

LABORATORY FLEXIBLE FUNDING MODEL (LFFM)  
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT PROGRAM

YEAR 4 | ACCOMPLISHMENTS SUMMARY

July 2023 - June 2024



ABOUT LFFM

**THE LFFM PROGRAM** is a comprehensive emergency response and surveillance cooperative agreement between FDA and Food Emergency Response Network (FERN) partner laboratories, supporting a wide range of analytical activities

LFFM supports an integrated national laboratory network that operationalizes domestic mutual reliance in support of an integrated food safety system (IFSS)

There are a total of **55 grantees** in the program

**ISO 17025 ACCREDITATION**

**44 LFFM laboratories** maintained **ISO 17025 accreditation** or enhanced their accreditation scope

**HARMONIZATION EFFORTS**

**31 scientists** were trained in FDA micro, chemistry or radiochemistry methods

**2 laboratories** hosted LFFM-funded trainings for **STEC** and **PCR Fundamentals**

**All chemistry laboratories** testing for toxic elements in human foods **harmonized** sample collection with the **FDA's Toxic Element Compliance Program (12 subsamples per lot)**

PROJECT AREAS (TRACKS)

**FOOD DEFENSE**

**41 laboratories** maintained readiness and capacity for the **analysis of foods involving intentional contamination** with microbiological, chemical, and/or radiological contaminants of terrorist concern

**CAPACITY/CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT and METHOD DEVELOPMENT / VALIDATION**

**5 LFFM Cyclospora testing laboratories** Participated in the MLV of the Mit1C PCR method.

**1 laboratory** provided surge capacity for Cyclospora during an **outbreak response**

**4 LFFM chemistry laboratories** developed the ability to test for **PFAS** in bottled water using EPA methods

**Completed Listeria monocytogenes enumeration** implementation efforts across M-HF labs. **All Listeria monocytogenes** positive LFFM HF samples are enumerated

**WHOLE GENOME SEQUENCING (WGS)**

**31 laboratories** submitted sequences for **6,354 enteric pathogen isolates** from food and environmental sources to NCBI

HUMAN AND ANIMAL FOOD PRODUCT TESTING TRACKS

**MICROBIOLOGY**

**25 laboratories** conducted **11,190 analyses** on **6,809 human food samples**, and

**18 laboratories** conducted **3,521 analyses** on **2,197 animal food samples**

**CHEMISTRY**

**26 laboratories** conducted **7,610 analyses** on **3,354 human food samples**, and

**15 laboratories** conducted **3,518 analyses** on **3,354 animal food samples**

**RECALLS**

**35 recalls, 10 consumer advisories,** and **2 outbreak advisories** resulted from **positive samples**

HIGHLIGHTS FROM YEAR 4

**Solving Outbreaks**

**2 labs** provided results that stopped **2 ongoing outbreaks** and prevented further illnesses. One sample solved a **10-year mystery** by identifying the outbreak food vehicle.

**Legionella Testing**

**2 laboratories** assisted FDA for a Legionella assignment for testing water from domestic cruise lines, **State labs** tested **314** samples from this assignment and resulted in regulatory meeting with the firm

**FERN Activated LFFM labs in Response to Lead in Apple Cinnamon Fruit Puree Pouches**

**12 laboratories** participated in the FERN activation. Within **4 business days**, LFFM SRPs and labs had collected **97 samples** and conducted XRF and ICP-MS toxic elemental analysis to confirm the scope and extent of the contamination. Samples from **3 states** who confirmed **high levels of lead** in fruit puree pouches were cited in the FDA warning letters and consumer advisories.

**Pivoting LFFM to Respond to Lead in Cinnamon**

LFFM states pivoted planned sampling to monitor ground cinnamon for lead, collecting **134 samples** in Year 4. **14 samples** from **5 states** resulted in **3 FDA consumer advisories** and **7 recalls** due to elevated levels of lead

STRATEGIC PLAN

In Year 4, the **Strategic Oversight Team** released the **LFFM 2024-2028 Strategic Plan**. The three strategic goals outlined for this 5-year period include: **furthering an IFSS**, **maximizing data stewardship**, and **supporting our state partners**.