

Applied Laboratory Methods PDG

Attendees: Alex Tudor, Getahun Agga, Marc Allard, Alphajou Bah, III, Stan Bailey, Takiyah Ball, Peter Ben Embarek, Rachel Binet, Patrick Bird, Dr. Preetha Biswas, Amy Bosco, Alex Brandt, Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney, Dana Buckman, Ariel Buehler, Laurel Burall, Astrid Cariou, Austin Cary, Mike Clark, Vanessa Coffman, Roger Cook, Nisha Corrigan, Erin Crowley, Bryant Davenport, Jim Dickson, Tian Ding, Melanie Downs, Erin Dreyling, Jean-Marc Durano, Vik Dutta, Emilio Esteban, Patrick Fach, Amanda Farrens, Peyman Fatemi, Jinsong Feng, Beilei Ge, Solomon Gebru, Lawrence Goodridge, Sanjay Gummalla, Jisun Haan, Eddie Hall, Lauren Hamilton, Yihan He, Lili He, Yosra Helmy, Sunee Himathongkham, Kristen Hunt, John Jarosh, Craig Jewell, Zerlinda Johnson, Suzanne Jordan, Minji Kim, Kento Koyama, Quynh-Nhi Le, David Legan, Sherita Li, Huanli Liu, Paul Liu, Pierre-Luc Longchamps, Gabriela Lopez Velasco, Yuxiao Lu, Xiaonan Lu, Jackie Lyle, Cynthia Mangione, Doug Marshall, Ryan Maus, Rodrigo Mendoza, Joseph Meyer, Minto Michael, Patrick Mies, Erica Miller, Jesse Miller, Jennifer Miller, Molly Mills, John Mills, Scott Moosekian, fernando mora, Nandini Natrajan, Jeff Nauseda, Jodi Nickerson, Sokhom Panhavatey, Trevor Phister, Sophie Pierre, Karen Pietrzen, Laurie Post, Bill Potter, Jane Pouzou, Patricia Quinn, Christophe Quiring, Sarita Raengpradub, Ravinder Reddy, Amber Richards, Lisa Riesberg, Kis Robertson Hale, Marie-Eve Rousseau, Lilian Saad, Gabriel Sanglay, John Schmidt, April Schumacher, Brooke Schwartz, Anru Shen, Malavika Sinha, Daniel Smieszek, Brad Stawick, Sara Sterkel Colombo, Antoine Stevens, Stacy Stoltenberg, Sloane Stoufer, Irshad Sulaiman, Hilary Sullivan, Sriya Sunil, Nikki Taylor, Margaret Tentser, Pheara Tep, Leslie Thompson-Strehlow, LaTaunya Tillman, Jean-Philippe Tourniaire, Grace Tung, Branko Velebit, Ashwini Wagh, Isabel Walls, Chun Wang, Kaidi Wang, Julie Weller, Shuang Wu, Shiwei Xu, Eiki Yamasaki, Mu Ye, Hung-Yueh Yeh, Anthony Zoropogui.

Number of Attendees: 129.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, July 14, 2024, 10:19 a.m. Pacific Time.

Minutes Recording Secretary: Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney (ALM PDG Secretary).

Old Business: Reviewed the Anti-Trust Guidelines and approved the 2023 minutes. Dan DeMarco (ALM PDG Chair) provided Board announcements. Reviewed the 2024 symposium and roundtable sessions accepted and in the program for primary and secondary ALM PDG sponsorship. Three symposia were accepted where the ALM PDG was the primary sponsor, three symposia were accepted where the ALM PDG was the secondary sponsor, and one roundtable where the PDG was the Primary Sponsor.

Board responses to the 2023 recommendations were reviewed. It was noted that the Board made no change in the distribution of the anti-trust guidelines presented by each PDG, which was noted in 2023 to be repetitive to those who attend multiple PDG meetings.

Regarding the recommendation to improve the IAFP Meeting App, David Legan provided some insights, as it was not clear to the board what issue needed to be addressed. Specifically, the IAFP App does not connect to the web program. If you are making selections on the website for sessions to attend, it does not add these into the app. This can present a challenge for those who have trouble viewing the app and prefer to make selections on a computer with a larger screen size.

Dan DeMarco read the poem "The Night Before IAFP".

