

A survey developed by the Check Sample Committee was distributed at the AACC International meeting during the table-top exhibition during the 2008 Annual Meeting and was also sent to check sample subscribers with their results. The results are summarized below.

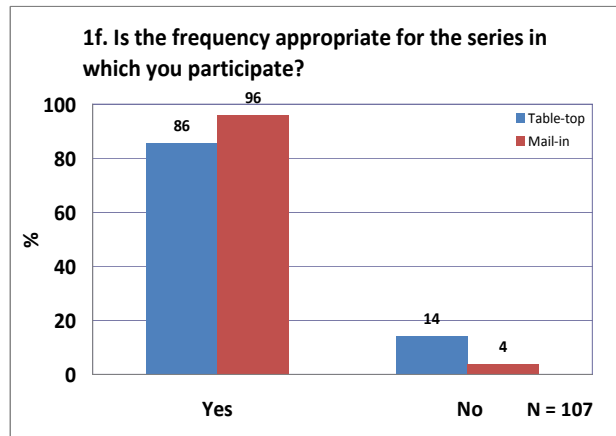
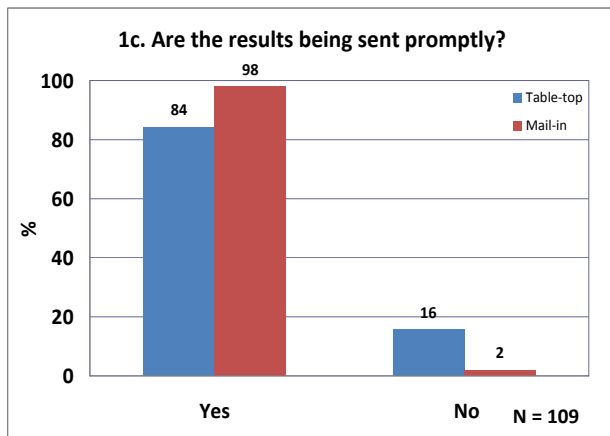
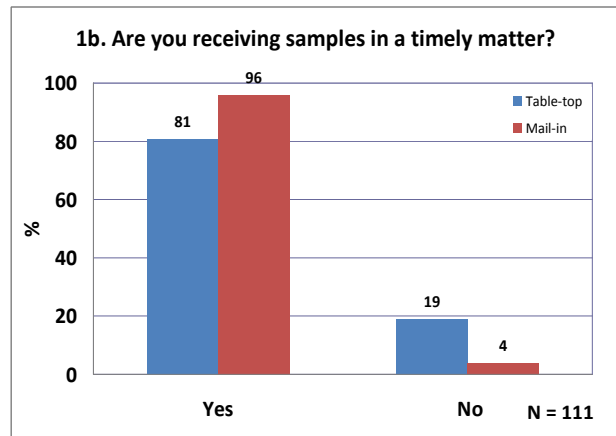
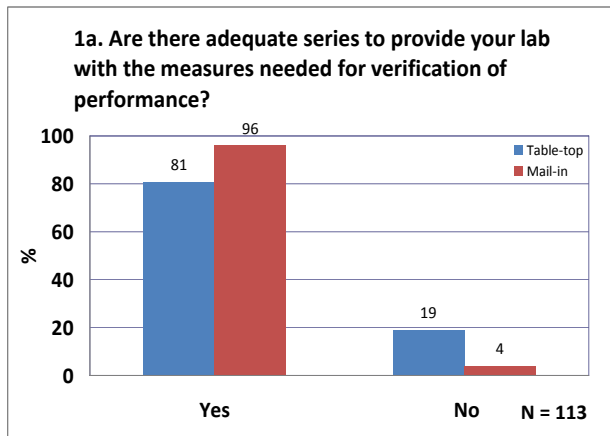
1a. Are there adequate series to provide your lab with the measures needed for verification of performance?

1b. Are you receiving samples in a timely matter?

1c. Are results being sent promptly?

1f. Is the frequency appropriate for the series in which you participate?

A high proportion (ca 87%) of respondents felt that there are adequate check sample series available in order for them to check their laboratory’s performance (Figure 1a). Respondents also felt that they were receiving both their samples and results in a timely manner (Figures 1b and 1c, respectively). They were also satisfied with the frequency of the series they participate (Figure 1f).

