ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN FEED CONTROL OFFICIALS (AAFCO)
1800 SOUTH OAK STREET, SUITE 100
CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

MINUTES OF THE LABORATORY METHODS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE NEW ORLEANS MARRIOTT 555 CANAL STREET NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA JANUARY 21, 2026, 8:00 A.M. CT

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Erik Pearson (Co-Chair)
Dominika Kondratko (Co-Chair)
Ametra Berry (virtual)
Naomi High
Josh Arbaugh
Gail Swinford
Denise Mittelstaedt (virtual)
William Hoek (virtual)
Solomon Kariuki
Christina Chrysogelos
Rebecca Moseley
Lawrence Novotny (virtual)
Michele Swarbrick (virtual)
Melanie Titley (virtual)
Robin Johnson (virtual)
David Snell
Dancia Wu (virtual)
Tai Ha
Teresa Rygiel
Srinu Chigurupati (virtual)

ADVISORS PRESENT:

Lars Reimann (virtual)
Jeff Horst (virtual)
Molly Peters (virtual)
Ken Riter
Jenny Bailie
Leo Schilling

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kristen Mintle
Kari Nichols
Paul Mostyn
Clarke Clemons
Jordan Kiefer
Jordan Cowan
Abie McCollar
Liberty Sibanda
Jessica Landry
Braden Mawdesley
Stacey Gutchewsky
George Collings
Matt Nichols
Claire Timlin
Renan Donadelli
Seth Hennagir
Deepika Curole
Stephanie Harry
Alicia Stell
Shanon Tysor
Tyler Davis
Don Hill
Brenda Knapp
Alex Rankovic
Brain Schuld
Buffy Meyer

ADDITIONAL VIRTUAL ATTENDEES:

Julie Berry
Alexa Bombich
Cheryl Benton
Andy Culling
Melissa Nichols
Frank Sikora
Cory Skier
Melissa Gresser
Preston Buff
Traci Kelm
Tiffany Potter
Dale Carter
Abbey Stieferman
Hannah Corvene
Mary Ketchum
Tadas Kargelis

Jodie Percy, Recording Secretary, Minutes Solutions Inc. (via teleconference)

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m.

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Christina Chrysogelos and seconded by Tai Ha, it was resolved to approve the agenda for the Lab Methods and Services Committee meeting, with additions. Motion carried.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

All members and guests introduced themselves and the sign-in sheet was completed.

4. FROM CRUDE FIBER TO DIETARY FIBER: MODERNIZING PET FOOD ANALYSIS WITH ACCURATE, AUTOMATED METHODS

Braden Mawdesley of ANKOM Technology gave a presentation on Dietary Fiber Analysis in Feeds and Pet Foods. It was noted that crude fiber measurements are for primarily ruminant animals and do not provide the necessary dietary information for monogastric animals. The gaps between the measurement of crude fiber and dietary fiber were outlined noting there is no mathematical correlation between the two fiber measurements. It was noted that accuracy in labeling of pet food is becoming more important as consumers are increasingly concerned with what they are feeding their animals. The AOAC dietary fiber methods were reviewed with a detailed examination of the AOAC 991.43 method, noting the numerous touch points and that the control of pH, temperature, and timing are critical for enzyme digestion performance. The challenges of testing dietary fiber were reviewed, including the multiple digestion steps, long incubation times, precise temperature control requirements, slow filtration and clogging, and high labor requirements. The automation provided by ANKOM was reviewed, noting the reduction in touch points for the method. With automation on one instrument, up to 9 sample dietary values could be obtained per 8-hour day by running 3 cycles. The importance of defatting all samples was discussed which is especially critical for pet foods greater than 10% crude fat and for wet pet foods. If you do not defat the sample, the total dietary fiber result will be inflated. The floor was opened to questions.

While the analytical variation is reduced with automation, the exact numbers were not available. The changes in values obtained through automation did not meet expectations or predictions, as there is limited research on pet food ingredients. The equipment will cost $40,000, with consumables costing approximately $5 to $7 per sample. Maintenance costs are expected to be approximately $1,000 per year. The enzyme costs are included in the cost for consumables. The presentation included one defatting process; however, crude fiber requires two defatting processes.

