In 2012, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Food Safety, Bureau of Food Laboratories (FLBFL) was funded through a cooperative agreement with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to expand their scope of ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. As part of this cooperative agreement, the laboratory was required to develop a sampling plan with the Bureau of Food Inspection (FLBFI), also within the department’s Division of Food Safety, which targets high-risk food items and/or high-risk pathogens in an effort to identify contaminated food before it causes human illness.

These targeted sampling plans have led to the discovery of foodborne pathogens in foods previously not considered to be likely vehicles of contamination, such as ice cream or frozen vegetables. Frozen foods can be a cause for concern because freezing can extend the shelf-life of a product, enabling the consumer to store an already-contaminated product for a longer period of time. FLBFL and FLBFI subsequently added frozen vegetable products to the department’s routine sampling plan which proved to be a successful strategy. In January 2017, just one month after being added to the sampling plan, FLBFL discovered *Listeria monocytogenes* in a frozen vegetable mix product. The FDA accepted FLBFL's test data from the frozen vegetables and worked with the manufacturer to issue a voluntary recall of the product, which had been distributed to stores throughout the state of Florida. As a result, no human illnesses were associated with this product.

In May 2017, routine sampling led to the identification of *L. monocytogenes* in a finished pasteurized milk cheese product. While reported illness is over 800 times more likely to be associated with raw milk, FLBFL regularly tests finished cheese products made from both raw and pasteurized milk for foodborne pathogens. The FDA accepted the department’s laboratory results and worked with the manufacturer to stop the production and distribution of the product. No human illnesses were known to be associated with this contaminated product.

FLBFL, FLBFI and FDA worked together in these situations to recall potentially harmful products from US commerce. FLBFL operates under a strong quality management system, and ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation provides the laboratory with documentation of structured and proper procedures. Collaboration is essential to quickly remove harmful products from the food supply and protect public health.