

FAPAS Newsletter



Welcome

Welcome to this issue of the FAPAS Newsletter.

Included in this issue:

- we celebrate 21 years of FAPAS,
- introduce the new programme for the PhytoPAS scheme,
- report on FAPAS at the Water Contamination Emergencies Conference (WCEC4),
- a post-card from Japan.

We hope that you enjoy this issue and find it useful. Please feel free to forward this on to friends or colleagues who may find it of interest.

Amanda Reynolds - Head of FAPAS



Happy 21st Birthday FAPAS!

- a look at how it's grown...

FAPAS® is 21 years old this year, with the first FAPAS round being run in 1990. 'Invented' by MAFF scientist Dr Roger Wood, who went on to chair the FAPAS® Advisory Committee for 18 years, it aimed to create a simple way for the food analytical community to improve the accuracy of their results. Over the past 21 years FAPAS® has been a major factor in promoting the general appreciation that quality – that is getting the correct result on time – is now of over-riding importance.

Dr Michael Thompson of Birkbeck College London was asked to provide statistical guidance for the scheme, and advocated the use of z-scores. Together Mike and Roger wrote the first FAPAS® protocol on how to run the scheme, which was then presented to the international community through the IUPAC, AOAC and ISO Quality Assurance Harmonisation Programme. The International Harmonised Protocol for the Proficiency Testing of (Chemical) Analytical Laboratories was published in 1993.

Data collected by FAPAS® led Mike to publish a new test for homogeneity in 2000, and to a new approach to handling 'real world' (non-normal) distributions of results, so called bump-hunting, in 2002. The International Harmonised Protocol was revised in 2006 to take into account this and other considerations experienced since the first versions of the Protocol were published - Mike and Roger were co-authors again together with Dr Steve Ellison (LGC). The International Harmonised Protocol inevitably influenced ISO Guide 43:1997, which prompted ILAC Guide 13, which in turn led to ISO 17043:2010.

To help develop the scheme, an Advisory Committee was formed with members from the major UK analytical institutes and interests of the time. The membership of the committee has changed over the years, except for Roger and Mike, they are still there! But it remains a very active body, providing feedback on all aspects of the science of Proficiency Testing.

In our first year we ran only one round – 0401 – which went to 34 participants. This year we have already run 280 rounds sending over 13,000 test materials to participants and we are only half way through the annual programme!



100 seconds with... Michelle Wong

Michelle Wong has recently joined FAPAS® on a student internship to investigate trends in proficiency tests over time in addition to learning how proficiency testing works at Fera. Michelle is currently studying Food Science at Leeds University.



What do you do in your degree?

I do food studies and nutrition. It mainly involves food science and analysis, but also incorporates healthcare, and making beer...

What's the best thing about your degree?

My course mates, the opportunity to have a sandwich year and learning new things.

What's the worst thing?

Waking up early for lectures

Why did you decide to come to Fera?

Fera is recognised internationally, and will give me good experience in line with my degree. It's a nice environment to work in.

What will you be doing here?

Here in FAPAS I will be mainly working with statistics, performing data analysis, presenting results and report writing.

What other work experience have you had?

Working in a gem store, helping people design jewellery

What did you have for lunch?

Chilli pesto pasta

Which famous person would you invite to your birthday party?

Rupert Grint – He's taller than Daniel Radcliffe

Do you have any hobbies?

Shopping, badminton, reading and Piano

What's your current favourite listening?

Adele, Glee soundtracks and K-pop.

Favourite reading?

Jodie Picoult, Sophie Kinsella, Nicholas Sparks and Cecilia Ahern

What would you do to make Fera a better place to work?

I would colour code the corridors.

Where are you going now?

Home – to cook dinner!

Tell us your favourite joke...

What's brown and sticky?
A stick

New programme for PhytoPAS

We are very pleased to offer a new programme of eight proficiency tests for Plant Health laboratories.



Last year we were disappointed not to be able to run our PhytoPAS programme. The test materials for many of our tests are expensive to prepare and we therefore need a minimum number of interested laboratories to make each proficiency test a viable proposition. However, since the cancellation we have received regular correspondence asking what has happened to PhytoPAS and telling us that the chance to participate is valued as an important part of your quality control regime.

We have decided to organise a limited programme for the most popular tests such as the detection of *Clavibacter michiganensis* subspecies *michiganensis* in extracted DNA, detection of Potato Spindle Tuber viroid in freeze dried leaves and the identification of *Phytophthora ramorum* from cultures. We are also offering the opportunity to test your ability to enumerate *Clavibacter michiganensis* subsp. *michiganensis* and subsp. *sepedonicus* by immunofluorescence.

