

Proficiency Testing Programs *General Information*

Why participate in an external proficiency testing program?

Participation in external proficiency testing programs allows customers to:

1. Assure the accuracy & precision of routine laboratory results.
2. Strengthen the credibility & defensibility of laboratory results and build confidence in the competency of technical staff.
3. Assess the technical performance of methods.
4. Comply with requirements of accrediting bodies, regulatory authorities &/or customer specifications.
5. Eliminate the need for an internal coordinator and the hassles of orchestrating internal programs, or corporate comparisons.

Current Program Offerings:

Cherney Microbiological Services currently offers 5 proficiency testing programs to its customers (see below). For each program, participants may analyze the test items for any, or all, of the tests specified for the given program. Customers may use methods of their choice to analyze the samples and are encouraged to handle and treat PT samples as routine laboratory samples.

Program:	Sample Matrix:	Analyze test items for the following:
Cheese Analytical - Semi Hard	Ground Cheese <i>Cheddar & Colby</i>	Butterfat % (wet basis), Moisture %, pH, Protein %, Salt %
Cheese Analytical - Pasta Filata	Ground Cheese <i>Mozzarella & Provolone</i>	Butterfat % (wet basis), Moisture %, pH, Protein %, Salt %
Cheese Analytical - Hard	Ground Cheese <i>Romano & Parmesan</i>	Butterfat % (wet basis), Moisture %, pH, Protein %, Salt %
Basic Microbiology	Mashed Potatoes	Aerobic Plate Count, <i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> Count, Total Coliform Count, Yeast & Mold Count (combined), generic <i>E. coli</i> Count (optional), <i>S. aureus</i> coagulase positive Count (optional)
Dry Whey	Sweet Whey Powder & Mashed Potatoes	Aerobic Plate Count, Ash %, <i>Enterobacteriaceae</i> Count, Fat %, Moisture %, pH, Protein %, Scorched Particles, Titratable Acidity, Total Coliform Count, Yeast & Mold Count (combined)

Frequency of Testing

Cherney proficiency test items are distributed 4 times per calendar year, according to a predetermined schedule. Test items are typically received in 13 week intervals. A proficiency testing schedule is provided upon enrollment or upon renewal. The schedule contains shipment, testing and results submission dates of each program for the calendar year.

Cost of Participation & How to Enroll

Customers may elect to receive multiple sets of test items each quarter. This allows customers to assess the performance of multiple technicians, or methods, in a single testing event. Each participating technician receives a test item each testing round to analyze. Test items are analyzed for any, or all, of the tests specified for the given program.

The standard annual program cost is \$1,056.00 for one technician, or 1 set of samples, plus shipping and handling. The annual program cost for each additional technician, or set of samples, is \$528.00. Shipping and handling costs are determined by customer location.

New customers may enroll in Cherney proficiency testing programs at any point throughout the calendar year. This enrollment is prorated for the number of quarters of participation. Contact the provider for more information. Interested parties must complete and submit an enrollment application to Cherney Microbiological Services before the next scheduled shipment.

Terms and Conditions

Once pertinent discussions have taken place regarding the relevance of the program to the Customer's needs, the enrollment process can begin. Submission of the enrollment form signifies agreement of the Terms and Conditions as well as agreement of the suitability of technical content of the program to the needs of the Customer. Please review the Terms and Conditions provided for more information.

Communication of Information

Customers receive notification of sample shipment each testing round, typically via email. The notification includes the reporting spreadsheet to be used for results submission and a copy of the instructions for testing. The notification is to be monitored by designated Customer personnel.

Instructions are also enclosed in each shipper each testing round. The instructions give details of requirements for testing the samples. The instructions should be reviewed each round, by each participant.

Analysis of Results

Test items undergo quality control checks prior to and/or during distribution to customers. A robust statistical method is used to analyze results submitted by Customers. Minimum participant numbers are established, documented and followed in order to produce statistically relevant results. Any results produced may be discussed between the Customer and Cherney Microbiological Services when desired/needed.

Questions?

For more information about our current program offerings, contact us at (920) 406-8300, or email us at proficiency@cherneymicro.com.