



LABORATORIO TECNOLÓGICO DEL URUGUAY

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The painstaking road to accreditation as a proficiency testing provider.

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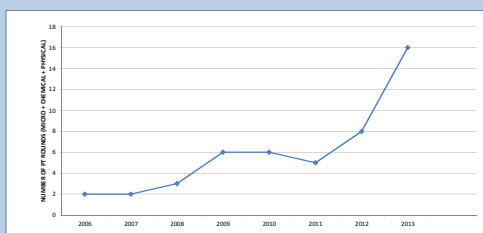
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Introduction

Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay (LATU) has developed several proficiency testing (PT) schemes in diverse matrixes (milk, wine, rice, soybean, sunflower, etc.) covering a wide range of commercially relevant parameters. The Chemical Metrology Department at LATU is currently responsible for the organization and execution of the PT process, along with the participation of other technical departments at LATU.

A bit of History...

The Scientific and Industrial Metrology Directorate at LATU has been participating in PT schemes since 2006 (milk and wine PTs being the first ones offered). As of 2011, the directorate was assigned to take charge of the PT schemes as part of a LATU process. This eventually led to an increase in the number of chemical PT schemes and the development of both microbiological and physical PT schemes. Attempts to implement an ISO/IEC 17043 quality system began shortly afterwards, achieving accreditation as a microbiological PT Provider (PTP) in February 2014.



Number of PT rounds held in the period 2006 – 2013, showing an abrupt increase as of 2011 after the Scientific and Industrial Metrology Directorate was assigned the PT process.



Reasons behind becoming PTP and seeking ISO/IEC 17043 accreditation

In its role as the Uruguayan National Metrological Institute, LATU's Metrology Directorate seeks to contribute to the national quality infrastructure by providing PT schemes.

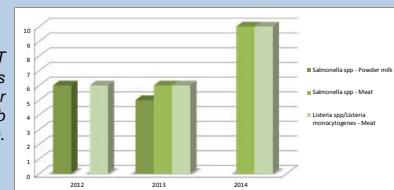
Although uncommon for most NMIs, LATU decided to apply for ISO/IEC 17043 accreditation as peer reviews contemplated within the Mutual Recognition Arrangement do not evaluate competence as a PTP. Additionally, user laboratories usually demand it in order to fully comply with ISO/IEC 17025 requirements, which was noticeable when micro PT clients doubled in numbers ever since accreditation was granted.

Setbacks overcome during ISO/IEC 17043 implementation



- Lack of subcontractor availability (and contract conditions)
- Assuring result confidentiality and avoiding collusion in a small country like Uruguay
- Statistical guidelines available aren't completely suitable for a small number of participants (small lot sizes)
- Technical training on ISO/IEC 17043/ISO 13528 is hard to access

Number of Micro PT scheme participants before and after accreditation (Feb 2014).



Challenges

ENSURING PT PROCESS SUSTAINABILITY

INCREASING NUMBER OF CLIENTS

- ✓ EPTIS REGISTRATION - Increasing lot size, cost-efficient and reliable transport services, custom control and extension of stability studies.
- ✓ Making PT schemes mandatory through national regulation, financial support from the government.
- ✓ Widening scope of PT schemes.
- ✓ Making PT schemes more interesting.
- ✓ Assigning values through CRMs produced internally (improving reliability and lowering PT execution costs).

Achievements of this ISO/IEC 17043 implementation process

- ☐ UKAS granted LATU **accreditation as a Microbiological PTP** (Listeria and Salmonella in meat and milk powder) and **Rice PTP** according to ISO/IEC 17043, **being one of the first accredited Rice PTP in the world**. In this way, **we contribute to a fair trade in some of the most profitable industries in Uruguay**.
- ☐ Through a close relationship of the Cereal Department and the clients in rice PT schemes, LATU has developed a **scheme tailored to their needs**, including the organisation of several workshops in order to discuss rice analysis criteria which led to an important **decrease in the variation of results in PT schemes throughout** the years.

Acknowledgements

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