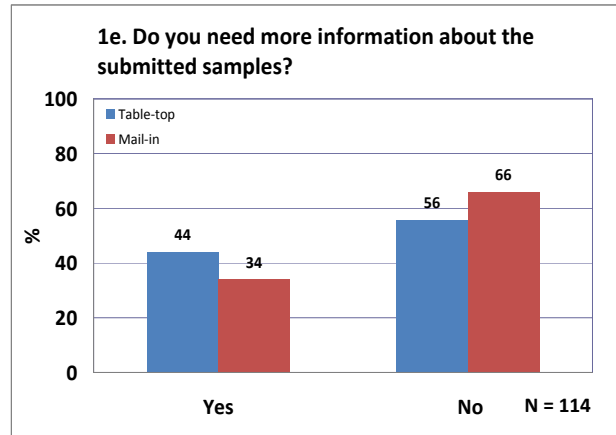
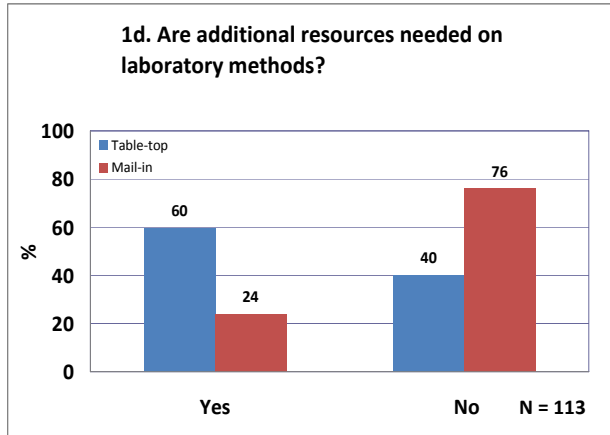


1d. Are additional resources needed on laboratory methods?

1e. Do you need more information about the submitted samples?

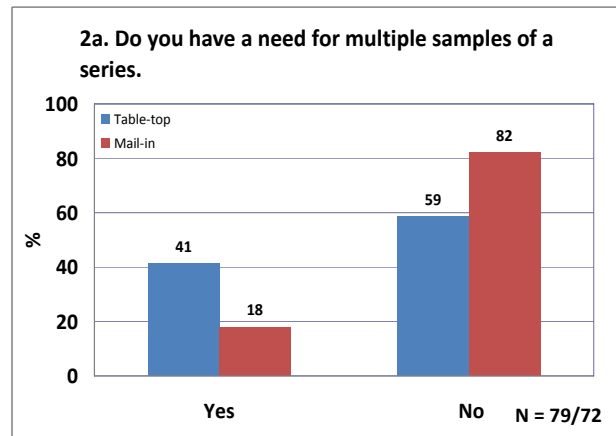
There was some difference in opinion on whether or not additional resources were required on

laboratory methods. While 60% of the respondents from the table-top surveys felt that additional resources were required, 76% of the respondents from the mail-in survey felt that no additional resources were required (Figure 1d). Respondents also felt that more information on the samples should be provided (Figure 1e).



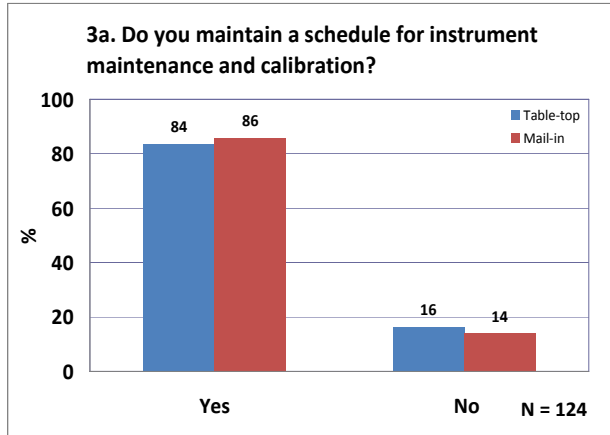
2a. Do you have a need for multiple samples of a series to be sent to one or more of your company's locations?

