

Preface	V
Authors	VIII
I. Microbiological parameters to be used in testing of foods	1
1. Microbiological quality indicators / spoilage organisms	3
1.1. Introduction	3
1.2. Total colony count	4
1.3. Aerobic or anaerobic sporeforming bacteria and/or spores	6
1.4. Lactic acid bacteria	12
1.5. Yeasts and moulds	15
1.6. Specific Spoilage Organisms (SSO)	19
2. Hygiene indicators	22
2.1. Indicator organisms to serve as an indication of good ‘process hygiene’	22
2.1.1. Selection of indicator organisms	22
2.1.2. Setting threshold limit for indicator organisms	26
2.2. Indicator organisms to serve as a marker organism for increased likelihood of (enteric) pathogens present	26
2.2.1. Prerequisites for a hygiene indicator to serve as a marker organism of pathogen(s)	26
2.2.2. A selection of indicator organisms to serve as marker organisms	27
2.3. Process hygiene indicator organisms in EU Regulation 2073/2005	30
3. Food-borne pathogens	36
3.1. Reported cases and outbreak data	36
3.2. Definition of ‘food infection’ versus ‘food intoxication or food toxi-infection’	38
3.3. Food-borne infections	42
3.3.1. The “big four” in food infections	44
3.3.1.1. <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	46
3.3.1.2. <i>Salmonella</i> spp.	47
3.3.1.3. <i>Campylobacter jejuni</i> and <i>C. coli</i>	50
3.3.1.4. STEC: <i>E. coli</i> O157, non O157 STEC and <i>E. coli</i> O104:H4	51
3.3.2. Other food infectants	55
3.3.2.1. <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i>	55
3.3.2.2. Pathogenic <i>Vibrios</i>	56
3.3.2.3. <i>Cronobacter</i> spp. (previously <i>Enterobacter sakazakii</i>)	56
3.3.2.4. <i>Shigella</i> spp.	57
3.4. Food-borne intoxication and toxi-infection	58
3.4.1. <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	64
3.4.2. <i>Bacillus cereus</i>	65
3.4.3. <i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	67
3.4.4. <i>Clostridium botulinum</i>	69

3.5. Food-borne viruses	70
3.5.1. Noroviruses	71
3.5.2. Hepatitis A Virus	72
3.5.3. Hepatitis E Virus	73
3.5.4. Other food-borne viruses	73
3.5.5. Surrogates	74
3.5.6. The detection method	77
3.5.6.1. <i>The standardized ISO method</i>	77
3.5.6.2. <i>Lessons learned from implementation of the ISO method</i>	79
3.5.6.3. <i>Future perspectives</i>	81
3.6. Food-borne parasites	82
3.6.1. General introduction	82
3.6.2. Meat-borne parasitic infections	83
3.6.3. Water, vegetable, fruit-borne parasitic infections	86
3.6.4. Fish, snails, amphibian, seafood-borne parasites	89
3.6.5. Detection of food-borne parasites in food	89
3.6.6. Susceptibility of food-borne parasites (stages) to food processing	92
II. Sampling	95
1. Sampling and testing: what are the objectives?	97
2. Sampling for batch control	100
3. Sampling as part of baseline studies, monitoring and surveillance	104
4. Risk-based sampling approaches for monitoring or surveillance	110
5. Sampling in the framework of validation and verification of quality management system (QMS) and/or food safety management systems (FSMS)	113
5.1. Sampling in the framework of validation of QMS/FSMS: the example of the Microbiological Assessment Scheme (MAS), a stratified convenience sampling plan	115
5.2. Sampling in the framework of verification of QMS/FSMS: the example of sampling of raw materials and end products at a food service institution	117
6. Sampling of the production/processing environment	120
6.1. Sampling to verify adequate hygiene, cleaning and disinfection	120
6.2. Sampling in the framework of Microbial Source Tracking	124
6.3. Some guidelines to approach Microbial Source Tracking in a food processing environment	127
7. Concluding remarks on sampling and testing	131

III. Challenge testing / Durability studies	137
1. Some definitions	139
2. Relevant EU legislation: EU Regulation No. 2073/2005	140
3. Approach to conduct studies on growth potential of <i>L. monocytogenes</i>	143
3.1. Description of the product (group)	143
3.2. Determining the representative physico-chemical characteristic and storage conditions of the food product, taking into account reasonably foreseen variability	143
3.3. Evaluating growth potential of <i>L. monocytogenes</i> in the food product based on literature data and/or predictive microbiology	143
3.4. Performing a challenge test to assess growth potential	144
3.4.1. Selection of the test strains	144
3.4.2. Standardisation of the test inoculum	144
3.4.3. Inoculation procedure	145
3.4.4. Packaging	146
3.4.5. Storage conditions	146
3.4.6. Microbiological analyses	147
3.4.7. Calculating the growth potential	147
3.4.8. Interpretation of the test results of a challenge test to assess growth potential	149
3.5. Some reflections about predictive modelling	150
4. General considerations for setting up studies to determine the behaviour of <i>L. monocytogenes</i> in RTE foods	153
4.1. Definition if the food product under consideration is an RTE food or not	153
4.2. The end responsibility of conducting challenge or durability studies is the Food Business Operator (FBO)	154
4.3. Considerations on the inoculum level and inoculation procedure for challenge testing	154
4.4. Interpretation on the time temperature profile to be used in shelf life studies	156
4.5. Measurements of pH, a_w , competing microbiota and other factors	158
5. Challenge test on other microorganisms than <i>L. monocytogenes</i>	159
6. General conclusion	160
IV. Microbiological Guidelines: support for interpretation of microbiological test results of foods	163
1. Some definitions	165
2. Microbiological guidelines and legal criteria	170
3. FMFP-UGent microbiological guidelines for interpretation of test results	173