Applied Laboratory Methods (ALM) Professional Development Group (PDG) Executive Committee was provided: Chair: Daniel R. DeMarco (Eurofins), Vice Chair: Julie Weller (Hygiene), Secretary: Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney (Midwest Laboratories), Student Liaison: Pranita Surendra Patil (UGA), Board Liaison: Manpreet Singh, Staff Liaison: Dina Siedenburg.

New Business: A reminder was given to attendees to please introduce themselves prior to speaking, so that the meeting notes can accurately reflect who said what. Julie Weller (Vice Chair) introduced the validation and verification interest group. The leads of each validation and verification interest group initiative will present for their respective project. David Legan spoke for the Method Considerations Subgroup, which is led by David

Legan and Laurie Post. He noted that the Validation and Verification group started five years ago at the IAFP meeting. Its goal was to provide resources to anyone working in a lab lacking guidance on how to execute method verification and validations, as at the time there were limited materials available outside of the AOAC Appendix J, which does not include all aspects of how to execute these types of microbiological studies. The intended objective of the group was to provide practical guidance that would assist end users.

Since its conception in 2019, the Verification and Validation (V&V) Interest Group has published five articles in (*FPT*). Three of the published articles have won the most viewed interest article award by IAFP. The 2022 efforts produced the publication “Evaluating Microbiological Method Equivalence – A Decision Guide” in May/June 2023 edition of *Food Protection Trends* and won the Most Viewed *FPT* General Interest Publication 2024, which is the second consecutive *FPT* “most viewed” award. In 2023 the group collaborated on another article, titled “Discrepancies in the Microbiological Analysis of Foods: Causes and Resolutions” which was published in the current July/August 2024 edition of *Food Protection Trends*.

The current article in progress will outline hazard analysis and risk-based testing, and how to make decisions regarding the prioritization of microbiological analysis. The working title is “Role of Hazard Assessments in Driving Risk-Based Testing” and the group plans to submit the article to *FPT* by the end of the year. The content of this article is also going to be presented in a joint webinar with the Institute for the Advancement of Food and Nutrition Sciences (IAFNS) microbiology committee.

Next, Julie Weller presented on the V&V subgroup for Protocols for Inoculum Preparation and Inoculation led by Julie Weller and Oscar Rodriguez-Gonzalez. This work is nearly ready for submission to *FPT*. The overarching goal of this article is to supplement the existing guidelines for validation microbiological methods used to test food and environmental surfaces. It will guide the laboratory portion that happens at the bench and explain how to apply the validation principles (such as organism stress, bulk inoculation, etc.) to the inoculum preparation protocol to have a successful validation. This article will be a “how-to guide” and a great instructional reference for scientists interested in performing matrix validations and verifications.

Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney provided an overview of the Webinar subgroup led by Amanda Brookhouser-Sisney and Patrick Bird. The group’s initial intention was to provide an alternative forum to present the materials created and/or authored by the V&V subgroup. In 2022, the group presented Matrix Additions Part 1, which covered information found in the V&V subgroup’s first two publications. In 2023, they followed up with Matrix Additions Part 2: Alternative Approaches for Rapid Pathogen Detection Methods (November 2023), which covered expanded information found within the more recent publications on verification and validation. The webinar group is currently meeting to create content for Matrix Additions Part 3, with intentions to host a webinar in Fall 2024. This webinar will define the operating characteristics of the method with a new matrix and outline the validation parameters provided on AOAC Appendix J, and how they can be applied to matrix extension studies. It will also include the content of the Protocols for Inoculum Preparation and Inoculation in-progress publication.

Finally, the subgroup on best practices for handling and storage of enrichments, in-process materials, media, led by Joe Meyer and Arpan Bhagat was presented. This group is now meeting to work on a publication under the topic of “Powerful Partnerships Promote Pathogen Prevention”. Joe Meyer outlined that the partnership with third party labs has a tremendous impact on the manufacturer and stressed the value of a good partnership between a producer and their third-party lab. The group plans to provide a resource for considerations for onboarding a new laboratory, with the intention to establish a partnership from the outset. This group comprises of a mix of industry and third-party laboratory personnel. They are currently brainstorming subjective and objective ways of determining the relationship between food and beverage industry clients and the third-party pathogen testing labs. The goal is to provide practical parameters, including literature, scoring rubrics and verbiage that promotes a culture of accountability while meeting realistic goals of the food industry as well as third-party testing labs.

