

February 16, 2012

TO: See Distribution List

FROM: Martha Lamont
Director, Monitoring Programs Division

SUBJECT: Program Plan (April 1 through September 30, 2012) – Microbiological Data Program

I. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

A. Program Status: The Microbiological Data Program (MDP) budget allocation for FY2012 was finalized and adjustments to Program operations were made to offset budget decreases. MDP may again adjust Program operations to offset any additional budget shortfalls which may occur this fiscal year.

B. Personnel: State Program participants are required to inform the Monitoring Programs Division (MP) of any critical personnel vacancies, staffing issues, expected increases in rent (e.g., due to laboratory or office renovation/relocation, etc.) or delays in sample turn-around-time (e.g., due to staffing issues, equipment repairs, etc.) and sampling or technical issues.

C. Data Reporting: Laboratories must contact MP as soon as possible with preliminary positives (within 48 hours) or immediately (same day) for final (VITEK® confirmed) positive results for pathogens. A reporting form for pathogen detections is included as Attachment 1 to Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) MDP-DATA-01 and can be faxed or included as part of an email notification. An updated version of the reporting form can be found on the extranet site.

State Program participants must transmit **routine batch data results**, (this does NOT refer to detection results) including any in-house confirmations, within **60 days of receipt of the last sample** of each batch to RDE. This requirement is specified in SOP MDP DATA-01, subsection 5.1.5.2.

D. Financial/Cooperative Agreements: All MP Cooperative Agreements were issued in January 2012, with full year funding. The Agricultural Marketing Service transitioned to new financial software in October 2011. The transition is complete and the system is now fully operational. It is believed all issues related to the transition have been resolved and payments will no longer be delayed. A new reimbursement request spreadsheet was

sent to the States. It is requested that all States utilize this form beginning with FY12 reimbursement requests.

E. MDP Meetings: A MDP Technical Meeting will be held 6-8 March 2012 in Gainesville, Virginia. Meeting topics of discussion will include MDP operations, planning, analytical methods, and MDP SOPs.

F. Advisory Committee: Members of the MDP Technical Advisory Group (TAG) are: Kristina McCallum (Colorado), Patricia Hanson (Florida), Frances Mohnke (Michigan), Barton Olson (Minnesota), Maya Achen (Ohio), Crystal Verellen (Washington), Kate Angeles (Wisconsin), with Cynthia Mangione (New York) serving as TAG Chairperson.

G. Electronic Transfer of Data: The current version (Build 14) of the web-based RDE System was installed in June 2010. A version upgrade (v4.0) to the electronic Sample Information Form (e-SIF) software, which works on Windows-based desktops, laptops, tablets and netbooks, was distributed in March 2011. The v4.0 upgrade included modifications to increase the size of all data entry screens and fields, add new Brand Name and Expire/Use-by Date fields, allow for sample split/replication for MDP/PDP, and display the transmission status of each entered SIF record. There will be no further upgrades for the PDA (Pocket PC) platform due to compatibility and synchronization problems, limited screen space of handhelds, and feasibility issues. There are plans to restart development for a Build 15 version upgrade in early 2012 to increase the size of some text fields, add new fields to capture sample identity elements (Expire/Use-by Date, Brand Name, etc.), fix sample receipt location in the LIMS-to-RDE Import database, revise the file import routines to eliminate the need for registering separate DLL (library) files on the Web server, and other modifications based on State's/Laboratory's suggestions, where feasible. MP maintains a Change Request Database to capture all problems identified and suggestions made regarding the RDE system.

II. PROGRAM SAMPLING AND TESTING UPDATES

A. Sampling: Shipping Charts are distributed quarterly to Sampling Managers by MP. Draft Shipping Charts for the 2nd and 3rd quarters of calendar year (CY) 2012 are attached to this document. Actual shipping dates and fact sheets will be sent under separate cover with the final version of each Shipping Chart. The final Shipping Chart, fact sheets, and proposed sampling schedule for the 2nd quarter CY 2012 will be distributed by March 1, 2011.

Sampling Continuations: Cantaloupe, cilantro, hot peppers, bagged lettuce (leaf/Romaine), bagged spinach, sprouts (alfalfa/clover), and cherry/grape tomatoes continue.

B. Testing: *Listeria monocytogenes* special projects testing expansion (additional laboratories will test for *L. mono*), effective April 1, 2012.

Testing Continuations: Laboratories not participating in *L. mono* screening will test for the presence of *Salmonella*, *E. coli* O157:H7 and non-O157 STEC in all commodities

Testing Changes Effective 1 April: Laboratories participating in screening for *L. mono* will test all commodities for *Salmonella* and will only test cantaloupe, bagged lettuce, bagged spinach and sprouts for presence of *L. mono*; laboratories participating in *L. mono* screening will only test cilantro, bagged lettuce and bagged spinach for presence of *E. coli* O157:H7 and non-O157 STEC

Proposed Testing Changes: May 1, 2012 implementation/addition of ABI platform protocols for screening of select produce for presence of EHEC. *Implementation of testing changes contingent upon acceptable protocol(s) and March meeting discussion outcomes.*

C. Quality Assurance:

Combined MDP/FDA FERN Listeria PT Round: A combined agencies' Proficiency Test (PT) round was conducted the week of November 14, 2011. Sprouts were used as the test matrix and the target organism was *Listeria monocytogenes*. All MDP laboratories reported their results and successfully completed this PT.

D. Standard Operating Procedures: All SOPs are posted to the MDP website at the time of distribution to Program participants. Refer to: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/mdp>. All currently in use MDP SOPs are provided on the extranet.

Planned 2012 MDP SOP Revisions/Additions

- MDP-MTH- Special Project (Listeria SOPs – LIS and LMO2)
- Special Project SOP for implementing real-time (Rt)-PCR for detecting EHEC in select produce using the AB 7500-fast platform; projected implementation May 2012

E. Transfer of Data: MDP data is uploaded to the FERN eLEXNET system on an annual basis and also transferred to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the FDA on an annual basis; pathogenic findings are communicated to the FDA, CDC and applicable State agencies as soon as possible. In addition, MDP data is reported to USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and Agricultural Research Service (ARS). Custom MDP data reports are available on request to MP. Update: The MDP 2010 data were uploaded to eLEXNET on 18 January 2012.