

## 5 Food Safety Testing Trends

WOODSTOCK, Vt. (PRWEB) — Two new reports from Strategic Consulting, Inc. (SCI), a management consulting firm focused on [food safety and industrial diagnostics](#) [1], point to five major trends for 2014 in the global food microbiology testing market. SCI's market research reports are based on extensive interviews with QA/QC managers in food processing facilities around the world and one-on-one discussions with food safety experts from academia, government and industry as well as diagnostic test manufacturers.

With growing public concern about food safety, and the increasing globalization of the food supply chain, it is a critical and challenging time in food microbiology diagnostics. There are a number of dynamics at play that present both opportunities and minefields for players in this field. As in any market, those well informed and positioned will benefit.

Data from two new reports, [Food Micro, Eighth Edition: Microbiology Testing in the Global Food Industry](#) [2] and [Food Contract Lab Report](#) [3] point to five major trends for 2014:

### 1) Increasing Food Microbiology Testing Worldwide

Food safety testing at food processing facilities around the world is increasing for a number of reasons. Public concern is a key driver, and every time the public reads about another food recall, concern grows. Active media coverage of food safety issues is a prime catalyst.

Also driving growth in food safety test volumes are increasing regulations in many countries and regions. The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) in the US and a heightened food safety action plan for China are just two examples, but critical ones given the volume of food production in the two countries.

Not surprisingly, food processing companies are proactively increasing testing efforts in order to avoid the huge costs associated with food recalls, both to their bottom lines and their brand names, and to avoid litigation.

Growth in food micro testing will not be even across all geographic regions, however. Testing in North America and Asia will grow rapidly but Europe should see slower growth.

### 2) Growing Use of Rapid Microbial Methods (RMMs)

Thirty years ago, all microbiology testing utilized traditional methods for analysis. Since then, newer microbiology methods have been introduced that are easier to use and faster, and as a result, more cost effective overall.

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Many food plants have embraced RMMs as the best way to meet their increased testing needs, but not uniformly across all geographies. Although use of RMMs is increasing everywhere, it's quite striking how different the regions are in the level of their adoption.

### **3) Booming Business for Food Contract Testing Laboratories**

As food micro testing increases, there are a number of factors that are driving the analysis of tests out of food plants and into contract testing laboratories.

In today's world, running a food plant lab requires significant expertise, documentation, and investment. More and more food plants are finding the effort and investment prohibitive, and outside their core competencies. With many contract labs located near food factories, they have been able to provide excellent service and value to food companies.

Contract labs also have been willing to take on the increasing expectation that food testing laboratories be accredited. This alone has been a tipping point for many food companies in letting go of their food plant labs.

Again, regions vary in use of contract test labs, with North American companies rapidly adopting the practice, and European and Asian companies showing more mixed uptake.

### **4) Increasing Environmental Testing, Especially for Pathogens**

Environmental testing is done by many food plants to validate that their factory is under control. In the US, the evolving FSMA regulation will impact environmental testing. In fact, FSMA will require the 80% of US food plants governed by the FDA to have FSMA versions of HACCP plans, and to document that these food safety plans are actually working.

As a result, FSMA will be driving an increase in environmental testing, especially pathogens, in plants governed by FDA. This is not to say that these plants weren't doing environmental testing before, but that there will be an increased emphasis on this testing in the future.

### **5) Rising Concern Over Salmonella**

Salmonella is a major pathogen of concern. According to SCI's research, it is the most frequently tested pathogen. Yet it still has not met the CDC's target guidelines. While outbreaks of other major pathogens have been reduced, Salmonella has remained stubbornly at historic levels.

In addition to recent high profile outbreaks and recalls, there is also growing concern about antibiotic resistant Salmonella strains. At some point it seems likely that Salmonella, or at least some serotypes of Salmonella, will be treated in the same manner as E. coli O157--that is, as an adulterant, and as such, not acceptable at any level in food. For all of these reasons and more, Salmonella will factor more

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heavily in food safety discussions going forward.

*About Strategic Consulting, Inc.*

*Strategic Consulting, Inc. (SCI) provides market reports and business consulting on microbiology-based quality and safety testing. Strategic Consulting's long tenure in food safety and industrial diagnostics includes the publication of 14 comprehensive market reports based on extensive primary research. In total, SCI has conducted close to 5,000 separate interviews with production facilities in the food, pharmaceutical, personal care, beverage, environmental water, and industrial process segments of the industrial diagnostics markets. For more information on Strategic Consulting and its current market reports, visit <http://www.strategic-consult.com> [4] or call 802-457-9933. Follow SCI president and industry expert Tom Weschler on LinkedIn or Twitter @TomWeschler.*

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[1] <http://www.strategic-consult.com/about/>

[2] <http://www.strategic-consult.com/product/food-micro-eighth-edition-microbiology-testing-global-food-industry/>

[3] <http://www.strategic-consult.com/product/food-contract-lab-report/>

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