

# Testingfocus

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## Global Sourcing Focus at First Eurofins UK Conference

LEAD STORY

The challenges facing retailers and suppliers with regard to food safety, quality and authenticity when sourcing from overseas markets was the focus of the first customer conference held recently by Eurofins UK.

Keynote speaker at the event on 30th March in Birmingham was Breda Mitchell, Tesco's International Trading Law and Technical Director who shared her experience in managing food safety as an international retailer. This included a specific account of the challenges currently facing the business in Japan as a result of the earthquake, tsunami and subsequent radiation leaks which have raised unprecedented logistical and food safety issues for her team to manage.

Experts from Eurofins laboratories both in the UK and Europe also presented on 'hot topics' facing today's food industry as it opens new channels of business across the world. Subjects covered included emerging contaminants, supply chain control in China, update on GMOs and allergens as well as the latest on DNA testing technology.

"The UK imports over 60% of its food and new supply routes are continually being forged to meet consumer demand for a variety of year round produce. For retailers



Breda Mitchell, Tesco



Speakers at the First Eurofins UK Conference

and suppliers alike, global sourcing can pose a number of challenges with regard to food safety and authenticity which we were able to profile at the conference. We were delighted at the response

and hope to stage a regular event focusing on the issues that face our fast-changing industry," explains Graeme Risdon, Managing Director of Eurofins, who chaired the conference. 🌱

HELLO

Testingfocus



## Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of Testing Focus in 2011 and already we have achieved a few milestones with 2010 showing excellent results for Eurofins Food UK in terms of growth and profitability and we are well on track to meet our targets in 2011.

Eurofins Group has shown its commitment to the UK with plans for a new state of the art laboratory at Wolverhampton details of which we will reveal in our next issue.

Another first was the success of our international conference held on 30th March with an audience made up of more than 100 Eurofins customers and other invited guests. The feedback from those that attended has been tremendous and we hope to make this a regular feature in the calendar.

Liz Paterson, Sales and Marketing Director UK Food  
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# New Reliable Rapid Test as Melamine Raises its Head Again

With the threat of adulteration of food by melamine in the news again, Eurofins UK has developed a new rapid approach for the testing of melamine contamination in chocolate, with same day results available by special request.

For those importing chocolate products, particularly from China where there has been recent identification of melamine in powdered milk as well as illness among 300,000 people in 2008 from the same issue, a sensitive rapid method for testing melamine is essential to ensure product safety and minimise delays in getting product to market.

The new method has improved on previous published methods which often provided unreliable results due to the high fat content of chocolate. Eurofins' new method utilises the latest

chromatographic LC-MS/MS instrumentation – recently installed at the company's Wolverhampton laboratory – resulting in more rapid results in fewer steps. The new instrumentation has excellent sensitivity and the methodology has been designed to handle high fat content sample types such as milk and milk derived products such as chocolate, butter, cheese plus soya derived products.

Depending on customer requirements, Eurofins offers melamine adulteration testing on a same day, next day or three day turnaround, allowing products to



be delivered to market quickly. The adulteration of food products with melamine was first recognised in 2007 in China when milk and infant formula were found to be contaminated, causing conditions such as kidney stones and renal failure, especially in young children. Three hundred thousand people became ill, with more than 50,000 infants hospitalised and six infant deaths.

In July 2010 the World Health Organisation confirmed tolerances for melamine at 2.5 mg/kg in foods and 1 mg/kg for infant formulas. 🌐

## Profile on Eurofins China

RETAIL FOCUS

Eurofins operations in China are well positioned to offer companies a range of both testing and auditing capabilities to ensure that only the highest standards are operated to meet European legislation.

The scope of testing capability is far reaching, covering pollutants and contaminants and pesticide residue analysis through to GM, allergen, melamine and rice authenticity testing. The Suzhou laboratory has also recently secured CNAS accreditation for all of its tests, meaning that the local Chinese market can now also be served. In addition, the Chinese laboratory offers 'spot', 'representative' or 'according to Codex' sampling.

Supporting Eurofins laboratory operation is the European Technology Service (Suzhou) Technology Group Ltd, a Eurofins wholly owned subsidiary in China run by Managing Director Mark

Ralph (testing) and Peter Leedham for non-testing services. The increase in global sourcing means that increasingly both retailers and food manufacturers are looking to the Chinese market and, as a result, Eurofins presence in this part of the world is increasing in profile.

In China, an informal inspection is often the first step to certification, so Eurofins is able to offer uncertified audits to BRC and other standards as well as, via Vernon Brown certified BRC, M&S Farm to Fork Audits and HACCP training and auditing. Eurofins auditors – all of them approved outside China – can also offer training to companies in matters such as identity preserved,

auditing and certification, Eurofins also assists customers with pre-shipment inspections including container sealing.

Peter Leedham explains: "Sourcing from the Chinese market offers so many opportunities, but it is important for companies to choose a testing and certification partner that understands the nuances of the local market as well as the requirements of UK retailers. We offer testing that is vital for customers sourcing from China such as rice authenticity and melamine, as well as robust auditing to meet the highest standards of UK retail", Peter Leedham explains.

# Eurofins Develops First True Multi-Screen for Allergens

NEW TEST

Eurofins Centre of Excellence based in Germany has developed the latest Mass Spectrometry (MS) testing methodology to enable accurate multi screening for allergens.

There has been a rise in allergic reactions to food, with some 4% of adults and 8% of children having a food intolerance or allergy of some form. In Europe, 14 allergens must be labelled on packaging and there are plans for the introduction of threshold levels for labelling to give consumers greater security. For food manufacturers being able to identify a number of allergens from a single analysis has enormous time and cost benefits as Dr Bert Popping, Director of Molecular

Biology and Immunology at Eurofins explains:

"This new wider screening method allows manufacturers to move from a risk based testing for individual allergens and so gives higher levels of confidence in results. Additionally, DNA methods may deliver false positive results and do not detect egg and milk proteins, whereas MS techniques determine the actual potentially allergenic compounds, in this case peptides.