The Committee discussed the option of using a phosphate buffer, noting the need for a method change. A phosphate buffer had been explored, with more information to be provided to the Committee regarding outcomes. Quality control standards were discussed, noting that defatting standardization is required and a database for defatting would be useful. The accuracy of the measurement of insoluble fibers was discussed, and it was noted automation does not change the values of the insoluble fibers, making these as accurate as the method allows for. The Committee discussed improved protein removal with the use of a mammalian enzyme rather than bacterial, and it was noted that further research would be required to determine the suitability of this method.

5. DIETARY FIBER: AN OVERVIEW OF ANALYTICAL METHODS FOR PET FOOD

Tadas Kargelis of Neogen presented the discussion on analytical methods for measuring dietary fiber, starting with the history and definition of dietary fiber. The classification and proven health benefits of dietary fiber were reviewed. The chemical gravimetric methods for crude fiber and dietary fiber were reviewed and compared. The advantages and challenges in measuring

dietary fiber in pet food were discussed, with challenges including methods mimicking human in-vivo digestion, complex methods, limited analytical data available, and potential matrix challenges. The differences in values obtained using various methods were reviewed, which are not insignificant. The importance of defatting was discussed; when the fat content is below 10%, defatting becomes less significant. There are 2 websites/databases – FoodData Central and EuroFIR – that offer guidance and could be a tool to estimate protein, ash, fiber, etc. in ingredients. The goals and next steps of the dietary fiber working group were reviewed, noting the need to create pet food quality reference material (QRM), distribute the QRM to participants, continued lab analysis, and statistical analysis and reporting. The floor was opened to questions.

It was noted that sample weight (1 gram) was collected after defatting was completed. The definitions for dietary fiber are related to human food only. It was noted that the recommendation by AAFCO to use AOAC 991.43 is specifically for labeling purposes; if specific claims are to be made regarding specific fibers, further testing would be required for accuracy. Currently, total dietary fiber is to be considered as a maximum when labeling.

6. MICROWAVE SAMPLE PREPARATION FOR AMINO ACID ANALYSIS

Alicia Snell of CEM Corporation presented the information on using microwaves for amino acid analysis, starting with an introduction of CEM Corporation. A review of traditional hydrolysis methods and microwave hydrolysis methods was discussed, noting that microwave hydrolysis allows for improved purity and consistent data. Sample preparation is very important, and nitrogen purge is required to remove oxygen for accurate Cysteine and Methionine results. The data for samples including Soy Flour CRM, AAFCO Swine Finisher, and AAFCO Deer Field Feed were presented. The derivatization method was completed according to the instructions and following all details was important for consistency in sample results. All samples that 165°C and 30 minutes of hold time produced the most consistent results. The benefits of microwave hydrolysis were reviewed, including accuracy and precision, reduced reaction times, cleaner hydrolysates, quicker times to analysis, and safety. The floor was opened to questions.

It was noted that the sample size is only limited by the vessel size, and larger samples can easily be accommodated in the MARS 6. In addition, the Waters HPLC method was used for analysis. The Committee discussed concerns regarding samples with high mineral contents. Samples can be sent to CEM to be tested using CEM devices.

The meeting recessed from 10:35 a.m. to 10:55 a.m.

7. HEMP UPDATE

Hunter Buffington of Agriculture Policy Solutions presented the ASTM D37.07 industrial hemp subcommittee analytical method development update. A draft method will be provided to the Committee by the end of the day. Achieving lower-limit testing is an ongoing challenge with hemp. Further challenges were reviewed, including the legislative language allowing for only 0.4 mg of THC per container. It was noted that the “container” size for feed is drastically larger than for human consumption, which is what the legislation is based on. There is no reported standard deviation attainable for 10 ppm.

The Committee discussed the next steps, including the interlaboratory study. The goal is to have the draft method distributed to laboratories at the beginning of February, 2026, followed by feedback and registration to participate in the study. Two samples will be sent to laboratories with two to four months of registration. There are currently nine laboratories confirmed for participation.

8. WORKING GROUP UPDATES

8.1 Dietary Fiber

The Dietary Fiber Working Group is charged with reviewing methods and provided a recommendation for an appropriate method for dietary fiber values in pet food. The working group has recommended the use of test method AOAC 991.43 but there is no reference material (RM) for total dietary fiber in pet food. Next steps include sending the RM to laboratories for testing and collection of data. The fee for participation will be $50 to ensure that laboratories return the data. Samples, controls, and enzymes will be provided. The goal is to send samples by late February 2026. Promotional information will be distributed to laboratories to encourage participation, with a goal of 20 labs participating. Clear instructions will accompany samples, including a request for a summary of the process from each laboratory to determine if any modifications were used during the process.

