

Resolutions of the 4th workshop of Microbiological NRLs for Bivalve Molluscs, Nantes, France, 15-17th March, 2005

Proficiency testing

1. NRLs agreed to maintain commitment to the CRL/HPA EQA as the primary means of proficiency testing for *E.coli* and *Salmonella* spp. amongst the NRL network.
2. NRLs reaffirmed commitment (by 5th Workshop) to establishing proficiency testing for statutory determinants (*E.coli* and *Salmonella* spp.) amongst national laboratories conducting testing for classification of production areas.
3. The workshop agreed that the CRL would conduct a *V. parahaemolyticus* ring trial for detection, enumeration and determination of pathogenicity principles using the methods of the laboratories own choice. The CRL will invite expressions of interest for one distribution planned for autumn 2005.
4. The workshop agreed that the CRL should organise further ring trials for detection of NoV/HAV and that this should include shellfish analyses. The CRL will invite expressions of interest for two distributions the first focusing on analysis of NoV/HAV in faecal samples/tissue culture material in September 2005 and the second comprising whole shellfish in winter 2005/6.

Risk assessment

5. The workshop identified the difficulty of interpretation of PCR positive results in shellfish. The CRL agreed to make proposals at the next workshop on the design of studies to progress a risk assessment for viruses in shellfish in consultation with relevant risk assessment experts.

Commercial practices

6. The workshop identified that trade practices relating to trans-shipment of B and C shellfish for final processing in other Member States lacked clarity with regard to the controls actually applied and acknowledged that this could have consumer health implications. NRLs agreed to investigate this issue and the CRL would circulate a protocol for an audit with the results to be reported at the next workshop.
7. The workshop discussed the remit of NRLs in relation to industry “own-checks” and identified that the EU legislation was not precise on this point. The CRL agreed to seek clarification from the Commission and feedback to the network with a view to further discussion at the next workshop.
8. The workshop discussed the need for establishment of a minimum specified duration for the commercial depuration process in order to ensure compliance with statutory bacteriological standards. The workshop resolved to inform the Commission via the CRL of their agreement on this need and for a

working group to determine the minimum period and the optimum physiological conditions for each species in order to define best practice with regard to commercial depuration as it effects bacterial contamination.

Monitoring of harvesting areas

9. NRLs endorsed the draft output of the microbiological monitoring of bivalve mollusc harvesting areas working group and noted the timetable for comment on the review document of 25th March 2005. The draft good practice guide is scheduled for distribution to NRLs for comment in June 2005.

10. In order to finalise the Microbiological Monitoring Good Practice Guide the WG requested clarification of the need to monitor *Salmonella* and *Listeria* in class A production areas as part of official control surveillance programmes. The CRL agreed to seek clarification from the Commission and to report back to NRLs.

Human health

11. The workshop acknowledged the importance of sharing information relating to bivalve mollusc related human health incidents and resolved to share information on this, and related epidemiological information, in a dedicated session at the annual workshop.