EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF YEAR FIVE PROGRESS REPORT
September 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017

The Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) continued to accomplish the goals of a five-year Cooperative Agreement with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to support human and animal food testing laboratories seeking to achieve or enhance accreditation to the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 standard. Accrediting human and animal food laboratories to a recognized standard will enhance the probability of rapid acceptance of laboratory data for compliance and regulatory actions. This Executive Summary captures the successes achieved in Year Five of the Cooperative Agreement. Workgroup involvement continues to be very robust, with over 100 individuals actively contributing. The activities listed below support all governmental human and animal food testing laboratories pursuing ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation.

Documents

- Publishing a second revision of the Data Acceptance White Paper, and accompanying Glossary and Checklist, in June 2017. These tools help laboratories strengthen the defensibility of their data, which is particularly important when testing informs a regulatory action. A July 2017 peer-reviewed article in Journal of AOAC International details the white paper’s content, intended audience and use.
- Publishing “A National Approach to Human and Animal Food Laboratory Accreditation: The Importance of FDA’s Cooperative Agreement Program.” The publication includes the benefits of accreditation for both the accredited laboratory and the customer, examples of successful uses of data from accredited laboratories and strategies to sustain accreditation in the absence of federal funding.
- Efforts on a guidance for laboratories, elaborating on the principles outlined in GOODSamples with publication anticipated in early 2018: “Guidance on Obtaining Defensible Test Portions (GOOD Test Portions)”

Training

- Continuing development of the State Human and Animal Food Laboratory Professionals Curriculum Framework, which identifies competencies and training necessary for food and feed laboratory professionals to participate in an integrated food safety system.
- Creating the Quality Management Training Series, a collection of short, quick-learning modules that cover common ISO-required topics offered on a recurring basis within a laboratory. The modules can be customized by the quality professionals in a laboratory to meet their staff’s specific needs.
- Hosting the 3rd Governmental Food and Feed Laboratories Accreditation Meeting, January 24–26, 2017 in St. Petersburg, FL. The presentations, discussions and exercises provided training for laboratories pursuing ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. A session entitled “FDA’s Electronic Laboratory Exchange Network (eLEXNET)” was conducted.
- Providing training between March and August 2017 to six laboratories that were not yet submitting data to eLEXNET.
• Completing two state sampling pilots, two training workshops, and a laboratory workgroup training event based on the GOODSamples recommendations, which provided training to 80 feed testing professionals. A flyer for the Michigan Department of Agriculture pilot describes the successes of the MI pilot.

• Developing and presenting ISO 17025 learning events, including workshops, live and archived webinars, a conference dedicated to laboratory accreditation, and on-demand courses. These included:
  ○ Webinar—ISO/IEC 17025: Using Section 4.4 to the Laboratory’s Advantage (June 2017, 17 registrants)
  ○ Webinar—Internal Audits (September 2016, 205 registrants)
  ○ Hands-On Laboratory Workshop—Storage Insect Pest Identification (June 2017, 4 trainees)

Resources

• Providing direct technical assistance to 10 state laboratories seeking accreditation without the benefit of FDA ISO program funding. Support included site visits, conference calls, review of quality manuals and methods, creation of record templates, internal audits, and evaluation of document control systems.

• Presenting posters and presentations at various professional meetings, providing important information on cooperative agreement projects, laboratory accreditation successes, and how laboratories are essential to an integrated food safety system.

• Leading a Laboratory Managers Steering Committee, which promoted integration between regulatory program and laboratory partners—as well as communication with associations’ laboratory committees—and facilitated updates to the manufactured food regulatory program standards and state sampling plans.

• Hosting a web-based repository of over 280 resources organized according to the ISO/IEC 17025 standard, including examples of best practices, standard operating procedures, worksheets, records and work plans.

• Maintaining a Subject Matter Expert (SME) Registry hosted on the AFDO website that includes food and feed laboratory professionals. As of August 31, 2017, the registry includes 43 Food Laboratory SMEs.

• Maintaining AFDO’s web-based information portal Topical Index of Laws and Guidance to expand data collection and integrate both public and protected tools for effective sharing of resources for improving the food/feed safety systems with respect to laboratory accreditation.

• Providing access to AAFCO’s accredited Proficiency Testing Program that meets ISO/IEC accreditation requirements for FSMA critical tests in feed, food and pet food and expanding the Pet Food Program, Mycotoxin Contaminants Program, Minerals Program and Veterinary Drug and Drug Residue Program. As of August 31, 2017, three of the four schemes are accredited to the ISO/IEC 17043 Proficiency Testing Providers Standard.

• Maintaining a current list of relevant proficiency testing providers for food and feed laboratories.

The collaborative efforts of APHL, AFDO and AAFCO continue to facilitate ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation of governmental food and feed testing laboratories. The resources provided through this cooperative agreement will carry on long after this five-year funding period, assisting laboratories as they maintain or enhance ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. The cumulative impact of Association efforts has been and will continue to be realized with an increase in the number of ISO/IEC 17025 accredited governmental food and feed testing laboratories contributing to a fully integrated food safety system.

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