

Proficiency Testing Program Committee
2024 AAFCO Mid-Year Meeting
January 23, 2024, 2:15 – 5:15 PM (EST), Chattanooga, TN

Committee Recommendations and Board Recommendations

None

Committee Participants

Members Present: Ametra Berry (GA), Carrie Crabtree (GA), Deepika Curole (LA), Dorota Inerowicz (OISC), Kristi McCallum (CO), Gail Swinford (FDA), Teresa Rygiel (chair/ FL), Rebecca Moseley (AL), Sharon Webb (UKY), Josh Arbaugh (WV), Dancia Wu (OISC), Naomi High (NC)

Advisors Present: Lars Reimann (Eurofins), Ken Riter (PFI NPAL), Leo Schilling (Eurofins), Sally Flowers (AFDO)

Virtual Attendees: Alexa Bombich (PTP Quality Manager), Brenda Snodgrass (PTP Manager/ AAFCO Life Member), Andy Crawford (PTP Consultant), Nancy Thiex (AAFCO Life Member), Melanie Titley (CFIA), Michele Swarbrick (MN), Robin Johnson (MT), William Hoek (NY), Srinu Chigurupati (FDA), Lawrence Novotny (Life member), Sue Humphries (FDA), Abbey Stieferman (MO), Aline Nunes (The Peterson Company), Galia Feldman (CVS Canada), Kelly Gardner (UC Davis), Linda Benjamin (FDA-CVM), Traci Kelm (FDA), Robin Johnson, (MT)

Others Present: Tina Herfel (Central Garden Pet), Mathews Danker (FDA), Phoebe Sun (Pet Lab), Macy Harris (CEM), Elijah Williams (PA), Buffy Meyer (LA), Dan Bellavia (Nestle Purina), Marteen van Aardt (ANKOM), Amy Hatton (ANKOM), Andrew Komarek (ANKOM), Patrick Collins (TN), Angelica Alcivar (Eurofish SA), Buffy Montgomery (The Farmer's Dog), Nicolas Young (Hana Instruments), Myranda DeMaily (Hanna Instruments), Chuck Cawley (IL), Jenny Bailie (NutriQuest), Danny Walters (Perfection Pet), Chris Almon (Fresh Pet)

Committee Activities

None

Subcommittee Activities

None

Committee Report

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 2:15 EST, Motion to approve Agenda, Kristina McCallum, 2nd -Ametra Berry, Motion carries

Quality Management System Update:

The AAFCO Proficiency Testing Program completed our ISO 17043 accreditation assessment earlier in December. Our Accrediting Body, ANAB, has recommended unconditional approval for our continued accreditation with zero non-conformance. This was the first time the ANAB assessor was a statistician.

Committee Leadership update:

Sally Flowers resigned as the Committee Co-chair since she left the Kansas Ag Lab. She now works for the Association of Food & Drug Officials (AFDO) and plans to continue her involvement with AAFCO

Dietary Fiber Environment Analysis

- Andrew Komarek from ANKOM Technology discussed their Dietary Fiber and Vitamin A analyzers. ANKOM is well known for its analyzers used for crude fiber for pet food labels and acid detergent/neutral detergent for the dairy and beef industries. Soluble dietary fiber, important for monogastric animals like pets, is enzymatically analyzed. The shift from crude fiber to dietary fiber in dog food is noted for nutritional benefits.
- A comparison between crude fiber and dietary fiber results in dog foods was presented. Dietary fiber is larger than crude fiber since dietary fiber includes cellulose, hemicellulose, lignin, and other resistant starches which reach the lower gut.
- The uniqueness of defining dietary fiber by its physiological effect was discussed. Official methods like AOAC 991.43 and modifications for resistant starches were explained.
- ANKOM's dietary fiber analyzer, reduces the number of steps and improves accuracy and precision versus conventional analysis. Challenges were noted for pet food analysis due to the need for more aggressive defatting methods.
- **Discussion: The floor was opened to questions:** A question was asked about the direct comparison between the AOAC Methods 985 and 991 results, since new AAFCO regulations specifically call for the use of AOAC Method 985. ANKOM hasn't specifically compiled data for a direct comparison but both methods have been compared head-to-head over time.

2024 Subscription Update:

Brenda Snodgrass provided an update on PT Scheme enrollments for 2024, compared to the prior 3 years. Current enrollments are ongoing, and Program has seen a rise in the Pet Food Ingredient scheme and increased international participation. Sharon requests Brenda to send scheme subscription details.

Brenda reminded the attendees that they can download a system generated pro-forma invoice from the PT Program Dashboard (purchasing portal). The pro-forma invoice is based on the lab's prior year subscriptions.

Budget note: Banks are now charging 3.5% -5% for credit card transactions.

Customer Feedback:

The Program hasn't had any feedback by email since the last meeting. Feedback is primarily collected via discussions during Committee Meetings at the two yearly AAFCO Meeting and by email. A formal survey hasn't been sent recently. For future survey's Shron Webb suggested the use of Microsoft 365 Forms for ease of exporting the survey data.