3.1. The purpose and intended use of the microbiological guidelines	173
3.2. Microbial parameters and analytical method	175
3.3. Target and tolerance values and threshold limits at the end of shelf life	183
3.4. Target and tolerance values and threshold limit end of shelf life including measurement uncertainty	186
CATEGORY 1: Milk, dairy and egg products	199
1. Some definitions	201
2. Some reflections	206
3. Microbiological guidelines	217
CATEGORY 1 A: Ultra-High Temperature (UHT) treated and sterilized milk and milk-based products	217
CATEGORY 1 B: Raw milk	219
PART 1: Raw milk on the farm and before processing at the milk processing plant	219
PART 2: Raw milk for direct human consumption	222
CATEGORY 1 C: Butter and cream made from raw or thermised milk	224
CATEGORY 1 D: Cheese made from raw milk	226
CATEGORY 1 E: Cheese made from heat-treated milk	228
PART 1 Unripened (fresh) cheese	228
PART 2 Ripened soft or semi-hard cheese	230
PART 3 Ripened hard or extra-hard cheese	232
CATEGORY 1 F: Pasteurized milk and other pasteurized fluid or non-fluid (non-fermented) milk-based products	234
PART 1: not susceptible to post-contamination	234
PART 2: susceptible to post-contamination	236
CATEGORY 1 G: Fermented dairy products (lactic acid fermentation) and butter from heat-treated milk	238
CATEGORY 1 H: Ice cream and frozen dairy desserts	240
CATEGORY 1 I: Milk powder and whey powder	242
CATEGORY 1 J: Dried infant food formulae, dried dietary foods for special medical purposes intended for infants below six months of age, dried follow-on formulae	244
CATEGORY 1 K: Eggs and egg products	246
PART 1: Eggs (in shell)	246
PART 2: Peeled (hard)boiled egg	246
PART 3: Pasteurized liquid egg products: whole eggs, egg whites, egg yolks and peeled boiled egg	247
PART 4: Egg powder	248
CATEGORY 2: Meat and meat products	249
1. Some definitions	251

2. Some reflections	254
3. Microbiological guidelines	262
CATEGORY 2 A: Carcasses	262
CATEGORY 2 B: Fresh meat (including game meat)	264
CATEGORY 2 C: Minced meat, meat preparations & mechanically separated meat (MSM)	266
CATEGORY 2 D: Cooked meat products	268
PART 1: not susceptible to post-contamination	268
PART 2: susceptible to post-contamination	270
CATEGORY 2 E: Mildly cured or salted meat products (non-fermented)	272
PART 1: NaCl < 8 % on the water phase, $a_w \geq 0,95$	272
PART 2: NaCl > 8 % on the water phase, $a_w < 0,95$	274
CATEGORY 2 F: Fermented meat products (lactic acid fermentation)	276
CATEGORY 3: Molluscs, crustaceans, fish and fishery products	279
1. Some definitions	279
2. Some reflections	285
3. Microbiological guidelines	296
CATEGORY 3 A: Primary production health standards and microbiological criteria for live bivalve molluscs and live echinoderms, tunicates and marine gastropods	296
CATEGORY 3 B: Viable or non-viable unprocessed molluscs or crustaceans	299
CATEGORY 3 C: Fresh and frozen fish (including sushi)	302
CATEGORY 3 D: Cooked fishery products (refrigerated or frozen)	304
PART 1: not susceptible to post-contamination	304
PART 2: susceptible to post-contamination	306
CATEGORY 3 E: Cold smoked or salted/dried fishery products	308
PART 1: NaCl < 8 % on the water phase, $a_w \geq 0,95$	308
PART 2: NaCl > 8 % on the water phase, $a_w < 0,95$	310
CATEGORY 3 F: Acidified, marinated or fermented fishery products	312
CATEGORY 4: Plant-based products	315
1. Some definitions	317
2. Some reflections	323
3. Microbiological guidelines	334
CATEGORY 4 A: Ultra-High Temperature (UHT) treated and sterilized juices and plant-based drinks	334
CATEGORY 4 B: Fresh Produce (excluding sprouted seeds)	335
CATEGORY 4 C: Fresh-cut produce (4ème gamme) (including sprouted seeds) and unpasteurized juices or nectars	338
CATEGORY 4 D: Frozen fruits and vegetables, frozen herbs, frozen (pre-cut) potato products	342
CATEGORY 4 E: Frozen fruit/vegetable juice or frozen fruit-based desserts (sorbets, granitas)	344

