

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AFTL Stands Ready to Implement Rapid Detection of “Big Six” non-O157 STEC

Leading the Way in Cost Effective Testing Strategies for USDA 2012 Compliance Efforts

SEPTEMBER 20, 2011 - NORTH SIOUX CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA Aegis Food Testing Labs (AFTL), an independent, “a2la” accredited food testing lab, has distinguished itself as the preeminent food safety testing laboratory for isolation and identification of non-O157 Shiga-toxin producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC). In partnership with a large beef processor, AFTL’s team of Ph.D level microbiologists have gathered critical data allowing them to deliver cost effective rapid screening test results in order for their customers to comply with new USDA compliance standards.

“AFTL’s strong technical capabilities have made them instrumental in the successful implementation of our expanded food safety program” said Craig Letch, Director of Food Safety and Quality Assurance for Beef Products, Inc. “As part of BPI’s hold and test program, AEGIS onboarded efficient and cost effective rapid detection systems for the “Big Six” non-O157 STEC.”

AFTL has had the opportunity to better understand the dynamics of rapid screening systems with regard to sample enrichment, diagnostic evaluation and data analysis. Rapid screening results for non-O157 STEC relative to product disposition have been analysed according to protocols published in the USDA-FSIS Microbiology Laboratory Guidebook (MLG) Chapter 5B.00, “Detection and Isolation of non-O157 Shiga-Toxin Producing *Escherichia coli* Strains (STEC) from Meat Products.” Since naturally occurring microorganisms other than the “Big Six” can also contain targets that are detected by the rapid screening tests, yielding what can be classified as “false positive”, it is necessary to conduct cultural confirmation as described in the USDA-FSIS Method 5B.00, which can be an expensive and inefficient process.

The AFTL team has optimized cultural confirmation techniques for the isolation and identification of non-O157 STEC using a series of routine, commercial samples and “spiked” positive control samples. This process has cleared the way for Aegis Food Testing Lab's rapid food testing system to deliver efficient and cost effective solutions that address the new USDA compliance standards.

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About Aegis Food Testing Labs

North Sioux City, South Dakota based AEGIS FOOD TESTING LABORATORIES was founded to support companies in their increasingly demanding and competitive operating environments. Aegis Food Testing Labs strives to set new industry standards for accuracy, reliability and customer service while providing a comprehensive range of value added services and solutions for its clients.

AFTL has two state-of-the-art laboratories: one in North Sioux City, SD and the second in Oklahoma City, OK.

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