

The participation of analytical laboratories in proficiency testing is becoming more and more important. Accreditation under EN 45001 requires participation in proficiency testing so that the results obtained can be used as an important and objective measure by which to judge the analytical performance of the laboratories.

Since 1990 the U.K. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) has run an international program for the food sector, the "Food Analysis Performance Assessment Scheme", (FAPAS®) with participants

from more than 50 countries. This program provides a comprehensive range of different parameters in the widest variety of matrices. The choice of method of analysis is left to the laboratory.

The FAPAS® program 1999/2000 includes 56 proficiency tests in more than 40 different matrices. Parameters are offered in the area of nutritional components, veterinary drug residues, colourants, preservatives, mycotoxins, OC/OP pesticides, trace elements, migration, fatty acids, sweeteners and vitamins.

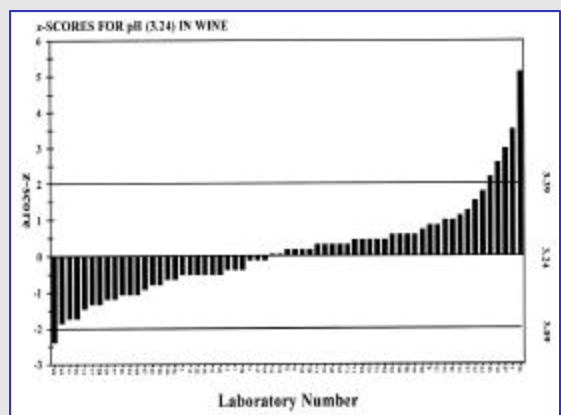
In view of the growing demand in the microbiological sector the service was extended in 1999. The "Food Examination Performance Assessment Scheme" (FEPAS) offers 11 proficiency tests in different food matrices within the framework of its 1999/2000 program. Available analyses include those for pathogenic germs, indicator-micro organisms and spoilage micro organisms in realistic concentrations. Both qualitative and quantitative tests are available.

FAPAS®/FEPAS operate on the basis recommended by the IUPAC/ISO/AOAC "International Harmonised Protocol for Proficiency Testing of Analytical Laboratories".

The operation of proficiency testing comprising the dispatch of test materials, as well as collation and evaluation of the results, is undertaken exclusively by the FAPAS®/FEPAS Secretariat. Thus the confidentiality of the results is guaranteed; the publication of these latter takes the form of an anonymised report.



REPORT: Example Interpretation of Data



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Industrial self-control for optimum quality of fruit juice *the SGF control scheme*

The Protective Association of the Fruit Juice Industry, SGF, was born 25 years ago as an instrument for industrial self-control to safeguard quality and fair competition. In 1986, it implemented the Voluntary Control System (VCS), first industrial organisation of this type in the fruit juice industry.

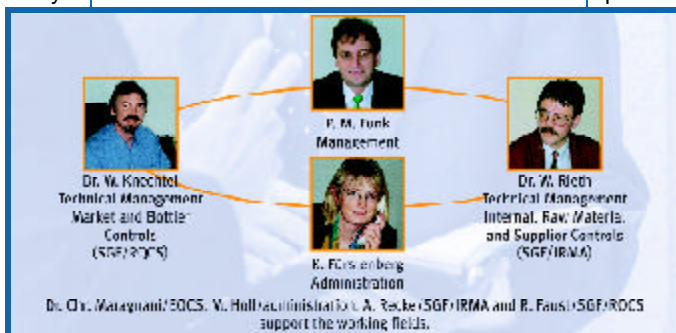
In the meantime, similar systems have been set up in various countries based on the SGF's model with the European Quality Control System (EQCS). The EQCS includes national market and bottler controls, in Spain, France, Netherlands, Denmark, UK/Ireland and Germany/Austria/Hungary as well as an International Raw Material Assurance (IRMA) which is managed by the SGF.

From its headquarters in Nieder-Olm near Mainz, Germany, the SGF currently monitors about 280 raw material suppliers (producers and traders) in almost 50 countries. With few exceptions, all German bottlers participate in the control system and the SGF is active on behalf of more

than 380 raw material purchasers and bottlers in Europe.

The VCS has been designed to assure quality control and traceability at all stages of production from the fruit through the manufacturers of semi-finished goods, the traders and bottlers to the supermarket shelves, and back. All participating producers have the obligation to keep reserve counter samples and documentation so that a control chain can be established. The member companies see themselves as responsible and quality conscious producers of fruit juices or raw materials.

Several laboratories have been selected by the SGF for the routine control of industrial samples, collecting data of authentic reference samples, method development and validation as well as advice, among which are Eurofins Scientific. These laboratories help the participants of the Voluntary Control System of the Fruit Juice Industry to offer to the food trade, beverage wholesalers and food catering services or canteens, products that are in compliance with legal food quality standards and due diligence. They all are working together for fair competition and optimum consumer protection and satisfaction.



Responsibilities in the SGF Secretariat

More information as well as a list of the participating companies are available at SGF's headquarters :

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