

## **Microbiology Expert Committee (MEC) Meeting Summary**

**May 7, 2013**

### 1. Roll Call and Minutes:

Robin Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00pm EST. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A – there were 6 members present. Associate members present: Shawn Kassner and Carl Kircher.

The minutes from April 9<sup>th</sup> were reviewed. A motion was made by Elizabeth to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Dwayne and unanimously approved.

### 2. Small Laboratory Handbook

The Quality Systems Expert Committee is taking on the responsibility to review the Handbook for adherence to the new standard. Our committee has been asked to review the Microbiology information.

Robin asked Elizabeth to review her concerns:

- Inconsistency in use of heat sensitive tape being required for autoclaves, but not for the ovens.
- In Texas, they made the determination that if the vendor does the positive and negative control checks and a certificate is received from the vendor, the labs does not need to do these checks. Po had some mixed feelings on it, but small labs appreciated this. This saves them a lot of time.

Carl disagrees with this. He feels the certificate is only good when the media leaves the manufacturer, but that the labs still needs to check that it can maintain the media. They still need to do a positive culture test. Elizabeth feels this should only be questioned if there is some evidence that a problem exists. If there is no problem, she feels the assessors should accept the certificate and the check that was done at the manufacturer's lab.

Carl asked what should be done about pre-sterilized membrane filters? Does a sterility check need to be done on those? Elizabeth responded that a certificate from the manufacturer should be acceptable on these too.

Dwayne provided some comments by e-mail. Not all methods require these checks as part of the method.

Deb Waller commented by e-mail:

*SM 9223B states to include a sterile water control. The water used with the media is different for every lab using the product. This is why NJ will still expect you to perform a sterility check with each lot of media along with the culture controls prior to first use. Labs from the smallest permittee facility to the largest commercial lab, does this for our state.*

Robin commented that removing it from the TNI standard may not make any difference since it is still in the EPA cert manual and standard methods.

- Chlorine Residual Monitoring. It would be great if this could be checked for all samples, but it is very difficult for large labs. Too many samples. Small labs find this to be a burden too. There are labs that are actually collecting additional samples to do these checks, but this doesn't seem like a proper implementation of the standard. The exemption in the standard to test one sample per month is only for potable water, but Elizabeth would like this to apply to wastewater too. The standard only discusses potable water. Robin does not like the once a month check option. Labs would like to check their sample bottle lots to confirm there is enough to neutralize it. Elizabeth commented that TNI should discuss what the benefit is to sampling one sample a month per client to see if chlorine is neutralized. There is a lot of paperwork to track and there should be a good reason for doing it.

Carl asked how would you conform to the Save Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act to confirm that each sample is adequately preserved. He thinks every sample should be checked. Robin commented that being a part of the writing of the standard, the thought was that the wording was an exemption. A lab does not have to check every sample if certain procedures are in place. Elizabeth noted the requirements that are in the Drinking Water Manual.

Robin described a situation where she had a sample flash blue and foam. IDEXX said it meant the sample was over 700 ppm of chlorine. This was a well known client and she had no idea where the additional chlorine came from. She noted that other people expressed similar experiences, so perhaps the checks are beneficial.

Elizabeth asked if the lab can prove that the sample container came from their laboratory and that sufficient sodium thiosulfate is added to neutralize chlorine – could this be substituted for having to check every sample? People agreed this is worth consideration. She thinks this should apply to both drinking water and wastewater.

Additional Handbook Comments:

- Pg 88, 1.7.3.2 Test Variability and Reproducibility

For test methods that specify colony counts such as membrane filter or plated media, duplicate counts must be performed monthly. Counts within 10% are acceptable if done by two analysts. Counts must be within 5% if done by the same analyst.

Standard methods talks about log 10 recoveries. Robin will take a look at this, but she thinks it is talking about something different. Could a lab stipulate that any counts of plates below 10, are acceptable if they are within 1 colony? Above 10 it would need to follow the 10%. Carl would agree with this, except in the case of 1 colony vs. 0 colonies because of presence/absence.

Dwayne thought it was originally written with the thought that the plate count would be 20-80 colonies. If the plate counts are low, it causes the need to use the corrective action process.

The section is fine as written.

- No other concerns were raised.

Robin noted that the main issues raised are dealing with sterility, chlorine checks and positive/ negative control checks. These are areas the committee can review for changes in the standard, but what should be done about the handbook?