All test materials will be dispatched to customers on the 6 March 2012.

Please log on to our web-site www.fapas.com and click on PhytoPAS to view all of our tests.

ISO17043 Accreditation is here!

Following our assessment visit in November, FAPAS®, FEPAS®, GeMMA and LEAP are now accredited to ISO17043. More information can be found at:

<http://www.fapas.com/iso-accreditation/>



New Report style, 2011

Early in 2011, the style of the FAPAS Reports changed slightly. The changes were made in response to the readability of the reports and the relative importance and relevance of the data contained within them. In particular, the text of the reports has been simplified with all the unnecessary duplication taken out and greater emphasis placed on referencing the information already present in the Protocols. The Protocols are freely available to download from the FAPAS website, so the reports now only contain the information immediately pertinent to the particular proficiency test. For the vast majority of our customers, the key priority is the assessment and we have aimed to fulfil this with the new report style. All information relevant to the PT is still in the reports but in a much more brief form.

Since the new report style concentrates on the assessments and the homogeneity mean value is not used in the calculation of the assigned value or z-score. The removal of the homogeneity data does not affect the essence of the report. If a participant has a particular interest in the raw homogeneity data, this is still available on request

(please send an email to info@fapas.com). The new report style first made its appearance in the FAPAS® reports. The other schemes (FEPAS®, LEAP® and GeMMA) followed suit, to maintain the corporate approach.

FAPAS at the Water Contamination Emergencies Conference (WCEC4) Monitoring, Understanding and Acting - Muelhiem Germany October 2010

The FAPAS® (LEAP) Emergency PT Scheme was pleased to attend this very successful conference and took the opportunity to present a poster and paper entitled 'Potable water contamination emergency: The analytical challenge'. This outlined the challenge involved in analysing potable water samples for unknown chemical contaminants in an emergency situation. It also explained the benefits of participating in the LEAP Emergency PT Scheme, with particular emphasis on how participating laboratories had been able to demonstrate improved performance in this very challenging area of analysis.

The paper went on to be published by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) in a book entitled 'Water Contamination Emergencies – Monitoring, Understanding and Acting'. For more information on this visit: <http://www.rsc.org/shop/books/2011/9781849731560.asp>

The fifth WCEC5 conference, called 'Managing the Threats', is scheduled to take place on 19th – 21st November 2012 in Muelhiem Germany. For more information on this visit: www.wcec5.eu



When I was asked if I would like to go to a conference in Japan, I must have hesitated for all of three milliseconds. My boss, Amanda, had visited Japan annually for several years but was now called to higher duties as head of the FAPAS. I would take her place at a major international analytical chemistry conference in Kyoto and present a paper on mycotoxins proficiency testing. Then our agent in Japan asked if I would be free to give a short presentation about FAPAS at an international food exhibition in Tokyo. Furthermore, would I have some free days and, if so, could I visit some of the 288 Japanese laboratories which participate in FAPAS proficiency tests?

They had some specific questions to ask and a direct visit would be most effective - the main issue for the Japanese is the condition of samples on receipt at the laboratories. Inevitably, after a few days' journey halfway round the world, fish and prawn test materials will be a little on the ripe side. There's no evidence to suggest that this compromises the analysis, of course, but it can't be very pleasant for the analyst.

The timing of the visit was just a couple of months after the devastating earthquake and tsunami in March, in the north-east of the country. Up until about four weeks before I was due to go, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advised against travel to Tokyo. Once I was there, however, there was virtually no sign at all of the recent disaster. An opening reception at the Kyoto conference was cancelled out of respect for the loss of life but that was about it.

Getting around on the underground in Tokyo was no problem, and using the Shinkansen (Bullet) train was remarkably straightforward. In fact, the only travel issue of the whole trip was the York to London train being cancelled (and the London to York train...). There was one minor quake while I was in Tokyo but not enough to raise the alarm. So in the end, my one and a half week visit took in the food expo and conference in Kyoto, and visits to seven customers in Kobe, Osaka and Tokyo. The Japanese agent, Ryoichi Matsuo, was a perfect host and had the tight schedule very well organised. Needless to say, the sashimi (raw fish) served at dinner was always exemplary in its freshness. Overall, I had a wonderful time in Japan and hope to visit again next year.

Mark Sykes

A post-card from Japan



Customer Satisfaction

98.5% of customers that responded to the 2010 questionnaire were satisfied with our performance. We had some really positive responses – thank you for the encouragement.



Our next questionnaire will be sent to customers in November. Please give us feedback on our service and tell us where we could improve.

For more information please contact us at:

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