

PART 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE *OFFICIAL METHODS*SM PROGRAM (OMA)

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QUICK & EASY!

ABOUT AOAC® *OFFICIAL METHODS*™

- AOAC® *Official Methods*™ are referenced in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations and are used worldwide by regulated industry, product testing laboratories, and academic institutions.
- Notice of all actions related to AOAC® *Official Methods*™ are published in *The Referee* section of the AOAC magazine, “*Inside Laboratory Management*,” *The Journal of AOAC INTERNATIONAL*, and/or the AOAC website (<http://www.aoac.org>).
- All AOAC® *Official Methods*™ are published in the compendium, “*Official Methods of Analysis of AOAC INTERNATIONAL*” (OMA), published by AOAC INTERNATIONAL, 481 N. Frederick Avenue, Suite 500, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2417, USA.
- All collaborative study manuscripts, which include data supporting AOAC® *Official Methods*™, are published in the *Journal of AOAC INTERNATIONAL*.

INTRODUCTION

1. Overview

AOAC INTERNATIONAL (formed in 1884 as the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists) is an independent association devoted to promoting methods validation and quality measurements in the analytical sciences. It does this by reviewing and validating approved standard methods of analysis, promoting uniformity and reliability in statements of results, and developing and promoting criteria useful for laboratory accreditation and analyst certification.

2. The AOAC[®] Official MethodsSM Program (OMA)

The AOAC[®] Official MethodsSM Program (OMA) is designed to provide methods of analysis for which performance characteristics have been determined and tested. The cornerstone of this program is the interlaboratory collaborative study by which proposed methods are validated through independent testing in separate laboratories following the same method and analyzing the same samples. The purpose of the study is to establish the characteristics of the methods with respect to accuracy, precision (repeatability and reproducibility), sensitivity, range, specificity, ruggedness, limit of measurement, and practicality under typical laboratory applications. AOAC[®] Official MethodsSM, can then be used with confidence by regulatory agencies, regulated industries, product testing laboratories, and academic institutions to determine compliance with government regulations, to maintain quality control and process requirements, to set and evaluate compliance with terms of procurement contracts, to conduct national and international trade, and to support research.

AOAC[®] Official MethodsSM are recognized worldwide as an authoritative resource, because of thorough and rigorous testing characterization. They are written into the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, product specifications, and product acceptance, relied on in legal proceedings, and required as a basis of national and international trade. They are also adopted by other national and international standards organizations such as the International Standardization Organization, Codex Alimentarius Commission, International Dairy Federation, European Standardization Committee, American Association of Cereal Chemists, Nordic Committee on Food Analysis, and many others.

Methods work is performed by appointed volunteers who are staff scientists of international, national, federal, state, provincial, and municipal laboratories, college, university, and experiment station laboratories, and commercial laboratories worldwide. The work is coordinated through volunteer committees, with AOAC staff support.

Experts in a subject area who are chosen to be members of committees, consultants, and General Referees, etc. may have conflicts or apparent conflicts in the performance of their duties. While this will not necessarily disqualify a volunteer from carrying out his or her duties, conflicts of interest or even the appearance of conflicts of interest should be avoided. Association policy states that these conflicts must be disclosed.

All AOAC volunteers are required to sign a Volunteer Acceptance Form (VAF) accepting their appointment and agreeing to the provisions of the AOAC conflict of interest policy. If a conflict of interest is not disclosed then the collaborative study can be disqualified. Clarification of possible conflicts of interest should be discussed with the methods committee chair and AOAC staff prior to the initiation of a collaborative study or related activity.

An AOAC[®] Official MethodSM is adopted First Action by the appropriate Methods Committee following successful completion of an interlaboratory collaborative study. Study Directors conduct studies, according to AOAC specifications, upon recommendation by the appropriate General Referee. First Action AOAC[®] Official MethodsSM and the collaborative study manuscripts are published by AOAC for further use, comments and testing by the scientific community.

A First Action method can be adopted as a Final Action AOAC[®] Official MethodSM by the Official Methods Board (OMB) upon recommendation by the appropriate General Referee and Methods Committee. A method is eligible for Final Action two years after methods committee approval of First Action status. First and Final Action methods may also be repealed, declared surplus, or modified.

Notices of all proposed actions and completed actions for methods are published in the Association magazine, *Inside Laboratory Management* and/or on AOAC's website (Method News). Collaborative study manuscripts including supporting data are published in the *Journal of AOAC INTERNATIONAL*. All First and Final Action AOAC[®] Official MethodsSM are published in the compendium, *Official Methods of Analysis of AOAC INTERNATIONAL (OMA)*.