



newsletter

BIOTRACER Project

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Calling All Applicants! BIOTRACER's Mobility Programme is accepting applications through 30 September 2008

Integrating Science and Industry

The aim of the BIOTRACER Mobility Programme is to encourage the mobility of scientists and students (Masters and PhD) for a period of 1-3 months, with a particular aim of integrating industry and universities/research centres. All grantees must be fully or partially working in or paid by BIOTRACER.

Continuing the Success

With 11 successful mobility visits completed in 2007 and the first part of 2008, we have decided to open a second round of visits.

Many of the partners in BIOTRACER may have a limited knowledge of the work conducted in the other partner organisations. BIOTRACER is organised by Research Areas, Work Packages and Tasks to achieve the deliverables as described in the Contract. In order to obtain the best results, a broad integration of project partners is necessary. One way of promoting this is to encourage participants to apply for the Mobility Programme, where they can visit and work with another type of partner organisation.

Who Can Apply?

Applicants for the Mobility Programme could be scientists, Ph.D. students or M. Sc. students from universities/research organisations who would benefit from a

visit to an industry partner, or industry partners who would benefit from a visit to a research organisation. There is a specific need in the project for better integration of our INCO partners. Therefore, mobility of INCO partners is encouraged. In agreement with the Gender Action Plan in the Contract, women are strongly encouraged to apply for mobility grants.

Support Offered

The Mobility Programme can offer financial support for travel and subsistence of the participants. Please see www.biotracer.org for more information.

How to Apply

The application form for the Mobility Programme is available on www.biotracer.org (Training Events link). Complete the application form and send it to Jeffrey Skiby (jeesk@food.dtu.dk) by **30 September 2008**.

Kieran Jordan will review all applications and make a prioritised list based on the programme's criteria listed on BIOTRACER's web page. A final decision based on the prioritised list will be made by the project's Coordinator, Jeffrey Hoorfar.

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'Professionally, I gained insight into the procedures in a BSL 3 lab and writing risk assessments. Also, it was very inspiring to be in a new environment and see how the laboratory procedures were in an institute with a lot of people compared to a small company. I have tried to incorporate some of the procedures into the labs here at ilochip.'

-Julia Skov, ilochip
Mobility Programme recipient



Reliable Methods to Fight Bioterrorism by Patrick Fach (AFSSA)

The development of effective and reliable methods to defend European countries against biological terrorism remains an urgent challenge. Real-time reporting systems are needed that can rapidly detect, identify and locate any botulinum neurotoxin producing agent, providing early warning and preventing widespread exposure to the public.

Actually, there are no commercially available tests to detect the presence of the botulinum neurotoxins (BoNTs) or the bacteria able to produce BoNTs. Screening

foodstuffs for the presence of this threat agent is then problematic and accomplishing this goal requires the development of highly integrated monitoring systems that incorporate sample treatment, PCR detection and interpretation of the data.

The strategy that we have used to reach the objectives relies both on the evaluation of the capacity of a bio-robot extracting the DNA and on the performance of newly developed real-time PCR tests based on TaqMan probes which have incorporated LNA

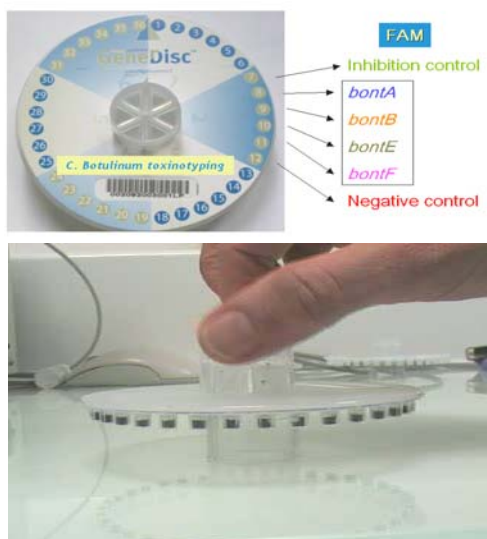
monomers, to rapidly detect the presence of the *bontA*, *B*, *E* and *F* genes which are each genetically highly variable.

Adaptation of the methods on the GeneSystems® PCR-based technology, which relies on simultaneous real-time PCR amplification of several DNA targets within a unique GeneDisc, bear the advantage of a simultaneous detection of the target genes *bontA*, *B*, *E* and *F* which encodes for toxin types responsible for human botulism.



Patrick Fach is with AFSSA in France.

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The GeneDisc Cyclotherm is an apparatus used to perform real-time PCR applications using the GeneDisc systems. The GeneDisc is a disposable plastic reaction tray the size of a compact disc. Its rim is engraved with 36 reaction microchambers preloaded with desiccated primers and TaqMan probes labelled by FAM.

A New Look for www.biotracer.org

Just before the Second General Meeting, something wonderful happened: BIOTRACER's public web site got a makeover. The improved look of the web site will allow for users to navigate more

easily to find the information they are looking for. New features of the web site include the ability to register for workshops and meetings on line, as well as more project information.

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American FDA relaxes criteria for *Listeria monocytogenes*

The American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has published a proposal to relax the current criteria for *Listeria monocytogenes* in refrigerated and frozen ready-to-eat food products. This implies that for products which do not support growth of *L. monocytogenes* the so-called 'zero-tolerance' is abolished.

