

# OTSC Quarterly Newsletter



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## ISO Accreditation

Implementing an ISO 17025 laboratory management system is a means of ensuring efficiency and technical competency in testing laboratories. A laboratory that establishes a laboratory management system compliant with ISO 17025 joins the growing world partnership of accredited laboratories. An ISO 17025 accreditation certificate shows customers that your laboratory values quality and that you have taken steps to ensure that your testing results are accurate and reliable.

Accreditation is an objective way to assure customers that you have demonstrated technical competence to provide reliable and accurate test results. Accreditation is objective because an independent third party accreditation body performs annual assessments to verify whether your system is meeting all of the requirements of ISO 17025. This independent evaluation is important to the customer because it is an unbiased guarantee that your laboratory is performing at its highest level.

The accrediting body is responsible for assessing

## Mixer Performance Testing in Texas

The Texas Feed and Fertilizer Control Service investigators began mixer performance testing as a service to the Texas feed industry beginning in 2013. The intent of this effort is to assist the feed industry validate their mixers in preparation for the pending Preventive Controls for Animal Food regulation. This proposed rule is part of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Per the background section of the proposed rule, *Ensuring the safety of animal food is complex in light of several factors. Many animals consume one food as their sole source of nutrition. Therefore, the food that they consume must be nutritionally adequate or the food presents a safety hazard to the animals.*

To date, 90 mixer performance tests have been performed on 36 mixers. The mixer testing methodology involves measuring the chloride ion content in

the quality system and technical aspects of the laboratory quality system to determine compliance to ISO 17025 requirements. It is the accreditation body that ultimately decides whether or not a laboratory is complying with the standard.

In December of 2012 the Office of the Texas State Chemist laboratory applied for ISO 17025 accreditation with Perry Johnson Laboratory Accreditation, Inc. (PJLA). PJLA is one of only four accrediting bodies in North America that is a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). A preliminary assessment of the OTSC laboratory was performed by PJLA in July 2013 with a full assessment conducted in August 2013. The laboratory implemented the required corrective actions and they were accepted by PJLA on October 17, 2013. The Laboratory's certificate of accreditation has a scope of chemical testing of food products (corn) for aflatoxin by ELISA and HPLC and for fumonisin by HPLC-mass spectroscopy.

the feed. In most instances, the test is performed on site and results are shared immediately with the feed establishment's production management team. Results from the mixer test are reported as a percent coefficient of variation (%CV). The coefficient of variation is a descriptive statistic that reports the amount of variation between samples (usually 10 samples within a single batch of feed).

The practice of mixing creates a balanced ration of nutrients in each mouthful of feed. A CV of 10% means that an average variation of target nutrients is 10% between each mouthful of feed. Companies with a 20% CV or greater implement corrective actions including increased mixing time, changing the sequence of ingredient addition to the mixer, and, in some cases, replacing the mixing apparatus within the mixer to reduce the CV below 20%.

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*Protects consumers & enhances Agri-Business through its Feed & Fertilizer Regulatory Compliance Program, surveillance & monitoring of Animal-Human health & environmental hazards, & preparedness planning.*

## Balanced Scorecard Application by OTSC

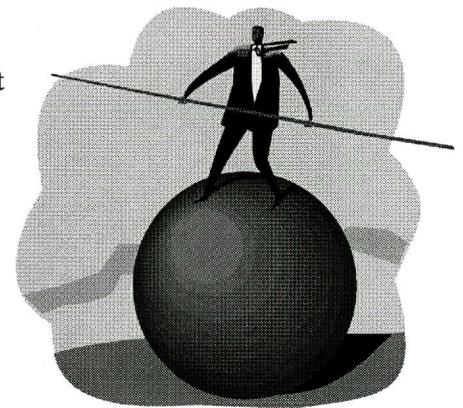
The Texas State Chemist found a need for a performance measurement system that would allow the agency to better perform its duties as the state's feed and fertilizer regulatory authority. A beta version of an executive balanced scorecard, a performance management tool, was developed by Peggy Wantwandi, a graduate student in the Bush School of Government and Public Service, in 2009. Since that time, the Office has successfully implemented this system to reduce sample evaluation time by 60% as part of its re-engineering effort (OTSC Quarterly Newsletter Volume 17, No. 1). The balanced scorecard helped OTSC translate its organizational strategies and identified preliminary performance measures.

The application of the balanced scorecard approach to regulatory compliance began in September 2013 and will focus on three compliance measures (seizures, unlicensed and unregistered facilities, and violative samples). The intent of this effort is to reduce the time required for firms

to implement corrective actions for each enforcement action involving product seizures, registration, and addressing the root cause for sample deviation.

Throughout fiscal year 2014, the Texas Feed and Fertilizer Control Service management team and field investigators

will perform real time monitoring of industry compliance and focus their effort to reduce corrective action turn around time by the industry.



## Congratulations to Ms. Prabha Vasudevan

Ms. Prabha Vasudevan, Coordinator of Education and Outreach Programs, received her Masters of Science in Food Regulatory Affairs with distinction, from the University of Ulster in October 2013. Ms. Vasudevan, is responsible for developing and implementing the OTSC education and outreach efforts with the regulatory and regulated community. These efforts are designed to advance the science of creating tools, standards and practices to improve the protection and compliance of

food systems and are an important component of the OTSC's mission to protect consumers and enhance agri-

business through its feed and fertilizer regulatory compliance program. In her position at the OTSC, Ms. Vasudevan is responsible for:

- Designing and developing courses for the Graduate Program in Regulatory Science and continuing education programs in HACCP, and
- Documenting FFCS quality procedures to ensure compliance with the Texas Feed and Fertilizer Control Act

As the Office and the larger regulatory community transitions to a risk-based approach to enforcement and compliance, the OTSC education and outreach efforts will play a key role in both training regulatory professionals and educating the regulated community and the public at large.