A high proportion of the responses from the mail-in survey suggested that multiple samples are not required however; there was no clear consensus for the results from the table-tops respondents for additional samples (Figure 2a). When asked why multiple samples might be required, the majority of respondents indicated that multiple samples would be used for calibration and/or verification of multiple instruments (Question 2b i) and to a lesser degree, to evaluate of outside testing laboratories (Question 2b ii).



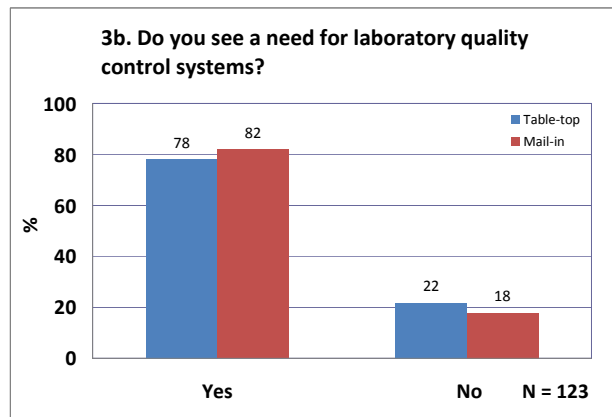
3a. Do you maintain a schedule for instrument maintenance and calibration?

The majority (ca 85%) of total respondents indicate their laboratories conduct scheduled maintenance and calibration of laboratory instrumentation. Specific requirements for maintenance and calibration of measurement equipment are defined in several contemporary quality certification systems. The number of companies requiring certification or compliance to recognized standardized performance criteria is increasing and for many it is a business requirement.

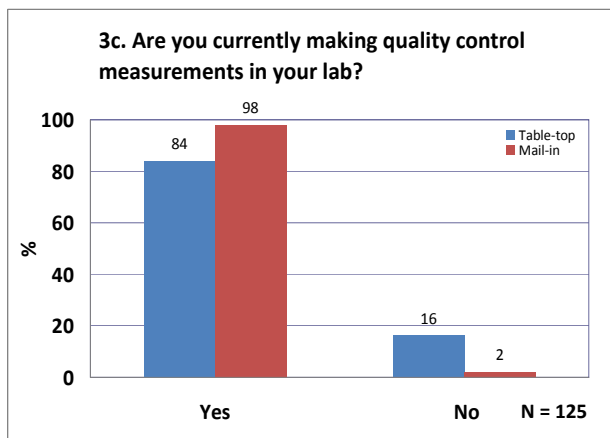


3b. Do you see a need for laboratory quality control systems?

Laboratory quality control systems were identified as a need by only about 80% of the total respondents; approximately equivalent number of responses between the on-site and mail-in responses.

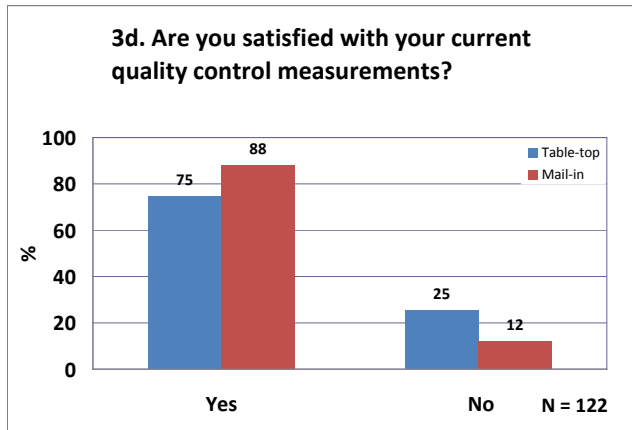


3c. Are you currently making quality control measurements in your lab?



More than 89% of total respondents (combined mail-in and on-site) stated their laboratories were conducting quality control measurements. This number is approximately 9 percentage points greater than the number of respondents that stated they perceived a need for a lab quality control system (question 3b). The number of mail-in responses indicating they are currently making quality control measurements was substantially greater than the number of positive, on-site responses.