The changes

In the new regulations, ready-to-eat products have been divided into two categories: products which don't and products which do support growth of *L. monocytogenes*.

Products which do not support growth of *L. monocytogenes*

In these products, *L. monocytogenes* may be present up to 100 organisms per gram. These foods should have the following properties:

- $\text{pH} \leq 4.4$; or
- The product is frozen; or
- The water activity (a_w) is ≤ 0.92 ; or

Have You Been Published?

Please keep the Project Office informed of any publications you have authored related to BIOTRACER. It is very important to list

- The product does not support growth of *L. monocytogenes* due to its composition, for instance by a combination of low pH and a_w , or by naturally occurring or added antibacterial agents.

If in this category of products the number of *L. monocytogenes* exceeds 100 organisms per gram, these products are regarded unfit for consumption and should be destroyed.

Products which do support growth of *L. monocytogenes*

In products that *L. monocytogenes* can grow, *L. monocytogenes* should be absent in 25 grams. The product is regarded unfit for human consumption if *L. monocytogenes* is detected in a sample of 25 grams.

Elucidation by the FDA

In an elucidation, the FDA explains that the new criteria are more in line with the criteria used by other countries, for

instance Canada and European Union.*

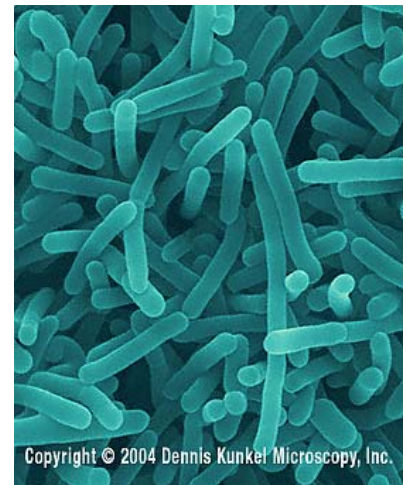
Editorial note:

The proposal of the FDA only partly brings the American criteria for *L. monocytogenes* in line with the criteria established by the European Union. According to EU-legislation, in ready-to-eat product which support the growth of *L. monocytogenes*, the legal limit of 100 colony forming units (cfu)/g product may not be exceeded during the entire shelf life of the product. The producer has to prove this by way of challenge tests. Only ready-to-eat foods for infants and special medical purposes are excluded from this criterion: in these products *L. monocytogenes* should be absent in 25 gram samples (See Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1441/2007 of 5 December 2007). This implies that the new American criteria are still stricter than European legislation.

This article is from Food Safety Online (www.foodsafetyonline.org).

*Source:

http://www.fda.gov/ora/compliance_ref/cpg/cpgfod/draft_cpg555-320.html
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/fr08027a.html>



lists publications, so if you don't see yours there, please let us know.

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BIOTRACER's Second General Meeting Wrap-up

BIOTRACER held its 2nd General Meeting in Dublin, Ireland, 2-4 July 2008. There was a pre-meeting programme which included a workshop on data generation and a Steering Committee meeting.

Shared Interests

On 2 July, the General Meeting started in earnest with a welcome message by the host, Kieran Jordan of TEAGASC. This was followed by a presentation from other 'traceability' EU-funded projects ProSafeBeef and Traceback. Dr. Geraldine Duffy presented ProDafeBeef and Dr. Raffaello Prugger presented Traceback.



The BIOTRACER Scientific Manager, Dr. Martin Wagner, facilitated an open discussion between the two representatives of the projects and BIOTRACER participants. BIOTRACER's EC

Scientific Officer, Hallgeir Herikstad was present to share his support for synergy between the projects.

Integration Is Key

In the afternoon of 2 July, the Research Areas met to discuss developments since the last General Meeting.



In the morning of 3 July, Work Package meetings were held. These meetings were held to discuss the work to take place during Months 19-30 of the project, as well as to discuss issues and challenges to the work.

In the afternoon, BIOTRACER participants presented posters on their latest research. In addition, Continuing Education Seminars were offered to the meeting participants.

Scientific Committee Meets

On the morning of 4 July, informal task meetings were held while the Scientific Committee held a meeting. The Scientific Committee discussed the EC review report, heard

updates on progress from each of the Work Packages, and discussed the development of work for the third 18-month period (months 25-42).

BIOTRACER Beyond the EU

Before lunch on the final day, all participants gathered in plenum to hear Rickard Knutsson (SVA) describe his presentation of BIOTRACER to the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Biodefense and Emerging Diseases Research meeting in the US in February.

What They Heard

The General Meeting was closed after the International Advisory Board (IAB) presented their 'Reflections'.

In the IAB's review, they congratulated the participants on the work completed so far, but noted there were some challenges ahead.

More information and reports from meetings are available on the e-management tool, accessible by BIOTRACER participants only.

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BIOTRACER Project

Mark Your Calendars!

- Steering Committee Meeting, 25 September 2008, Brussels, Belgium
- RA 2 Meeting, 3 October 2008, Russia
- RA 5 Meeting, 3-4 November 2008 Rome, Italy
- RA 4 Meeting, 6-7 November 2008, Spain
- RA 3 Meeting, 16 November 2008, Copenhagen, Denmark
- BIOTRACER Ph.D. course, **POSTPONED until 2009**, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Dissemination Conference/General Meeting, Berlin, Germany 23—26 June 2009

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