



Cannabis Analytical  
Science Program

February 3, 2020

**AOAC CASP WILL MEET AT THE AOAC MID-YEAR MEETING ON MARCH 17, 2021. [REGISTER TODAY!](#)**

## **Advisory Panel News**

### ***Join the 2021 CASP Advisory Panel***

Joining the CASP Advisory Panel (AP) allows your organization to be involved in priority-setting for the program. There are three tiers of annual membership available. Member organizations may designate multiple representatives to participate in AP meetings; the first meeting is planned for mid-February. Contact Alicia Meiklejohn ([ameiklejohn@aoac.org](mailto:ameiklejohn@aoac.org)) by February 5, 2021, to confirm your commitment.

- *Pioneer: \$10,000 – AP representation, listed in CASP communications, discounts on AOAC consulting services, exclusive use of AOC CASP logo*
- *Partner: \$5,000 – AP representation, listed in CASP communications*
- *Affiliate: \$2,500 – AP representation, listed in CASP communications*

## **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 Holly Johnson of APHA, completed a draft guidance document, *Laboratory guidance for drying field-fresh hemp plant samples in preparation for determination of total THC on a dry-weight basis*.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 have been collated and sent to the working group Chair for reconciliation, and the responses to those comments will be included in the final e-ballot for this document. Since then, the group has begun work on an SMPR for cannabinoids in beverages as part of the new ‘matrix-centric’ approach to SMPR development. The group has agreed to incorporate the US regulatory definition for beverages and has developed an extensive list of different beverage types that may be used for this SMPR. Alcoholic beverages will not be in scope. At their next meeting they will address the performance requirements table, the list of cannabinoids, and validation guidance.

### ***Chemical Contaminants***

The Chemical Contaminants Working Group, chaired by Dr. Julie Kowalski of JA Kowalski Science Support, has made significant progress in the development of a quantitative SMPR for mycotoxins in cannabis. At their last meeting, this group had an extensive discussion on the definition for limit of quantitation (LOQ). They will discuss the remaining definitions and other sections of the SMPR at their next meeting. After this document is completed, 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 currently working to finalize a draft SMPR titled *Standard Method Performance Requirements for Total Yeast and Mold*. The group met on January 12, 2021 and agreed that a cocktail of five organisms will be used for the SMPR – two yeast, two molds, and the fifth can be either and will be left up to the developer. They also discussed decontamination of materials and suggested that the CASP Advisory Panel may want to consider if guidelines for decontamination of cannabis flower is something the program should consider. Most recently the group met on February 2, when they agreed to list contamination levels as low, medium or high instead of specifying a level, because these levels could vary depending on the state or region. This was followed by a deep dive discussion into the validation guidance section. The group will meet to discuss this SMPR at least one more time to conclude the discussion on validation guidance, specifically the cultural contamination step and guidance around an unpaired study and evaluating the suitability of whatever media is used in the candidate method.

### ***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 moisture, and contaminants including pesticides. A schedule of upcoming 2021

subgroup meetings is currently being completed and will include new areas such as microbials and residual solvents. An email asking members if they would like to join any of these new subgroups will be sent soon. AOAC staff is also currently putting together the information required to select advisory task force members.

### ***Training and Education Working Group***

The CASP Education and Training working group is excited to bring the first installment of virtual educational seminar sessions to the extended AOAC CASP stakeholder group. Join one, or all, of the sessions to learn about the cannabis & hemp testing ecosystem that supports a market estimated to approach \$25B by 2025. Subject matter experts will present their insight into a variety of topics that are common across the legal US and International markets and conclude each session with a live Q&A to engage further with the audience.

Dr. Toby Astill leads this group and has been working with the sub-groups to develop these seminars on the following topics: setting up a cannabis lab, microbial testing, heavy metals testing, mycotoxins testing and pesticides. Registration information will be forthcoming.

### **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 Chemical Contaminants ERP is chaired by Andrew Pham of Alkemist Laboratories and met on December 16, 2020 to review a method submitted against [SMPR 2020.001, Determination of Heavy Metals in a Variety of Cannabis and Cannabis Derived Products](#). All open calls for methods can be seen [here](#), and new calls for mycotoxin methods and *Shiga-toxin producing E. coli* will be forthcoming.

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. The deadline for submitting a method for review at the next AMW is **Friday, February 26**. For more information including open calls for methods please see the [website](#).

### **Regulator Spotlight (NEW!)**

Going forward, the AOAC CASP Newsletter will include a regulator spotlight column. Are you a regulator with important cannabis related regulatory news that you would like to share with our CASP community? If so, contact us by reply email today!

### **CASP Related Speaking Engagements**

*Do you want your speaking engagement included in the next CASP Newsletter? [Email us](#).*

Title: Establishing Quality Assurance in Cannabis Testing

Speaker: Dr. Susan Audino, Audino & Associates

Conference: Canna Business 101 (EUCI Online learning)

Format: Virtual

Dates: February 16, 2021

[Register here](#)

Title: How Accurate Are My Lab's Microbiology Results? Ensuring the Fitness for Purpose of Your Cannabis Microbiology Methods

Speaker: Pat Bird, PMB BioTek Consulting

Conference: Analytical Cannabis Expo West

Format: Virtual

Dates: April 20-21, 2021

[Register here](#)

Title: The Need for a Rational Approach to Regulations

Speaker: Dr. Susan Audino, Audino & Associates

Conference: Analytical Cannabis Expo West 2021

Format: Virtual

Dates: April 20-21, 2021

[Register here](#)

Title: So You Think You Want to Start a Cannabis Lab: Triumphs, struggles and lessons learned

Speaker: Josh Smith, Premium CBD Labs

Conference: Analytical Cannabis Expo West

Format: Virtual

Dates: April 20-21, 2021

[Register here](#)

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