Occasionally, customers do email technical questions, which Brenda is usually able to answer. When a rare question is asked that Brenda is unable to answer, she reaches out to the AAFCO Feed Lab community and Statistician, Andy Crawford, for assistance in responding

CEM requested a method code be added for AOAC Official Method 2008.06, for Fat via NMR. Although the AOAC Method is for meat and meat products, approximately 75 labs use the method across all matrices including wet, raw, and semi moist pet foods and pet food ingredients. Validation data for matrix extension to animal feed, pet food, and feed ingredients has not been published. Lars Reimann suggested CEM could purchase the PT Program Quality Reference Materials and present comparison data at a future Committee meeting.

A question was asked about including Mineral Scheme statistical reports by method codes. This scheme doesn't include the method codes because there are multiple methods used and the numbers of labs reporting results for any given method code is not statistically informative. Combining all methods for statistical evaluation permits the program to use robust statistical analysis.

Laboratory Sample Preparation Survey Update:

Nancy Thiex discussed her draft proposal for a Laboratory Sample Preparation Study. The purpose of the study is to help labs evaluate the error introduced in sample preparation from receiving samples to taking test portions. Once finalized the proposal will be submitted to the AAFCO Board of Directors for funding approval. The Study design is an expansion of a similar study done between 11 labs which found considerable diversity in sample processing approaches.

Details of Laboratory Sampling Study:

- The proposal considers the study as educational rather than focusing solely on assessing laboratory sampling error.
- Participants are limited to U.S. and Canadian participants in the AAFCO PT Program, with a suggested minimum of 40 and a potential cap of 60 participants.
- The study would be conducted quarterly, with two shipments per year, each containing two test items prepared from the same materials in different ratios.
- The proposed test items are two one-kilogram laboratory feed items manufactured from common feeding ingredients suitable for particle size, density, and analyte stability.
- Statistical treatment and reporting would follow the same procedures as regular schemes, comparing the robust mean to analyte concentrations estimated by calculation.
- AAFCO method codes would be used to capture information on sampling methods, with a suggested spreadsheet for code placement.
- The budget is tentatively set at \$10,000, covering materials, manufacturing, shipping, statistical analysis, and additional analysis on sampling techniques.

The floor opens to discussion on the scheme proposal: The first comment expressed the need to fill in details, especially regarding the budget, before presenting the proposal to the board. Nancy mentioned not finding a specific form for this type of proposal and suggests using the presented breakdown. Josh confirms the absence of a form on AAFCO's website and recommends creating a Word document breakdown with cost tables. Additional concerns were raised about costs for participants and a suggestion was made that the board might fund it initially, reevaluating after a year. The idea of charging a nominal fee to ensure commitment from labs was then brought up with suggestions of incorporating the fee during the ordering process.

The next question was regarding the goals of the new scheme —whether it aims to improve laboratory sampling or measure sampling variability. Nancy clarifies that it's both, intending to provide an estimate of total error, including sampling and analytical errors, with an educational focus to encourage uniformity among labs. The discussion was concluded with acknowledgment of the need for a more detailed budget and the plan is to schedule additional meetings to address remaining details.

OP 2024 Change Update Discussion

The committee discussed updating OP 2024 by replacing the term "check sample program" with "proficiency testing program." The PTP manager explains that this change is needed, and the committee needs to make a formal recommendation to the board. Blank suggests making the replacement everywhere except the AV pages, which are historically related to the old check sample program.

Motion by Sharon Webb, UKDRS & 2nd by Ametra Berry GDA to “Replace all references in the OP to “check sample” with “Proficiency Testing Program” except for in the tables discussing the AVs. The motion was properly seconded. The motion carries unanimously.

After meeting note: Brenda reviewed the 2024 Official Publication & says they removed the footnote on the ingredient definition, so the "check sample" edit is moot.

AV Workgroup Update

The next topic is the AV workgroup update by Josh. The committee has been working on updating and eventually replacing AVs with investigational allowances. However, progress has been slow, and the board has voted to hire Sally as a contractor to oversee and kickstart the project. Sally's contract is for two years initially, and the goal is to expand the work group by bringing in industry partners. Three to four industry volunteers are sought, and the committee plans to continue the project beyond the initial two years if needed. Ken Riter (Purina) and Lars Reimann (Eurofins) have volunteered.

A brief overview of the workgroup's framework is provided. The presenter mentions that the detailed outline can be shared. The goal is to have a balanced workgroup with both regulators and industry representatives. The committee expresses appreciation for those who volunteered and discusses the potential involvement of other regulators.

Round Table Discussion

The meeting concludes with a roundtable discussion, volunteers from those working for state governments are sought. Rebecca Mosely was asked to co-chair the PTP committee. She will need to seek approval from her department.

Adjournment

The Proficiency Testing Program Committee Adjourned at 5:15pm (EST)
Motion by Kristina McCallum CDA and seconded by Josh Arbaugh WVDA.