

## **Resolutions of the 9<sup>th</sup> workshop of NRLs for monitoring bacteriological and viral contamination of bivalve molluscs, Ancona 18 - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010.**

### **Microbiological monitoring**

1. The workshop expressed concern at the potential public health impact of the continued absence of microbiological standards in the water framework directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC). NRLs agreed to advise their Competent Authority, and to recommend that these concerns were highlighted at a European level.
2. The CRL presented the redraft of the Good Practice Guide, NRLs resolved to disseminate the document to their Competent Authority (to the authority responsible for Official Control and monitoring) and invite comments. Comments must be received by the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Comments should be addressed to Ron Lee at the CRL [ron.lee@cefass.co.uk](mailto:ron.lee@cefass.co.uk)
3. NRLs agreed that adoption of CODEX STAN 292/2008 (c=1, n=5, m=230 and M=700) for end product standards was in line with the approach taken with other foodstuffs, was scientifically justified, and should be reflected in EU controls.
4. The CRL agreed to circulate proposals for monitoring for class A areas which would give equivalence to the CODEX end-product standards. NRLs agreed to analyse class A datasets against these proposals and report back to the CRL with their opinion by the end of June 2010. The CRL would inform the Commission of the outcome.
5. With respect to the TBX (ISO 16649-2) method validation against the EU reference method (ISO TS 16649-3) for enumeration of *E. coli* and further to resolution 9 of the 8<sup>th</sup> workshop, NRLs agreed that it remained important to include comparative testing of an environmentally relevant range of naturally contaminated samples.
6. NRLs agreed to provide updated information on the number of completed full sanitary survey reports and the numbers of production areas covered by those reports within two weeks of this meeting.

### **Viruses**

7. The workshop noted that it was important to validate the CEN virus method if it was to be used for Official Controls. In the absence of implementation of CEN mandate (M/381) NRLs supported the CRL proposal to approach DG SANCO for funding to formally validate the virus standard. It was noted that the validation should address all matrices (bottled water, food surfaces, soft fruit, salad vegetables and bivalve molluscs).
8. The workshop acknowledged the high reported incidence of norovirus outbreaks observed in several EU MS during 2009/10. The winter of 2009/10 was unusually severe in Northern Europe which may have contributed to this.

9. Data presented from several NRLs showed that virus detection methods provide useful data for risk evaluation.
10. The workshop noted from data presented that the use of a presence/absence virus standard for bivalves would be likely to have a significant impact during the winter months. The health significance of low virus levels (<100 copies per gram) was extensively debated and opinions and data varied. It was agreed that it is important to continue to generate data on this issue.
11. The workshop noted that current EU controls did not adequately address the public health risk from norovirus and needed to be improved. The workshop discussed possible control options including: focussing on high risk products; reducing human faecal inputs based on sanitary surveys; using relaying in clean waters; improving the effectiveness of depuration; and the possibility of virus standards based on RT-PCR analysis.

### **Vibrios**

12. The workshop agreed that the target was to develop a single reference method for detection and enumeration of pathogenic *Vibrio* spp.. Currently, two proposals were under development based upon nucleic acid hybridisation for *V. parahaemolyticus* and real-time PCR. Further data on performance and applicability would be presented in due course.
13. NRLs were informed of the call for data and experts on *Vibrio* spp. in Europe from Codex, NRLs were encouraged to send information directly by May 31<sup>st</sup>. The CRL would provide contact details immediately after the meeting.

### **Comparative testing**

14. NRLs performance in comparative testing for statutory determinands (*E. coli* and *Salmonella* spp.) was good. The workshop agreed that participation in comparative testing for *E. coli* and *Salmonella* spp. was mandatory for all NRLs. The frequency of distribution for CRL/HPA EQA was discussed, the CRL was asked to examine historic data and make recommendations on the minimum frequency of participation.
15. The workshop agreed that virus ring trials were valuable and should be continued to include matrix samples, focus should be on analysis of quantitative data, where available, in addition to presence/absence assessments.
16. The workshop noted that progress with respect to assessment of Official Control laboratories in comparative testing was good. Several NRLs presented data describing assessments based upon the use of scoring systems and had developed follow-up procedures to address unsatisfactory performance.
17. The workshop agreed that further proficiency testing for *Vibrio* spp. should be focused on targeted ring trials to assist in methodology development.

### **Date and time of next meeting**

18. The next meeting would be in Weymouth U.K. on the 10<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2011.