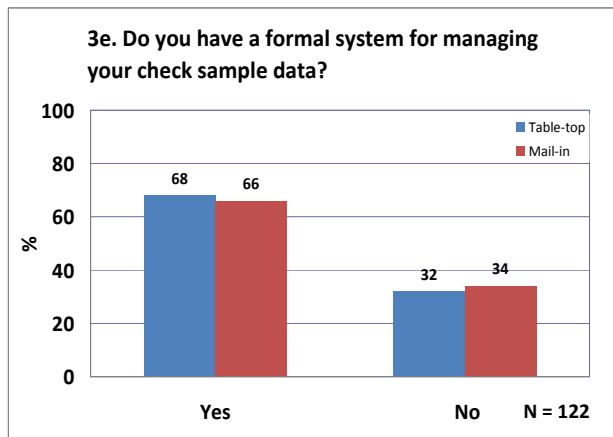
3d. Are you satisfied with your current quality control measurements?



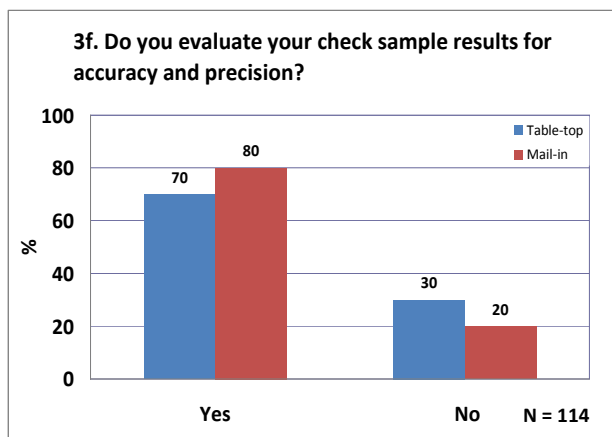
Approximately 80% of total survey replies indicated satisfaction with their laboratory quality control measures. The number of respondents indicating satisfaction with their quality measurements was substantially greater for the mail-in group than the on-site replies. With 20% of the labs that indicating they are not satisfied with their current quality control measurements suggests there is an opportunity to provide guidance/short course for improving laboratory quality systems.

3e. Do you have a formal system for managing your check sample data?

Of all the laboratories reporting, only 67% of the laboratories indicated they have a formalized system of managing check sample data; mail-in and on-site responses being nearly equal. There was no indication of the extent or process these laboratories undertake to evaluate/review their results. Results of check sample data analysis by Terry Nelsen indicates the actual number of laboratories ‘managing’ their data is probably somewhat smaller than reported by this survey.



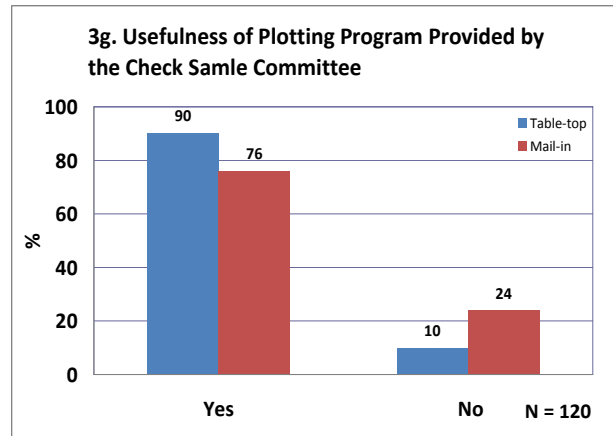
3f. Do you evaluate your check sample results for accuracy and precision?



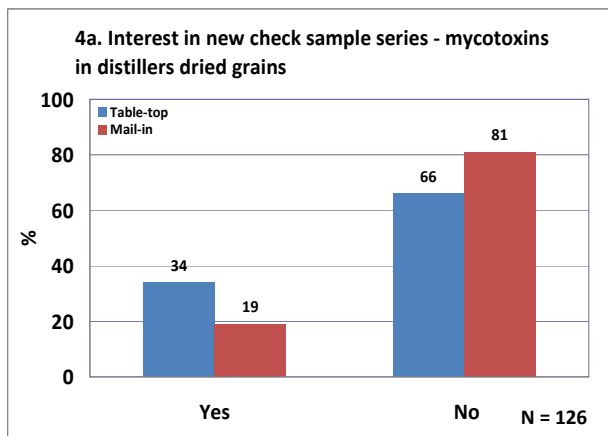
Seventy percent of the on-site and 80% of the mail-in responses indicate their labs conducted an evaluation of their check sample data. A number of methods were identified that were used to check for accuracy and precision of check sample results. These methods include comparison to other labs in corporate networks, assure results are within 1 sd of mean, use of AACC check sample proficiency results (z-scores), trend analysis and data plots.