"Testing using Mass Spectrometry offers a number of advantages over DNA testing and in particular, the multi-screen capabilities from one single analysis and the direct detection of allergenic peptides. This means that a number of allergens can be tested in one batch giving accurate results – a real benefit to customers.

"We are delighted to be leading the field by offering European food industry such detailed detection of allergens." 🌟



LAB TEST



Paul Sutton, is Eurofins' Analytical Services Manager (Retail), providing the interface between retail customers and the range of services available from Eurofins worldwide. Testing Focus caught up with Paul to find out more about what his role involves and the challenges facing today's retailers.

ON THE SPOT

## 🌟 Tell us more about the role of Analytical Services Manager at Eurofins?

The Analytical Services Manager looks after client business within Eurofins. For retail customers this can range from advising on relevant testing and legislation, reporting and interpretation of test results against both specifications and legal limits through to shopping for samples in-store and general account management. Customers have the benefit of one point of contact to co-ordinate their business in any number of Eurofins laboratories. This one to one approach means that I also get to understand the clients' needs and can advise them on emerging issues, the latest legislation that may affect their business or the newest approaches in testing.

## 🌟 How does the team work?

There are two Analytical Service Managers in the retail team and between us we have more than 60 years experience of laboratory services in food and related areas. While many customers will have routine testing work done at Wolverhampton and Acton, we also manage other requirements – vitamin or GM testing for example – through Eurofins specialist competence centres in Europe. Rather than having to use multiple labs for different types of testing, the scale of the Eurofins business means customers can have their needs serviced through a 'one stop shop'. It's a streamlined approach that customers prefer. Samples can be on the bench in the competence centres the day after we receive them.

## 🌟 What does a typical day involve?

No two days are the same. I can be involved in reporting and interpretation of results, answering queries on legislation, providing quotations or advising on relevant testing. I have regular meetings with customers too and travel to other Eurofins laboratories.

## 🌟 What challenges face today's retailers?

Brand protection is the main challenge to retailers and Eurofins assists them with this by ensuring products are safe and free from contaminants, analytes are within legislative limits and labelling is correct. The food industry is fast moving so it is vital that we offer customers state of the art testing backed by cutting edge advice.

## Pesticide Residue Testing Scope Expanded

Following extensive investment in technology at the Wolverhampton laboratory, Eurofins has extended the scope of its pesticide multi residue screen with an additional 54 compounds. We are now able to quantify more than 400 targeted compounds, which include Ethirimol and Sethoxydim, not routinely included in other multi residue screens.

As well as now being able to offer the largest scope of pesticide screening in the industry, 'lean' business thinking which we reported on in the last issue of Testing Focus, means that Eurofins has also increased the speed at which test results can be reported back to the customer. Faster and more efficient working practices coupled with new technology gives customers results in shorter time frame. 🌟

# FSA Announces Changes for Control Bodies

FSA  
CHANGES

Ron Ennion, Senior Public Analyst at Eurofins highlights the key points recently discussed at an open meeting of the Food Standards Agency Board on how the official control bodies for food safety in the UK will be re-organised

"As the UK's competent authority in this area, the FSA is responsible for protecting the interests of consumers in relation to food. To do this it needs a system that ensures food business operators are able to fulfil their obligations for safe food production. These controls – implementing feed and food law in the UK – are currently delivered through a variety of means, including FSA employees, other Government Departments, Trading Standards, Environmental Health Departments and contractors. This makes food safety responsibility in the UK very complex, and the aim is to streamline the approach," Ron explains.

At the recent FSA open meeting in Bristol FSA Chair Jeff Rooker said:

"The UK food sector is one of the most sophisticated and developed in the world. The current official control delivery arrangements do not mirror the modern food supply chain with food businesses ranging from multinationals and global brands to single artisan producers operating across local authority boundaries.

"The heart of the FSA's role is protecting public health from risks, which may arise in eating food, including the way it is produced or supplied. In the current climate of financial pressures it is timely to consider how best we can secure consistency and sustainability in this fundamental public health protection function.

"The review will be principle based and objective with no pre-determined outcomes. A number



of options will be assessed including a more centralised model with four national delivery bodies in each of the countries of the UK.

The review will be undertaken by FSA staff but overseen by an independent representative. It will be done in partnership and seek the co-operation and involvement of other public health organisations, individuals, other Government departments, professional bodies and consumers across the UK!

Watch this space and we will bring you more information via Eurofins Bulletins and Testing Focus. 

## Eurofins Gets Thumbs Up in Customer Survey

CUSTOMER  
SURVEY

In a recent survey undertaken by Eurofins, customers gave the company an overwhelming 'Good' result for its range of services, performance and staff.

The survey asked customers to rate the services they used. Service level reporting was rated excellent or good, while staff's expertise and speed at dealing with issues was excellent. Taking into account all the services they used each customer was asked to rate Eurofins with an overall score with 'good' being given on all levels.

Liz Paterson Sales & Marketing Director said: 'Although the

results of the survey have been positive we are continually striving to improve our service and we shall be aiming for excellence in our service in all areas and taking action on areas where our customers have highlighted weaknesses. We will continue to survey our customers on a regular basis and encourage our customers to help us improve their experience.'

All customers who responded to the survey were also asked to vote for one of three charities with Eurofins donating a £1 for each survey returned – UN World Food Programme £48; Macmillan Cancer Support £143 and Help for the Heroes £78.

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