

## Testing of Field Crops Involved in June 2008 Flooding in Wisconsin

Buyers may be asking growers to have field crops tested that were touched by flood waters over the last few weeks. While each farm's situation is unique, following are general recommendations for such testing:

- Unless otherwise required by a buyer, growers should test for **generic *E. coli***. *E. coli* is a fecal bacterium and will indicate the potential presence of other fecal bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7. The cost to test directly for the pathogens may be prohibitive for growers and the generic *E. coli* test should be sufficient.
- Growers should request the ***E. coli* Petrifilm® testing method**. [You can expect to spend approximately \$14 per tested sample.]
- Growers will be expected to **sample their own fields**. At a minimum, anticipate taking 3 samples from each category of potentially contaminated material (root, fruit, leaf, stem) that you wish to sell to customer. Take samples that are representative of the affected area in your field, i.e. not clustered together in only one spot of a larger field that was flooded.
- **Sample as follows:**
  - Using clean hands (and clean implements such as a knife or shovel, if necessary), place the sample in a clean, unused sample bag (in a pinch a sturdy Ziploc freezer bag will work). Take care not to contaminate the bag on the outside, and limit the amount of dirt transferred to the sample bag with the produce.
  - Place each sample in its own sample bag.
  - Pack the samples in a cooler with ice packs and deliver or ship them to the testing laboratory. The samples should arrive at the lab within 24 hours and must still be cold on arrival for accurate results. Some labs may have a pick-up service for samples.
- You can expect **results** within a week. A negative result is good news!!!! A positive result may not be bad; it will require an evaluation on a case-by-case basis. Wisconsin growers may call upon UWEX Food Safety Extension Specialist Dr. Steve Ingham and he will assist with the interpretation of a positive test result. Steve may be contacted at [scingham@wisc.edu](mailto:scingham@wisc.edu) (preferable) or 608-265-4801 (phone) or 608-262-6872 (fax).

Following is a list of testing labs in the state which perform generic *E. coli* testing. The cost for testing may vary. Growers will want to contact the company before submitting samples for analysis.

Laboratory*	Address	Phone number	Fax number	e-mail or website
Cherney Microbiological Services	1110 S. Huron Road Green Bay, WI 54311-8024	920-406-8300	920-406-0070	testwithus@CherneyMicro.com
Commercial Testing Laboratory	514 Main Street. Colfax, WI 54730	800-962-5227	715-962-4030	laboratory@ctlcolfax.com
Davy Laboratories	115 S. 6 <sup>th</sup> Street LaCrosse, WI 54601	608-782-3130	608-784-6611	pharris@davyinc.com
Deibel Laboratories - Madison	103 S. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street Madison, WI 53704	608-241-1177	608-241-2252	Madison@DeibelLabs.com
Deibel Laboratories - Oconomowoc	132 S. Concord Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066	262-569-8491	262-569-5770	Oconomowoc@DeibelLabs.com
Food Safety Net Services	2343 Verlin Road Green Bay, WI 54311	920-465-4165	920-465-6846	lab@food-safetynet.com
Marshfield Clinic Food Safety Services	1000 N. Oak Avenue Marshfield, WI 54449-5795	888-780-9897	715-387-7121	<a href="https://my.marshfieldclinic.org/foodsafety/">https://my.marshfieldclinic.org/foodsafety/</a>
Northland Laboratories	1044 Parkview Road Green Bay, WI 54304-5512	920-336-7465	920-336-0647	<a href="http://www.northlandlabs.com">www.northlandlabs.com</a>
S-F Analytical Laboratories	6125 W. National Avenue P.O. Box 14513 Milwaukee, WI 53214-3255	414-475-6700 or 800-300-6700	414-475-7216	sales@sflabs.com
Silliker Laboratories of Wisconsin	3688 Kinsman Blvd. Madison, WI 53704	608-249-9112	608-249-9886	<a href="http://www.silliker.com">www.silliker.com</a>

\*Inclusion of companies on this list is not meant to endorse them, nor to exclude other companies that may offer similar services. The companies listed are known to perform the recommended test and are listed as a convenience to Wisconsin growers. Barbara Ingham, UWEX Food Scientist, 608-263-7383 or [bingham@wisc.edu](mailto:bingham@wisc.edu) . June 26, 2008.