The further goals of the group were discussed, including method validation, inclusion of canned products, timelines, and the number of samples that can be reasonably completed by a laboratory.

8.2 Metals

The Metals Working Group is charged with determining best practices. A rough draft of the best practices will be reviewed by the group in the coming months.

8.3 Fat-Soluble Vitamins

The Fat-Soluble Vitamins Working Group is charged with validating methods for vitamins A, D, and E. It was noted that there had been a roadblock faced regarding test portion mass. A previous study published by the WG showed that a 100 g test portion mass is needed for Vitamins A and D in finished products due to the encapsulation of these ingredients resulting in discrete particles. Experiments performed by the MT State Lab using pancreatic enzyme to pre-digest a 100 g sample, then taking a portion of this through the saponification extraction showed good repeatability with a 300,000 IU/lb Vitamin A sample. MT is still working on repeating the experiment with a use-level product around 20,000 IU/lb.

The WG does not think the OTSC LC-MS method for Vitamin D has been published yet.

8.4 Moisture

The Moisture Working Group is currently being re-established and will be led by Brian Schuld. It was noted that there is a lack of an official Karl-Fischer moisture method for dry and wet pet foods. The current goal of the WG is to extend AOAC Official Method 991.02 for semi-moist pet foods to dry and wet products. The first meeting will be scheduled during February, 2026, and volunteers for the group were requested.

The meeting recessed for lunch from 11:52 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

8.5 Ash

The Ash Working Group is charged with a review of the definitions of ash. Meetings will be scheduled in the coming months, with a report to be provided at the August, 2026 AAFCO meeting.

8.6 QA/QC

The charge of the QA/QC Working Group involves reviewing ISO/IEC 17025. Documents will be centralized and require review and updating. The group discussed the option of sending one document to each member for review to begin the process.

8.7 Laboratory Network

The Laboratory Network Working Group aims to establish a database to define the capabilities of each state laboratory. A detailed survey has been distributed to laboratories to a single contact to ensure that the work is not duplicated. As surveys are returned to the group to determine how the information will be stored, including searchability and access for regulators.

8.8 Emerging Contaminants

The Emerging Contaminants Working Group is charged with compiling information on emerging hazards and contaminants and establishing one location to obtain information. The group is currently focusing on gathering information for PFAS and microplastics. The information worksheet was reviewed, following the five sections: methodology and regulatory, risk assessment and prioritization, reference materials and controls, industry trends, and facility requirements. The group is seeking more volunteers; specifically, a volunteer with FDA background. Currently, there are 13 items on the contaminants list to be addressed.

8.9 Mycotoxins

The Mycotoxin Working Group is seeking a specific focus. It was noted that storage conditions and weather patterns can have an impact on the existing best practices. The Committee discussed various focuses for this group, including a survey to laboratories to determine the current need, flow chart for pet food and feed, and new targets for finding mycotoxins. It was noted that the focus should be on state laboratories and could include knowledge references and resources to support needs.

The Committee discussed the MMCOE (Mycotoxins Mitigation Council of Excellence), noting that there is an abundance of knowledge available from corn growers regarding mycotoxins and testing methods. Work in mycotoxins had been conducted at the North Carolina State University and could be used as another resource.

The working group agreed to draft and send out a survey to state laboratories as a next step.

9. 2025–2030 AAFCO STRATEGIC PLAN

The areas of the strategic plan that include the Committee were reviewed. It was noted that the Committee has a role under each goal, including training, professional development, increased participation in animal feed safety systems, and evaluation of stakeholder relationships that influence AAFCO.

The Committee discussed laboratory workshop ideas for the next mid-year meeting. Training could be provided by an accredited body in areas such as internal audit training or method validation. The costs and planning were further discussed.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Roundtable

10.1.1 Technology Sub-Committee

Volunteers have been requested for the Technology Sub-Committee from the Laboratory Methods and Services Committee. Volunteers were requested from state or federal laboratories.

10.1.2 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

It was noted that the closed AI system for AAFCO had been opened and resources from the Committee have been requested. Committee members were encouraged to use the AI system and provide suggestions regarding which documents the Committee should add.

11. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 2:53 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Committee Member	Committee Member
Date	Date