



API

The world's choice for proficiency testing.

ISO ACCREDITED PROFICIENCY TESTING PROVIDER*

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*By A2LA to ISO/IEC 17043; certificate #3094.01





PROFICIENCY TESTING FROM API: YOUR ANSWER TO THE GROWING QUESTIONS REGARDING FOOD SAFETY.

Product quality and safety are issues of great concern to the food industry. Laboratory testing, used as a tool to monitor quality and safety, plays an important role in a company's quality assurance program. But how do you monitor the quality of your laboratory's results?

Laboratory results are very dependent on such variables as the method used, equipment, procedures, and the skills and training of the analyst. Proficiency testing provides a documented, independent assessment of a laboratory's ability to produce accurate results.

American Proficiency Institute, a leader in medical laboratory proficiency testing, also offers a proficiency program that meets the unique needs of the food industry. It has been developed in conjunction with food industry leaders and meets the laboratory requirements for PT found in ISO/IEC 17025.

Successful performance in an external proficiency testing program is a key indicator of high laboratory quality and an integral component of laboratory accreditation.

WHAT IS PROFICIENCY TESTING?

Proficiency testing (PT) is a type of external quality control to measure a laboratory's accuracy. The practice of testing unknown samples from an outside source provides an additional means to assure quality laboratory testing results.

One of the most common designs for a PT scheme is for the proficiency provider to designate a few dates throughout the year when it will send test samples to all subscribers at the same time.

The samples, whose expected values are unknown to the subscribers, are run by the lab staff who return their results to the proficiency provider.

The results are reviewed to determine whether each participant meets established performance levels, and an evaluation is issued to the subscriber.

The evaluation and accompanying statistical data not only capture the laboratory's current performance, but over time allow lab management to analyze and improve the laboratory's long term performance.

API's proficiency programs are open to any laboratory finding them useful. Both accredited and non-accredited labs are welcome to enroll.

WHY ENROLL IN A PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAM?

- Compare your laboratory's results to those of others performing the same test
- Demonstrate and identify performance trends
- Monitor test performance across all of your company's testing sites
- Replace internal check sample programs
- Provide additional confidence in your laboratory's results
- Fulfill accreditation requirements
- Manage risk through early warning of potential problems
- Educate and train staff
- Check the reasonableness of the laboratory's measurement uncertainty



API FEATURES

ACCREDITED PROVIDER

API is accredited by A2LA to provide proficiency testing for select food microbiology and food chemistry analytes according to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17043:2010. Laboratories wishing to ensure that API's scope of accreditation meets their needs can view our certificate (3094.01) and official scope of accreditation at www.A2LA.org. A2LA accreditation is recognized by laboratory accreditation bodies around the world through an international system of signed agreements. More information is available at A2LA's website, www.A2LA.org.

STABLE SAMPLES

API sources the proficiency samples through well-qualified companies experienced in providing consistent, high-quality test materials. In addition, samples undergo homogeneity and stability testing to ensure a reliable testing experience and confidence in proficiency results.

We have refined the food microbiology proficiency testing process by using lyophilized microorganisms derived from traceable reference cultures. The lyophilization process provides an extremely stable matrix for the microorganisms with little to no organism 'die off.' The growth, biochemical, and serological characteristics of each strain are verified before and after lyophilization. In addition, lyophilized samples allow a laboratory the flexibility to begin analysis at any time within the testing period.

Chemistry samples are packaged in sealed mylar pouches to minimize any environmental effects on the sample between packaging and testing. Dairy and cereal programs consist of powdered / dried food products; meat samples are re-hydrated powdered meat.

CUSTOMIZED REPORTING

API reports are customized by participant. With our concise Comparative Evaluation there is no need to look through pages of every result returned. Additional analyte level detail is available at www.foodpt.com under PARTICPANT DATA SUMMARIES. Examples of reports are available on our website under LEARN MORE.

MANAGEMENT REPORTS

For companies with more than one testing site, API has developed unique management reports, which summarize the performance of each participating lab. These reports give the quality assurance administrator a snapshot of each laboratory's current performance, long-term performance, and items needing special attention.



TECHNICIAN COMPETENCY

This new feature offers your lab the option of submitting up to five sets of results per enrolled Microbiology program. The first set is considered lab proficiency; the results submitted will be included in the test event statistics and the evaluation will be within the scope of our accreditation to ISO/IEC 17043*. The four additional sets of results will be managed entirely on-line; laboratories will submit their results and access their evaluations at www.foodpt.com. Detailed instructions will be provided with the test kit. The best news is this program is offered at no additional cost!

OUTSTANDING TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Our technologists understand the entire proficiency testing process – from samples to statistics. They are experts in analyzing your performance and addressing questions pertaining to your evaluation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

API maintains strict confidentiality of each participant's identity and test results. At your request, copies of enrollment or evaluation reports can be provided to company management or regulatory bodies.

