Managing Microbiological Testing as a Preventive Control Verification
October 24, 2019
Chicago Marriott Southwest Hotel, Burr Ridge, IL
Co-hosted by Institute for Food Safety & Health and Food Research Institute

Program Outline *(Draft)***:**

Intro: Verification vs. validation overview

Criteria and principles in developing verification testing program overview

Setting specifications/action limits (resources, examples)

Break

Overview of statistical sampling: limitations and use to determine process control and lot disposition

Food ingredient and product testing and validation: surrogates vs. pathogen testing

Environmental monitoring and sampling (targets for microbes, locations, frequency)

Lunch

Updates on methodology Overview; Most promising new methodologies; Challenges with recovering pathogens from low-aw foods; Fitness for purpose methodology

Microbial testing for supplier control verification

Consideration for selecting tools to create sampling plans (software)

Break

Legal considerations: negligence for not testing vs. liability with false positives

Case studies: RTE foods without lethality step; Low moisture foods; Fresh produce (not necessarily lettuce); Refrigerated/frozen foods without full lethality

Final comments and farewell

Synopsis: FDA's final rule "Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food" requires that preventive controls be verified to ensure that they are consistently and effectively implemented. Verification procedures frequently take on the form of environmental and product microbiological testing. Establishing a testing plan is resource intensive and may create concerns regarding expense, effectiveness, and potential liability. In this symposium, speakers from government, industry, and academia will address considerations of where to test, testing frequency, rapid methods, statistical process control, role of environmental testing, role of existing literature and predictive modeling for validation, and responses to findings. Case studies will be presented and attendees will be engaged in break out groups to discuss strategies in developing effective testing programs.

Contact: Cindy Koschetz at ckoschet@iit.edu or (708) 563-8152