Vibrio* spp. as standard controls and reference materials to facilitate future quality assurance and proficiency testing using biological lenticules.

David Lees
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