

December 17, 2020

Happy Holidays to our CASP Participants!

With the year at a close, we wanted to share some of CASP's major accomplishments of 2020!

- SMPR: Determination of Heavy Metals in a variety of cannabis and cannabis-derived products
- SMPR: Detection of *Salmonella* species in Cannabis and Cannabis products
- SMPR: Mycotoxin Screening Technique in Cannabis plant material and cannabis derivatives
- SMPR: Detection of shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) in cannabis
- SMPR: Total Yeast and Mold
- Laboratory Guidance for Drying Field-Fresh Hemp Plant Samples in Preparation for Determination of Total THC on a Dry Weight Basis
- Launched a Training and Education Working Group – AOAC trainings planned for 2021
- Launched a Proficiency Testing Working Group – Sub-groups are forming recommendations on much-needed PT Programs
- *Official Method of Analysis* 2018.11 was approved total THC determination of total THC on a dry-weight basis for hemp

We could not have come this far without you, our CASP participants. Thank you all for your dedication to the program!

Advisory Panel

The AOAC CASP Advisory Panel met on November 2, 2020 to review the program to date. During that meeting, the Advisory Panel agreed to move all working groups towards a “product centric” (as opposed to the current “analyte-centric” approach of SMPR development. More information about this is in the working group update below. Would you like to be a part of the CASP Advisory Panel and help steer the future direction of the program? If so please contact Alicia Meiklejohn, Director of Business Development and Governance, at ameiklejohn@aoac.org or (301) 924-7077 x 101.

Working Groups

Cannabinoids in Consumables

The Cannabinoids in Consumables Working Group, chaired by Dr. Holly Johnson of APHA, completed a draft guidance document, *Laboratory guidance for drying field-fresh hemp plant samples in preparation for determination of total THC on a dry-weight basis*. This document was posted for a 30-day public comment period which ended on December 4, 2020. Comments will now be reviewed and reconciled by the chair in conjunction with AOAC staff. The document will then be put out to the CASP community for a vote, so keep an eye on your inboxes. With the guidance document nearing completion, the working group has begun work on new Standard Method Performance Requirements (SMPRs) for cannabinoid content in beverages. This will be the first group to begin working to a ‘product-centric’ approach (as opposed to analyte-centric).

Chemical Contaminants

The Chemical Contaminants Working Group, chaired by Dr. Julie Kowalski of JA Kowalski Science Support, completed a qualitative SMPR for mycotoxins earlier this year. That document was put to a ballot in September and we are pleased to announce that it has been approved and is currently moving through the AOAC publication process. Once published, AOAC will issue a call for methods that may meet this SMPR. The group has now started work on a quantitative SMPR for mycotoxins, which will follow the same process. After this, the group will join the Cannabinoids Working Group in moving towards a product-centric approach.

Microbial Contaminants

The Microbial Contaminants Working Group, chaired by Julia Bramante of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, is also finishing one last ‘analyte-centric’ SMPR before moving to the ‘product-centric’ approach. They are currently working to finalize a draft SMPR titled *Standard Method Performance Requirements for Total Yeast and Mold*. The group will reconvene in January, 2021 to complete the draft SMPR, which will then be posted for public comment.

Proficiency Testing Working Group

The sub-groups of the Proficiency Testing Working Group, chaired by Dr. Walter Brent Wilson of NIST, have been meeting to determine the technical requirements for a proficiency testing program. Discussions have included not only testing for CBD and THC, but also for contaminants including pesticides.

Expert Review Panels

AOAC CASP now has three (3) vetted, active Expert Review Panels (ERPs). The ERPs review methods that are submitted in response to calls for methods based on CASP SMPRs. The CASP Cannabinoids ERP is chaired by Dr. Melissa Phillips of NIST and recently looked at methods for cannabinoids in chocolate, the Chemical Contaminants ERP is chaired by Andrew Pham of Alkemist Laboratories and will meet on December 16 to review a method for heavy metals in cannabis, and the Microbial Contaminants ERP is chaired by Julia Bramante and will eventually review methods submitted for the SMPRs developed by the Microbial Contaminants Working Group.

ERPs typically meet during AOAC's Analytical Methods Weeks. In 2021, methods weeks are scheduled for the weeks of April 26, August 2, and December 13. For more information including open calls for methods please see the [website](#).

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