FREE EDUCATIONAL SAMPLES

Participants in the Food Microbiology program have the opportunity to take part in educational exercises at no extra charge. The educational samples are designed to illustrate certain test methods or concepts that are important to the food laboratory. Laboratories that choose to participate in this program receive an educational sample along with their usual test kit. After testing, laboratories are provided with an educational commentary pertaining to the sample, as well as information that allows them to determine their performance.

ONLINE SERVICES

API's website offers useful features to help manage your proficiency testing results and evaluations. Laboratories can submit, review, and print their results using our website. Other services include email updates with shipping information and result due dates.

*API's full scope of accreditation to ISO/IEC 17043 is available on our website at www.foodpt.com by clicking on the A2LA Accredited symbol.

PROFICIENCY PROGRAMS

API offers a variety of proficiency testing options depending on the nature and scope of your operation. All proficiency programs consist of three shipments per year with two unique samples per shipment for analysis. Laboratories may choose to order one program for the entire year, or may alternate between programs during the year (e.g., if they would like to perform testing with different matrices). Please see the separate order form for program prices and shipment dates.



MICROBIOLOGY

Each microbiology sample consists of a glass vial containing the lyophilized organism preparation, a hydration/dilution fluid, and a food matrix of either non-fat dry milk (nfdm) or powdered meat.^a Participants are instructed to prepare the sample according to the instructions provided with the kit, and to proceed to test the samples according to the protocol used in their lab to perform these types of tests. Results may be submitted to API using paper result forms or through the online Paperless Proficiency Testing feature.

The following list shows the tests that are included in each program, the food matrix to be used, and whether the tests are for quantitative or qualitative reporting. Laboratories may choose the programs that are the best match for the tests they perform in their facility.

Catalog #	Program	Description / Test Includes
724	Anaerobic Package – Milk (formerly Clostridium – Milk)	Quantitative tests for: Total Anaerobic Count** Sulfite-reducing bacteria** <i>Clostridium</i> sp. <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> **
717	Anaerobic Package – Meat (formerly Clostridium – Meat)	Same as 724, with a powdered meat matrix
723	HACCP Package ^a	Quantitative tests for: Aerobic Plate Count Coliforms <i>E. coli</i>
730	Pathogen Free Package – Milk	Quantitative tests for: Aerobic Plate Count Coliforms <i>E. coli</i> Enterobacteriaceae Mold Yeast
731	Pathogen Free Package – Meat	Same as 730, with a powdered meat matrix
740	Qualitative Package – Milk	<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7 <i>Listeria</i> sp. and ID <i>Salmonella</i> sp.
742	Qualitative Package – Meat	Same as 740, with a powdered meat matrix

^aThe Campylobacter, HACCP, and Vibrio programs do not include a food matrix.

**Not currently in scope of A2LA accreditation.

Catalog #	Program	Description / Test Includes
706	Quantitative Package – Milk	Aerobic Plate Count <i>Bacillus cereus</i> <i>E. coli</i> Enterobacteriaceae Mold <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> / Coagulase positive <i>Staph</i> (quantitative or qualitative) Thermotolerant Coliforms** Total Coliforms Yeast Yeast & Mold Osmophilic Yeast and Mold**
707	Quantitative Package – Meat	Same as 706, with a powdered meat matrix
715	Campylobacter ^a	Qualitative, ID, and/or quantitative test for <i>Campylobacter</i> sp.
721	Cronobacter – Milk only	Qualitative test for <i>Cronobacter</i> sp.**
720	Lactic Acid Bacteria – Milk	Quantitative test for lactic acid bacteria
735	Lactic Acid Bacteria – Meat	Same as 720, with a powdered meat matrix
766	Listeria – Milk	Qualitative, ID, and/or quantitative test for <i>Listeria</i> sp., <i>L. monocytogenes</i>
768	Listeria – Meat	Same as 766, with a powdered meat matrix
780	Pseudomonas – Milk	Qualitative or quantitative test for <i>Pseudomonas</i> sp.**
782	Pseudomonas – Meat	Same as 780, with a powdered meat matrix
760	Salmonella – Milk	Qualitative test for <i>Salmonella</i> sp.
762	Salmonella – Meat	Same as 760, with a powdered meat matrix
745	STEC Identification – Milk ^b	Detection and identification of Shiga Toxin producing <i>E. coli</i> ; includes the “Big 6” non-O157:H7 STEC and toxin producing strains of O157:H7
746	STEC Identification – Meat ^b	Same as 745, with a powdered meat matrix
737	Vibrio ^a	Qualitative test for <i>Vibrio</i> sp. and ID**

^aThe Campylobacter, HACCP, and Vibrio programs do not include a food matrix.

^bSpecial permit and handling fees apply for customers outside the U.S.

**Not currently in scope of A2LA accreditation.



Most proficiency programs are available as “add-on” options as well. If a laboratory is purchasing one of the programs listed previously, additional programs may be purchased at a reduced cost. Catalog numbers for Add-on programs are shown below.