- Examples can be given on how labs check for chlorine. Examples of what has been found to be acceptable.
- Robin did a presentation for small labs on how to do some basic things they have challenges with. People on the call thought it would be helpful to share this presentation with committee members and make it available to others. Robin cautioned people it has a focus on Florida requirements. She will send it out to the committee to see if it should be posted on the Micro website page or SLAG discussion board. Robin asked that the committee not share the information until after the San Antonio meeting.

Robin would like to take the e-mail comments from Dwayne, Deb, Elizabeth and Po and make changes to the handbook for everyone to review at the next meeting.

- Elizabeth will help write the Chlorine Residual section and any needed examples or guidance.
- Robin will look at language for positive and negative control checks.
- Dwayne will put some language together about the plate counts.
- Robin reminded everyone that this is guidance. Robin asked everyone to look for any other rewording they would like to see and send it to her.

### 3. TNI Method Codes

Robin has continued work on the method codes and has been in contact with Dan Hickman.

#### 4. Action Items

A summary of action items can be found in Attachment B.

#### 5. New Business

- Robin will talk to Carl Kircher about assessors. She will discuss this with him at the FSEA meeting.
- After the handbook review is complete, the committee will begin work on the standard. Need to address consistency on autoclaves and sterilization ovens and use of indicator tape. Also want to look at removing once a month check.

#### 6. Next Meeting and Close

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup>.

A summary of action items and backburner/reminder items can be found in Attachment B and C.

A motion to dismiss the meeting was made by Elizabeth. The motion was seconded by Patsy and unanimously approved. The meeting ended at 2:30pm EST.

**Attachment A**  
**Participants**  
**Microbiology Expert Committee (MEC)**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>	
Robin Cook (Chair) <b>Present</b>	City of Daytona Beach EML	Lab	(386)671-8885	<a href="mailto:cookr@codb.us">cookr@codb.us</a>
Patsy Root (Vice-chair) <b>Present – last 20 min.</b>	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc	Other	(207)556-8947	<a href="mailto:patsy-root@idexx.com">patsy-root@idexx.com</a>
Karla Ziegelmann- Fjeld  <b>Present</b>	Microbiologics, Inc	Other		<a href="mailto:kfjeld@microbiologics.com">kfjeld@microbiologics.com</a>
Donna Ruokonen  <b>Present</b>	Microbac Laboratories, Inc	Lab	(219)769-8378 Ext 110	<a href="mailto:druokonen@microbac.com">druokonen@microbac.com</a>
Colin Fricker  <b>Absent</b>	Analytical Services, Inc	Lab		<a href="mailto:colinfricker@aol.com">colinfricker@aol.com</a>
Deb Waller  <b>Absent</b>	NJ DEP	AB	(609)984-7732	<a href="mailto:debra.waller@dep.state.nj.us">debra.waller@dep.state.nj.us</a>
Dwayne Burkholder  <b>Present</b>	Pennsylvania DEP	AB	(717)346-8213	<a href="mailto:dburkholde@pa.gov">dburkholde@pa.gov</a>
Mary Robinson  <b>Present</b>	Indiana State DOH	AB	(317)921-5523	<a href="mailto:mrobinson@isdh.in.gov">mrobinson@isdh.in.gov</a>
Elizabeth Turner  <b>Present</b>	North Texas Municipal Water District	Lab	(972)442-5405 Ext 535	<a href="mailto:eturner@ntmwd.com">eturner@ntmwd.com</a>
Po Chang  <b>Absent</b>	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	AB	(512)239-4876	<a href="mailto:Po.chang@tceq.texas.gov">Po.chang@tceq.texas.gov</a>
Ilona Taunton (Program Administrator) <b>Present / Recording</b>	The NELAC Institute	n/a	(828)712-9242	<a href="mailto:Ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org">Ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org</a>

**Attachment B**

**Action Items – MEC**

	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Expected Completion</b>	<b>Actual Completion</b>
1	Review Method Codes and send comments to Robin for Dan Hickman.	Deb	TBD	
4	Review Handbook and Method Codes before next meeting.	ALL	5/7/13	Continue to June meeting.
5	Distribute Standard to Committee members.	Ilona	4/25/13	Complete
6	Distribute PPT to committee members for their personal use. Not to be shared.	Robin	6/3/13	
7	Assignments were given to update the Handbook.	All	6/4/13	
8				
9				
10				

