



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX COMMITTEE ON FISH AND FISHERY PRODUCTS

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UPDATE OF THE FAO/WHO HISTAMINE SAMPLING TOOL

(Prepared by FAO)

Background

One of the recommendations of the FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Histamine was that FAO and WHO developed a user-friendly tool to support decision-making related to the establishment or use of sampling plans for detection of histamine at the national and /or operational level.

In response to that recommendation, FAO and WHO developed in 2013 the FAO/WHO histamine sampling tool¹ which is a free resource available to national authorities and operators to support the development of an appropriate sampling plan. The tool provides support in two main areas related to sampling for histamine:

1. *Designing a Sampling Plan*

This tool function attempts to find sampling plans which meet user-defined objectives, by searching for combinations of the number of samples (n) and a concentration threshold (m).

2. *Analyzing the performance of a Sampling Plan*

This tool function estimates the probability of accepting lots of product tested according to a user-defined sampling plan.

Update of the tool

Since its launch the histamine tool has received positive feedback, as well as suggestions from users for potential modifications. The tool has also been used to support discussions related to histamine sampling plans by of the EWG on histamine (ref. CX/FFP 15/34/10).

Based on the feedback received the tool has recently been updated to expand the range of sampling plan options offered. In particular the following changes have been made:

- The maximum number of samples (n_{max}) supported by the tool has been increased from 50 to 1000
- The maximum level of protection supported by the tool has been increased to 1 in 1000000
- The default level of protection has been set to 1 in 10000
- A tabular numeric output has been added to the “Analyze a Plan” section in addition to the existing charts
- The confidence level limits in the “Design a Plan” section have been modified to allow lower values (e.g. 20%).
- The Acceptable number of samples above little m (c) supported by the tool has been increased from 5 to 200

In offering wider ranges for some of the key parameters of the sampling plans, the updated version of the tool should also be able to address some of the issues identified in paragraphs 35 and 36 of CX/FFP 15/34/10, and indeed continue to support national authorities and operators in the development of appropriate sampling plans.

¹ The FAO/WHO Histamine sampling tool is freely available at <http://www.fstools.org/histamine/>