

BRC Issue 8 requirements

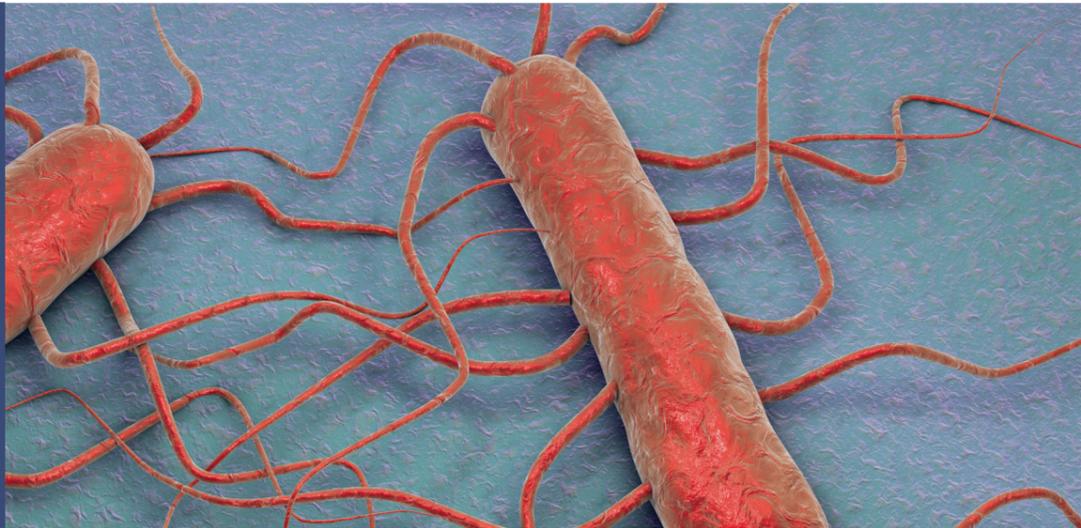
for the environmental monitoring of key pathogens in open and ready-to-eat food production areas – *Listeria* control

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► INTRODUCTION

British Retail Consortium (BRC) released Issue 8 of its global standard for Food Safety in August 2018¹ with the new section 4.11.8 Environmental Monitoring that states: 'Risk based environmental monitoring programmes shall be in place for pathogens or spoilage organisms. At a minimum these shall include all production areas with open and ready-to-eat products.'

Listeria monocytogenes (*L. mono*) is one of these key pathogens and especially important to monitor in ready-to-eat (RTE) food production environments.



► PURPOSE:

As part of a robust environmental monitoring programme - to emphasise the most important locations to look and sample for *L. mono* in RTE food production environments; and provide guidance on how to control *Listeria* in these environments.

► METHODS:

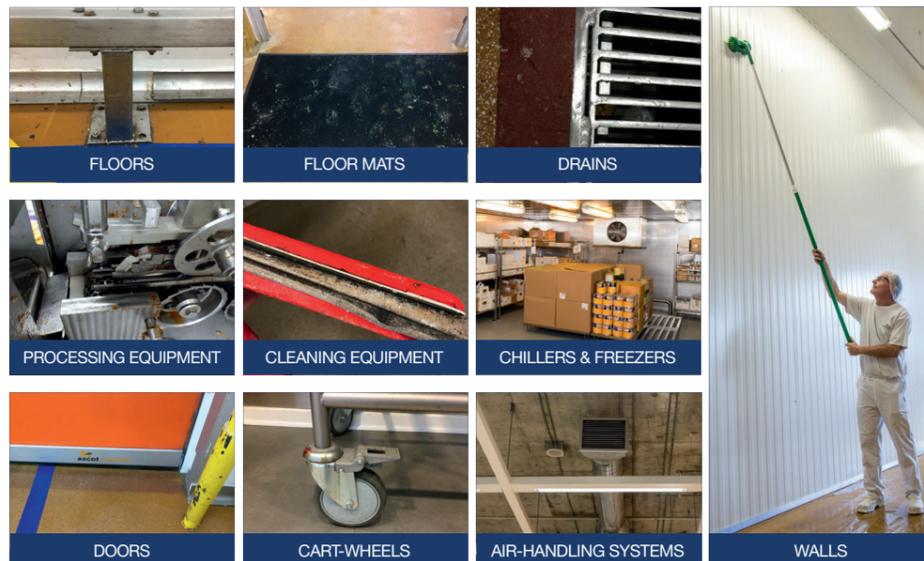
BRC section 4.11.8 Environmental Monitoring was reviewed and related to existing knowledge on *Listeria* hideouts and control and current EU legislation on *L. mono* in the environment and food².

► REFERENCES:

1. BRC (2018). Global Standard for Food Safety, Issue 8. August 2018.
2. COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 2073/2005 of 15 November 2005 on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1546606527431&uri=CELEX:32005R2073>
3. Lappi et al. (2004). Longitudinal Studies on *Listeria* in Smoked Fish Plants: Impact of Intervention Strategies on Contamination Patterns. *Journal of Food Protection*, Vol. 67, No. 11, 2004, Pages 2500–2514.
4. Tompkin (2002). Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in the Food-Processing Environment. *Journal of Food Protection*, Vol. 65, No. 4, 2002, Pages 709–725.
5. Carpentier and Cerf (2011). Review — Persistence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in food industry equipment and premises. *International Journal of Food Microbiology* 145 (2011) 1–8.
6. Reinhard et al. (2018): Incidence of *Listeria* spp. in Ready-to-Eat Food Processing Plant Environments Regulated by the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. *Journal of Food Protection*, Vol. 81, No. 7, 2018, Pages 1063–1067.
7. Holah, J.T. (1998). Effective microbiological sampling of food processing areas. Guideline No. 20, Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association.
8. Schäfer et al. (2017). Monitoring of contamination sources of *Listeria monocytogenes* in a poultry slaughterhouse. J. Holah and D. Gabric, Woodhead Publishing Limited ISBN 978-0-08-100155-4
9. Bislev, S.L. (2019). *Listeria*: its most common hideouts, and where to clean. *International Food & Meat Topics*, Vol. 29, No. 5, 9–10.

► RESULTS:

As a result of this review *Listeria* problem areas were identified as: floors, floor mats, walls, drains, processing equipment, cleaning equipment, chillers and freezers, doors, cart-wheels and air-handling systems.^{3,4,5,6,7,8}



Consequently, these areas should be included in an environmental monitoring plan for *L. mono* in RTE food production.

In order to provide guidance to the industry publications on *Listeria* hideouts and controls have been published⁹.

► SIGNIFICANCE:

It is crucial to food safety to control the presence of *L. mono* in RTE food production environments by using the appropriate cleaning and disinfection techniques and by confirming the efficacy of the controls through sampling in the right places, at an appropriate frequency. By sharing knowledge on where *Listeria* most frequently hides, and on how it can be controlled, food producers will be able to develop an effective environmental monitoring plan that will keep their products safe and aid in compliance with regulatory and standard requirements, including those in BRC issue 8.

