EU Reference Laboratory and National Reference Laboratories for halogenated POPs in feed and food

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Introduction

COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2018/192 of 8 February 2018[1] amended the Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the EU reference laboratories (EURLs) in the field of contaminants in feed and food. Given the growing importance of chlorinated persistent contaminants other than PCBs and dioxins, of brominated persistent contaminants and of fluorinated persistent contaminants for the safety of feed and food, it was appropriate to extend the scope of the EU reference laboratory for dioxins and PCBs in feed and food to all halogenated persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in feed and food. Therefore the EU reference laboratory for dioxins and PCBs in feed and food was renamed in EU reference laboratory for halogenated persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in feed and food to reflect this extension of scope. The consequences of this extension for the work programme of the EURL and its network with National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) are described.

Work programme

The extension of the work programme was discussed with the NRLs and agreed by the EU Commission: In addition to PCDD/F, dl-PCBs and ndl-PCBs, a particular focus in 2018 is on PBDEs and HBCDD. Furthermore, the information on the re-evaluation of fluorinated compounds by EFSA was taken into consideration, and therefore PFAS analysis is included as well,

An important task is to ensure the availability and use of high quality methods and high quality performance in the network. For this, proficiency tests (PTs) are performed by the EURL for confirmatory and screening methods (table 1). In order to fulfil the tasks of the new EURL for halogenated POPs, four PTs are organized by the EURL in 2018 covering PCDD/F, dl-PCBs, ndl-PCBs, PBDE, HBCDD and CPs in different and matrices. Furthermore, in order to cover also PFAS, the participation of NRLs in the UNEP project "Bi-ennial Global Interlaboratory Assessment on Persistent Organic Pollutants" – Fourth Round 2018/2019 is actively supported.

PT1 - feed	PCDD/F, dl-PCBs, ndl-PCBs, PBDE and HBCDD
PT2 - food	PCDD/F, dl-PCBs, ndl-PCBs, PBDE and HBCDD
PT3 -spiked lipids	Bioanalytical assays - comparison of BEQ and TEQ values
PT4 –matrix TBD	CPs - continuous method development and interlaboratory studies
PT5 - fish, human milk, standards	PFAS – cooperation with the UNEP project "Bi-ennial Global Interlaboratory Assessment on Persistent Organic Pollutants" – Fourth Round 2018/2019

Table 1: Proficiency tests performed in 2018

Workshops of the EURL with the NRLs and the EU Commission allow the comprehensive exchange of information on various analytical methods and regulatory aspects.

Four Core Working Groups (CWGs) have been established for the following specific tasks: “Dioxin Patterns”; “Methods of analysis for brominated flame retardants (BFRs)”; “Methods of analysis for chlorinated paraffins (CPs)” and “Methods of analysis for perfluorinated alkylated substances (PFAS)”. Analytical aspects are exchanged at meetings in detail. Conclusions are reported for information of the network at the EURL/NRL workshops.

A training of NRLs in BFR analysis is planned for the second half of 2018, with other trainings on an on-demand basis. The EURL furthermore supports the NRLs by confirming elevated levels of dioxins and PCBs in feed or food on their request and generally supports NRLs and COM on request within its tasks.

State of play of the extension of scope in NRLs

As requested by the EU Commission, the EURLs shall publish the lists of NRLs designated by the Member States in accordance with Article 100(1) at the homepage of DG SANTE. Therefore, a questionnaire on capabilities of the NRLs for the analysis of POPs was sent to all NRLs from EU Member States asking for the state of play of the extension of scope. In many countries the competence for the extended tasks has already been clarified, whereas in other countries this process is ongoing.

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References:

1. Official Journal of the European Union L 36/15