

AOAC's Proficiency Testing Program Scores High Receives Accreditation by A2LA

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INTERNATIONAL announced today that its laboratory proficiency testing (LPT) program for food analysis has been accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), an internationally recognized accrediting body. "This is the only A2LA-accredited, food analysis, proficiency testing program at this time," said Arlene Fox, managing director of the program. "Our accreditation gives the many laboratory clients currently in the program even more recognition for the quality of their analysis, which increases their client base and translates into better protection of the world's food supply."

Implemented in 1998, the AOAC LPT program focuses on laboratory analysis for the safety assessment of food products. Programs for food safety analysis include Pesticide Residues in Fruits and Vegetables, newly added in 2000; Standard Microbiology; Pathogen-Free Microbiology; Meat Microbiology; and HACCP (FDA's Hazardous Analysis and Critical Control Point). The program for Nutrition Labeling completes the list of current programs.

Laboratories use proficiency testing to test the caliber and quality of the processes, systems, equipment, and personnel used to analyze and test products. AOAC's proficiency testing program provides laboratory subscribers with unknown samples of substances to analyze and test. AOAC then reviews the confidential results of this testing, and the laboratory receives a score. An unacceptable score suggests to the laboratory the need for changes that will improve its competitiveness with other laboratories. If desired,

AOAC can also provide technical support for laboratories needing assistance in calculating the correct results. If the score is acceptable, the laboratory uses it to meet the requirements of clients and accrediting bodies. Many companies see proficiency testing scores as a useful tool in qualifying vendors.

Accrediting bodies maintain increasingly stringent requirements for laboratories seeking accreditation. Accreditation by A2LA involves an application process, an on-site assessment of facilities, and, finally, approval by an accreditation council. “The accreditation process is a long, hard road, but in the end it’s well worth the effort,” said Fox.

“AOAC’s proficiency testing programs are very popular, and the list of subscribers has grown rapidly,” said E. James Bradford, AOAC executive director. “The program will most certainly grow even more as the laboratory community learns about its accreditation, and we are well-prepared to handle this.”

The AOAC LPT program has been many years in the making and its programs are developed with the guidance of the LPT program’s advisory commi
accreditation is a milestone for our Association,” said AOAC President Michael Brodsky. “AOAC’s LPT program sets a standard for other providers to aspire to. Participants should have an extra measure of comfort that the program they subscribe to meets the highest level of scrutiny by the international scientific community.”

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AOAC INTERNATIONAL is a professional scientific association dedicated to the validation of analytical methods, improved laboratory management, and the professional development of analytical scientists. To learn more about the AOAC Proficiency Testing

Program or to look at our laboratory accreditation resources brochure visit the AOAC website at <http://216.55.34.180/proficiencytesting/profTestingPrograms.html>.

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