Food & Environmental Testing

Collaborative Food Safety Forum
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Yum!
Goals & Benefits of Testing

• Trust, but verify
• One of the means to monitor suppliers and processes
  – Preventive controls most important
  – But testing is an important part of the system
• Helps keep suppliers attentive
What is Tested and Scientific Basis

• Specify minimum testing requirements for most products/ingredients

• What is tested for depends on product risks
  – Raw materials
  – Finished products, both RTE and raw
  – Environmental pathogens
Sampling Frequency/Sample Size

- Sampling frequency depends on product and processing risk
- Guidance provided by ICMSF Book 7 and Book 8
- But, for higher risk products with limited controls, we require more sampling
  - For example, fresh-cut produce
Cost-Benefit of Testing

- Microbial testing cost is relatively low for products with definitive control steps
- Cost is much higher for fresh-cut produce
- Benefits
  - One tool to help monitor supplier processes
  - Suppliers do get positives, especially on fresh produce and environmental—those are diverted and not released because all testing is done on a test and hold basis
Challenges

- Short shelf life products require rapid methods and labs on site or very close by
- Lot definitions are a significant hurdle for many suppliers and product types
  - Many times other customers of our suppliers pressure our suppliers not to test fearing a positive that will impact their supply chain
- Storage capacity (while product is on hold) is a big challenge for some suppliers
Thank you!