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)  
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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)  
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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.

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