CATEGORY 4 F: Dried nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, fruits and vegetables ($a_w < 0.60-0.65$)	346
CATEGORY 4 G: Intermediate-moisture (dried/sugared) fruits, jams or jellies, fruit purees and fruit concentrates ($0.65 \leq a_w < 0.85$)	348
CATEGORY 4 H: Sugared fruits, jams or jellies, fruit purees ($0.85 \leq a_w < 0.92$)	350
CATEGORY 4 I: Pasteurized juices and other pasteurized plant-based drinks or derived products	352
PART 1: not susceptible to post-contamination	352
PART 2: susceptible to post-contamination	354
CATEGORY 4 J: Fermented or acidified (pickled) fruit and vegetable products	356
CATEGORY 5: Bakery products, chocolate, confectionery, sweet spreads	359
1. Some definitions	361
2. Some reflections	363
3. Microbiological guidelines	366
CATEGORY 5 A: Raw (pre-proofed) doughs : for bread or pastry	366
CATEGORY 5 B: Raw cookie doughs	368
CATEGORY 5 C: Par-baked doughs (bread or pastries and viennoisseries)	370
CATEGORY 5 D: Fully baked bread, cookies or biscuits	372
PART 1: Fully baked bread	372
PART 2: Fully baked cookies, biscuits ($a_w \leq 0,85$)	373
CATEGORY 5 E: Fully baked pastries, viennoisseries, doughnuts, cakes or swiss rolls	374
CATEGORY 5 F: Composite bakery products	376
CATEGORY 5 G: Baker's yeast	377
CATEGORY 5 H: Other bakery products' ingredients	378
CATEGORY 5 I: Sugared confectionery and chocolates, sweet spreads	384
PART 1: High sugar products with low water activity ($a_w < 0.60-0.65$)	384
PART 2: High sugar products with intermediate water activity ($0.65 \leq a_w < 0.85$)	386
PART 3: Sugared products with higher water activity a_w ($0.85 \leq a_w < 0.92$)	388
CATEGORY 6: Composite foods (Ready-to-eat and non Ready-to-eat)	391
1. Some definitions	393
2. Some reflections	395
3. Microbiological guidelines	404
CATEGORY 6 A: REPFEDs (cooked-chilled foods)	404
PART 1: not susceptible to post-contamination	404
PART 2: susceptible to post-contamination	406
CATEGORY 6 B: Mixed Ready-to-eat (RTE) multi-ingredient salads	410
PART 1: representative sampling as composite food	410
PART 2: subsampling of separate (main) food components	412

CATEGORY 6 C: Acidified sauces and (sandwich) spreads	414
PART 1: Spreads based upon a mixture of acidified sauces (4.0 ≤ pH < 5.5) (with ingredients NOT SUBJECTED TO a prior thermal or equivalent non-thermal treatment to reduce the microbial load)	418
PART 2: Spreads based upon a mixture of acidified sauces (4 ≤ pH < 5.5) (with ingredients SUBJECTED TO a prior thermal or equivalent non-thermal treatment to reduce the microbial load)	420
PART 3: Stable acidified emulsified and non-emulsified sauces (e.g. mayonnaises, vinaigrettes, ketchups) (pH < 4.0)	422
CATEGORY 7: Shelf-stable foods	425
1. Some definitions	427
2. Some reflections	429
3. Microbiological guidelines	434
CATEGORY 7 A: Canned foods	434
CATEGORY 7 B: Dry foods and mixes	436
CATEGORY 7 C: Sugar, salt, vinegar	437
CATEGORY 7 D: Food Additives, Enzymes, Food supplements, Nutrients, and powdered formulae of Food for specific groups	438
CATEGORY 7 E: Gelatine and collagen	447
CATEGORY 7 F: Beverages	448
CATEGORY 8: WATER USED IN FOOD PRODUCTION / FOOD PROCESSING	451
1. Some definitions	453
1.1. Water can be defined depending upon the source of the water	453
1.2. Water can be defined depending upon the quality of the water	453
2. The requirements on water (supply) in food production/food processing	455
2.1. The use of water in agricultural production of products of non- animal origin, in particular fresh fruits and vegetables (FFV)	455
2.2. The use of water in food production of foods of animal origin and overall food production and food processing	457
3. Microbiological guidelines	459
CATEGORY 8 A: POTABLE WATER	459
CATEGORY 8 B: CLEAN WATER / RECYCLED WATER	461