3g. The Check Sample Committee has developed a simple means for plotting check sample data. Do you think this will help you in your lab quality control?

A total of slightly more than 84% of respondents stated the Excel® program would be useful. There was a difference of 14 percentage points between the number of on-site versus mail-in respondents indicating they thought program provided would be useful. This could be a function of the visual demonstration provided at the table top. One comment stated that “visuals [are] good for lab staff”. Another response indicate the plotting capabilities were a ‘good start’.



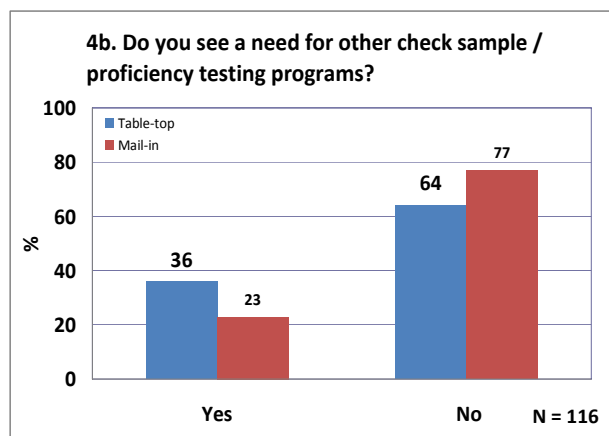
4a. The Check Sample Committee is considering new check sample series - mycotoxins in distillers dried grains. Would you be interested in participating in this series testing?



Only 28% (35 of 126) of all of the responses indicated their laboratories had an interest in a check sample for mycotoxins in distillers grains. It was not indicated if this number represents 35 individual laboratories or there were multiple responses from several individual laboratories.

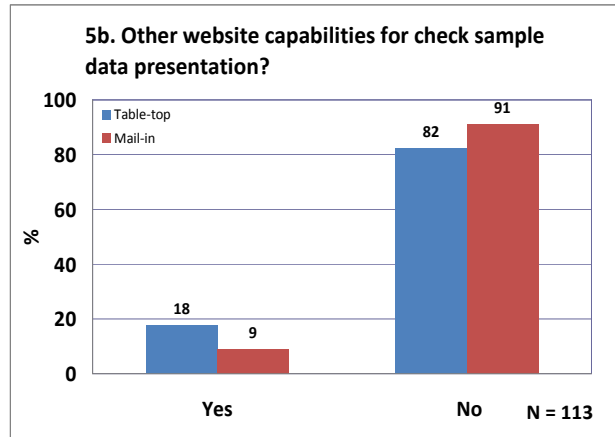
4b. Do you see a need for other check sample / proficiency testing programs?

The majority of total responses (69%) indicated there was not a need for additional check sample series. However, several respondents indicated interest for an Extensograph series. There was also interest expressed for series that would include wet gluten, starch damage, Zeleny sedimentation and/or the Alveograph. One response wanted a fiber series - total dietary, neutral detergent and acid detergent fiber.



5b. Are there other capabilities you would like to see offered on the website for the check sample data presentation?

The majority of respondents (ca 86%), both on-site and mail-in, indicated there was no need for additional web based data presentation.



5 c. The committee has provided an Excel spreadsheet that requires manual data input to maintain accuracy and plot your data. Would you be willing to pay an increased fee to obtain access to a user-friendly statistical software package to plot data and generate statistical analyses?

Approximately 40% of the respondents indicated a willingness to pay additional fees to access a web based statistical / plotting program. However, only 14% (question 5b) indicated there was a need for access to additional web based statistical/plotting software. The willingness to accept additional was substantially different between those responding on-site and those submitting main-in responses.

