

Workshop on Public Sector Food Safety

Data Collection, Access and Sharing

November 2-3, 2006 | Holiday Inn Conference Center | Decatur, GA

Examples of Standardization Opportunities

This is an illustrative list of some of the areas in which there may be opportunities for standardization or harmonization of data. This list is not intended to be complete or comprehensive, but rather is intended to spur discussion by showing the wide range of areas in which otherwise similar data may differ.

NOMENCLATURE

- Pathogen coding
- Case-definitions/classification (e.g. what counts as a case of gastroenteritis?)
- Food vehicle definitions (e.g. “hamburger” as ground beef or as sandwich)
- Chemical nomenclature (IUPAC system, CAS system, InChI identifiers)

LABORATORY PROCEDURES

- Sampling issues
 - o Location, size, and weight of sample: surface vs. tissue, etc
 - o Sample processing: blending, macerating, homogenizing, grinding, etc.
- Detection or enumeration of microorganisms
 - o Use of and choice of indicator or surrogate
 - o Choice of identification method: culture or nucleic-acid based methods
 - o Direct plating or enrichment, choice of enrichment media
 - o Time and temperature for preparing samples
- Detection or quantification of chemical residues
 - o “Clean up”/Separation process (e.g. solid phase extraction, cryogenic milling)
 - o Analytical method (e.g. chromatography, spectroscopy, mass analysis, photometry)
- Evaluation of intervention efficacy
 - o Reference strains (for pathogens)
 - o Inoculation procedures
 - o Experimental conditions

EXPERIMENTAL OR STUDY DESIGN

- Statistical methods applied
- Classification (e.g. in epidemiologic studies)

SAMPLING REGIMES

- Random (e.g. to obtain baseline prevalence)
- Following visual inspection (e.g. product is suspected of contamination, then tested)
- Following suspected breakdown (e.g. chlorine in wash water is low, therefore sample)
- Location of sample in environment/equipment or on product

REPORTING FORMS

- Local sanitation or inspection forms differing between localities/counties
- Variation in standards between individuals, locations, or over time (passes here, fails there)
- Interpretation of code

DATA FORMAT

- Different systems
- Different variable names
- Different variable coding (e.g. different age categories)