Committee on Additives, Beverages, and Food Process Related Analytes

Filth and Extraneous Materials in Foods and Drugs

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Summary

This General Referee (GR) topic was reinstated in response to recent scientific and regulatory developments involving potential health hazards associated with filth and extraneous materials (1). In response, the focus of this GR topic will shift towards the detection and evaluation of potentially hazardous filth and extraneous materials. This includes filth and extraneous materials that represent a potential physical, chemical, or biological hazard as well as filth from vectors such as flies, cockroaches, rodents, and other pests that are intimately associated with the transmission of microbial hazards (2–5).

Initially, the GR will develop recommendations for minor revisions to definitions and other introductory material in the topic chapter of the *Official Methods of Analysis* that will reflect the recognized need for differentiating between hazardous and nonhazardous adulterants. There will be no changes to official analytical methods. Future areas of activity may include collaborative studies for analytical methods to detect hazardous foreign objects and a protocol for micromorphology studies on the evaluation of filth from vectors.

Recommendations

1. Revise sections 16.1.02A (Definition of Terms) and 16.1.02B, part (i), (Special Techniques—Format for reporting filth) of the topic chapter to reflect recent scientific and regulatory advances. The shift in emphasis towards detecting filth that is associated with potential hazards will require the addition of new definitions as well as new categories for reporting filth from insects and other pests so that the definitions and reporting categories more accurately reflect associations with potential hazards.

2. Recruit members to develop methods for detecting hazardous foreign objects in various commodities. There is a priority need for verification and validation methods for physical hazards from foreign objects in seafood, juice and meat commodities in order to evaluate conformance to HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) regulations and prerequisite sanitation programs.

3. Develop a protocol for micromorphology studies of insect and hair fragments. Historically, AOAC is a primary resource for studies of the micromorphology of insect and hair fragments. There is an urgent need to begin a series of new studies in this area because the previous micromorphology studies by members did not deal with insect vectors of foodborne pathogens. Nor did the previous studies follow established scientific procedures for validating and vouchering specimens that are used in insect taxonomy and morphology research studies. The protocol will contain instructions for conducting micromorphology studies including procedures for validating and vouchering study specimens. This is necessary to ensure that future studies are conducted in a uniform and scientifically sound manner.

4. Discontinue study of the following topics: granary weevil myosin by immunoassay method; determination of rat and mouse feces in wheat flour; external light filth in grains and seeds by flotation method. These topics have been inactive for a number of years and lack current Study Directors in the active membership.

References