



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, 2005

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 2005 work programme year 25 Member States and 3 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, 2005

1. Scientific advice and support

- 1.1. Provide scientific assistance to DG Sanco towards further development of EU Community food legislation as it impacts bivalve molluscs (advice, participation in working groups, etc). For 2005 this will include completion of the work of the Commission WG on microbiological monitoring of shellfish harvesting areas.
- 1.2. Assist DG Sanco with U.S. equivalence negotiations relating to bivalve molluscs and with specialist assistance in relation to veterinary inspections of MS, Candidate Countries and Third Countries (on request). Assist DG TAIEX with targeted assistance towards training of new EU MS NRLs.
- 1.3. Prepare for and participate in EU and International scientific fora/committees relating to contaminants and contamination of bivalve molluscs (EU SVC, WHO/FAO, ISO/CEN, etc). During 2005 the CRL will continue to actively participate in ISO/CEN working groups to progress methods for *E.coli*, Salmonella and marine vibrios. The CRL will also be chairing a CEN working group on methods for detection of viruses in foodstuffs (including bivalve molluscs). The CRL also anticipates participation in follow up activities to the WHO workshop on Quality Management and Shellfish Safety.
- 1.4. Undertake CRL missions in support of above. During 2005 missions are foreseen in relation to the annual meetings of ISO and CEN (up to 2 missions, venues to be confirmed); the CEN, TAG4 working group on Viruses in Food (2 missions); participation in the 2005 Interstate Sanitation Conference (ISSC) Biennial Meeting in Alabama U.S.; the IWA Health-Related Water Microbiology Conference, September 2005, UK. In addition up to 3 European missions are foreseen in support of NRLs and DG Sanco activities.



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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, fourth annual NRL workshop and produce resolutions and other workshop outputs (March 2005, Nantes). Including CRL administrative assistance.
- 2.3 Undertake CRL activities and commitments agreed in resolutions of 2004 and 2005 annual workshops (as posted on www.crlcefafas.org).
- 2.4 Maintenance of CRL laboratory competence and expertise on analytical methods for monitoring bacteriological contaminants of bivalve molluscs (*E.coli*, *Salmonella*, FRNA bacteriophage, marine vibrios). Supply information and specialist advice to NRLs (particularly new MS NRLs and CCs), testing laboratories, and third county laboratories. Including assistance on implementation and accreditation to ISO17025 of methods by development and provision of CRL SOPs and transfer of other technical information.
- 2.5 Maintenance of CRL laboratory competence and expertise on analytical methods for monitoring virological contaminants of bivalve molluscs (Norovirus and hepatitis A virus). Supply information and specialist advice to NRLs, testing laboratories, and third county laboratories. Including assistance on implementation and accreditation of methods by development and provision of CRL SOPs and transfer of other technical information.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 Develop with NRLs and other interested parties improved means for exchange of epidemiological information on outbreaks of illness associated with molluscan shellfish.
- 2.8 Maintenance and further development of CRL website (www.crlcefafas.org) as primary means of dissemination of information to NRLs and others. Incorporate "welcome page" to highlight latest new documents and important information, for more efficient notification.

3 Ring trials, comparative testing and quality assurance

- 3.1 Continue use of the CRL/HPA shellfish EQA scheme as the primary means of comparative testing among NRLs for *E.coli* and *Salmonella* in bivalve molluscs. To establish widespread uptake of the scheme amongst MS (see resolution 8 of 3rd workshop) analyse results and produce report and recommendations.
- 3.2 Undertake Norovirus and hepatitis A ring trials (see resolution 32 of 3rd workshop) with 3 planned distributions during 2004/05. Analyse results and produce report and recommendations (by March 05).
- 3.3 Update dossier of virus detection methods used in ring trials (including quantitative



aspects) to assist in standardisation of virus methods under CEN WG (see resolutions 33 and 35 of 3rd workshop)

- 3.4 Further to the above undertake virus method development workshop with invited participation from targeted key laboratories to progress method standardisation and to feed into the CEN procedure.
- 3.5 Undertake FRNA bacteriophage ring trials (see resolutions 12 and 13 of 3rd workshop) with 2 planned distributions during 2004/05. Extend provision of ring trial material, methods of analysis etc to national testing laboratories if required by NRLs. Analyse results and produce report and recommendations (by March 05).
- 3.6 Delivery of ring trial programme for March– Dec 2005 as agreed in Resolutions of the 4th workshop in March 2005 (may include among further ring trials for *E.coli* in shellfish homogenate/whole animals, FRNA bacteriophage, *Vibrio* spp. HAV, and Norovirus).

4 Confirmatory testing

- 4.1 Contribution to costs for maintenance of CRL ISO 17025 (EN 45000) accreditation for tests for *E.coli*, *Salmonella* spp, and FRNA bacteriophage in bivalve molluscs.
- 4.2 Contribution to costs for maintenance of CRL capability to perform analysis of Norovirus and hepatitis A virus in bivalve molluscs.
- 4.3 Contribution to costs for maintenance of CRL capability to perform analysis for marine vibrios in bivalve molluscs.
- 4.3 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 Co-ordination and participation (as appropriate) in laboratory studies to support progression of the CRL-recommended reference method for *E. coli* as an ISO standard method
- 5.2 In the absence of appropriate International standards, development of agreed CRL/NRL criteria and procedures for validation and acceptance of alternative methods of analysis (see resolution 7 of 3rd workshop). During 05 this focuses in particular on *E.coli* analysis.
- 5.3 Continue to co-ordinate and participate in laboratory studies in support of the proposed horizontal ISO methods for detection of *Vibrio* spp. of human significance (ISO 21872 parts 1 and 2).
- 5.4 Further development of stable hepatitis A virus, Norovirus and FRNA bacteriophage, standard reference materials to facilitate future quality assurance and ring trials, with particular focus on the production and evaluation of biological lenticules.



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5.5 Participation in CEN co-ordinated laboratory validation studies in support of the development of a standard CEN/ISO method for the detection of viruses in food.