Once the V&V subgroups completed their presentations, the floor was opened for discussion on feedback for the ALM PDG meeting frequency and content. The career highlight at the last ALM PDG meeting was very informative and well received. The idea of technical presentations on methodology was also discussed, potentially on a hot topic or something of interest to the group. In-person attendees were encouraged to

participate in subgroup meetings as additional participants would broaden the topics and expand the knowledge base, providing new ideas.

The PDG Chair reminded the group that symposium and roundtable proposals for the IAFP 2025 meeting will be due soon (fall 2024). Preliminary ideas were gathered and included a short course about microbiology for non-microbiologists. It was noted that a workshop at the upcoming AOAC annual meeting will encompass this topic. It is titled "Micro and Molecular Biology for Emerging Scientists". The group considered converting the AOAC training into a workshop or similar at IAFP 2025. Other suggestions included a roundtable to discuss discrepancies between rapid methods and cultural confirmation, a symposium on using artificial intelligence (AI) in the lab, and current environmental mapping tools.

The Vice Chair noted from the Executive Board updates, that the 2024 acceptance rate of ALM PDG-sponsored sessions was less than 50%. The comments from the board explained that the idea submitted needs to be well-developed. The submission should focus on the quality of the information being presented in the submission. If the idea is not expansive enough for a symposia or roundtable, it could be a better candidate for a webinar.

Dan DeMarco (Chair) presented the *JFP* Special Topics Editions–Call for Topics. The *JFP* asks that PDG members consider cutting edge topics for a possible special issue in *JFP*, based on the sessions and thematic areas of the annual meeting. The *JFP* asks that IAFP Annual Meeting Attendees please take advantage of discussions within PDG communities, and networking opportunities at the annual meeting to come up with new ideas for the Special Issue. There were no contributions or comments from the ALM PDG attendees at the time of the meeting.

The Chair would like to present to the Board a Proposal for ALM-PDG Chairperson's award for outstanding service to the PDG. This award would be given to one (or more) members of the ALM-PDG recognizing outstanding contributions and service to the ALM-PDG in the furtherance of its mission and the mission of IAFP. The winner would be selected by the chairperson from nominations submitted by the ALM PDG members. Any member can nominate any other, but there can be no self-nominations; the chairperson is also ineligible. Other members of PDG executive committee are eligible. The nomination would consist of short written statement (no more than one page) by email describing why your nominee should be considered for the award. The winner would be announced at the annual meeting.

David Legan presented on the mentor match program. He began by navigating to the mentor match dashboard on the IAFP webpage, to show attendees where to access this information and utilize the mentor program. The mentor program is available and free to all IAFP Members either as a Mentor, Mentee or both. It is a 12-month commitment, with a meeting once a month. More information can be found on *IAFP Connect* at <https://connect.foodprotection.org/mentoring>.

Brad Stawick, Senior Director of the AOAC Research Institute, presented the AOAC Appendix J revisions initiative. The objective of the Appendix J revision is to modernize the instructions outlined in the validation protocol. The AOAC is currently gathering support and taking volunteers who would like to participate in the working group.

The meeting concluded with open discussion regarding the following topics: tools for validation, including experimental design and statistical analysis, food allergen methods, whole genome sequencing, methods for the detection of viruses, and collaboration with other related fields, such as clinical and public health.

Recommendations to the Executive Board:

1. Recommend that the Board improve the functionality of the IAFP Meeting App, specifically creating connectivity between the IAFP Annual Meeting website and the application.
2. Recommend to the Board that IAFP establish a yearly award to recognize an individual or individuals for their contributions to the PDGs. The winner should have all or most of the following attributes: A well-established track record of supporting and promoting participation in IAFP Professional Development Groups; a history of membership in PDGs and/or leading PDGs and/or serving on their executive committees; an ability to work within and among the PDGs to develop programs or materials that

showcase their value; a voice of support both privately and publicly recruiting others to join PDGs relevant to their areas of expertise or interests.

Next Meeting Date: July 27, 2025, Cleveland, Ohio.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:20 a.m. Pacific Time.

Chairperson Name: Dan DeMarco