Catalog #	Program	Catalog #	Program
729	Anaerobic Package – Milk (Add-on)**	722	Cronobacter – Milk only (Add-on)**
718	Anaerobic Package – Meat (Add-on)**	728	Lactic Acid Bacteria – Milk (Add-on)
779	HACCP Package ^a (Add-on)	736	Lactic Acid Bacteria – Meat (Add-on)
777	Pathogen Free Package – Milk (Add-on)	767	Listeria – Milk (Add-on)
778	Pathogen Free Package – Meat (Add-on)	769	Listeria – Meat (Add-on)
741	Qualitative Package – Milk (Add-on)	781	Pseudomonas – Milk (Add-on)**
743	Qualitative Package – Meat (Add-on)	783	Pseudomonas – Meat (Add-on)**
775	Quantitative Package – Milk (Add-on)	761	Salmonella – Milk (Add-on)
776	Quantitative Package – Meat (Add-on)	763	Salmonella – Meat (Add-on)
726	Campylobacter ^a (Add-on)	738	Vibrio ^a (Add-on)**

^aThe Campylobacter, HACCP, and Vibrio programs do not include a food matrix.

**Contains analytes not currently in scope of A2LA accreditation.

CHEMISTRY

Each chemistry sample consists of 150 g of the specified matrix. Samples may be tested for a variety of analytes, depending on the matrix selected. Participants are to test the samples according to the protocol used in their lab to perform these types of tests, and may test as many or as few analytes as desired. Results may be submitted to API using paper result forms or through the online Paperless Proficiency Testing feature.

Note: Not all chemistry analytes are included in the scope of API's A2LA accreditation. Call API or refer to our scope document (cert. #3094.01) at www.A2LA.org for the most up to date information on our PT provider accreditation.

Catalog #	Program / Description	Test Includes	
750	Cereal Chemistry <i>Two unique samples; typical matrices include ground breakfast or infant cereal</i>	Ash Calcium Copper** Dietary Fiber** Fat (total) Folic Acid** Iron** Magnesium** Moisture Niacin** Phosphorus** Potassium**	Protein Riboflavin** Salt Sodium** Sugars** Thiamin** Vitamin A** Vitamin B6** Vitamin B12** Vitamin C** Vitamin D** Zinc**
751	Meat Chemistry <i>Two unique samples; typical matrices include dried re-hydrated beef, chicken, or turkey</i>	Ash Calcium Cholesterol** Fat (total, sat.** , trans.**) Iron** Magnesium**	Moisture Potassium** Protein Salt Sodium**
752	Dairy Chemistry <i>Two unique samples; typical matrices include dried milk, cheese, or buttermilk powders</i>	Ash Calcium Cholesterol** Dietary Fiber** Fat (total, sat.** , trans.**) Iron** Magnesium**	Moisture Potassium** Protein Salt Sodium** Sugars** Vitamin A**
For additional sample volume:			
755	Cereal Chemistry	Additional 150g	
756	Meat Chemistry	Additional 150g	
757	Dairy Chemistry	Additional 150g	

**Not currently in scope of A2LA accreditation.



ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

1. Select the program options you need using this catalog. Use the order form to record your selections, then follow these instructions to complete the form. Orders should be placed four weeks prior to the scheduled shipping date. Make sure you include:
 - a. Shipping address (include mailing address for correspondence)
 - b. Billing information (if different than shipping address)
 - c. Regulatory information
 - d. Payment method

2. To order, select one of the options below:
 - a. Fax the order form to us at 231.941.7287
 - b. Phone us toll free at 855.366.3781 ((001) 231.668.9700 outside of the U.S. and Canada)
 - c. Mail the order form to us
 - d. Give the order form to your authorized distributor
 - e. Email the order form to foodtest@foodpt.com

3. After processing your order, we will send you an Order Confirmation showing products ordered and pre-set shipping dates.
 - a. Mark your calendar with the shipment dates.
 - b. Inspect your kit immediately upon receipt. Call us within 3 days if any sample is missing or damaged.
 - c. Read the instructions carefully before beginning a test.
 - d. Keep a copy of any results mailed to API.



Partial Year Orders

API makes every effort to accommodate new orders or order changes throughout the year. We will prorate the prices for orders received after the first shipment.

Cancellations

We will credit any charges for unshipped specimens if we receive notification in writing four weeks prior to the next shipment date.

International and Non-Continental U.S. Customers

Additional shipping charges will be added to International and Non-Continental U.S. orders. These orders must be placed a minimum of four weeks prior to the scheduled ship date.

In addition, most countries require import permits or certificates of origin for clearance through customs. Local authorities can tell you if any permits are required for your location. Import permits must be obtained by the laboratory and a copy forwarded to API. See the CATALOG page of our website for more details.





The American Proficiency Institute is the most innovative and widely accepted proficiency testing program available.

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