National Reference Laboratories (NRLs)

The role of National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) and the details of the UK NRLs for food and feed testing

NRLs are specialist laboratories responsible for maintaining EU-wide standards for the routine testing of feed, food and animal health. They provide advice and support on methods for official control testing, ensuring the delivery of risk-based and proportionate food enforcement to protect consumers.

We have a legal obligation to appoint UK NRLs under Official Feed and Food Controls Regulations 2017/625. The European Commission has created a corresponding network of European Union Reference Laboratories (EU-RLs). Individual EU Member States designate one or more NRLs for each EU-RL area.

The NRLs in the UK are divided into:

- NRLs for feed and food (appointed by the FSA and Defra)
- NRLs for animal health and live animals (appointed by Defra)

FSA-appointed feed and food NRLs by subject

Antimicrobial resistance

Food, Water & Environment (FWE) Microbiology Network
Public Health England (PHE) Microbiological Services (Colindale)
61 Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5EQ
Tel: 020 8327 7160/7325

Campylobacter

FW&E Microbiology Network
PHE Microbiological Services (Colindale)
61 Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5EQ
Tel: 020 8327 7160/7325

Coagulase positive Staphylococci, including Staphylococccus aureus

FW&E Microbiology Network
PHE Microbiological Services (Colindale)
61 Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5EQ
Tel: 020 8327 7160/7325

Dioxins and Halogenated Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in feed and
Escherichia coli, including Verotoxigenic E. Coli (VTEC)

FW&E Microbiology Network
PHE Microbiological Services (Colindale)
61 Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5EQ
Tel: 020 8327 7160/7325

Feed additives - authorisation and control

Laboratory of the Government Chemist Ltd
Teddington
Middlesex
TW11 0LY
Tel: 020 8943 7000

Foodborne viruses

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS)
Barrack Road
The Nothe
Weymouth
DT4 8UB
Tel: 01904 462000

Genetically modified organisms

Laboratory of the Government Chemist Ltd
Queens Road
Teddington
Middlesex
TW11 0LY
Tel: 020 8943 7000

Listeria monocytogenes

FW&E Microbiology Network
PHE Microbiological Services (Colindale)
61 Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5EQ
Tel: 020 8327 7160/7325

Material intended to come into contact with foodstuffs

FERA
Metals and nitrogenous compounds in feed and food

FERA
Sand Hutton
York
YO41 1LZ
Tel: 01904 462000

Monitoring of marine biotoxins

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
Shellfish Toxin Unit - VSD Stormont
Stoney Road
Belfast
BT4 3SD
Tel: 028 9052 5636

Monitoring the viral and bacteriological contamination of bivalve molluscs

CEFAS
Barrack Road
The Nothe
Weymouth
DT4 8UB
Tel: 01904 462000

Mycotoxins and plant toxins in feed and food

FERA
Sand Hutton
York
YO41 1LZ
Tel: 01904 462000

Parasites (in particular Anisakis)

CEFAS
Barrack Road
The Nothe
Weymouth
DT4 8UB
Tel: 01904 462000

Parasites (in particular Trichinella and Echinococcus)

Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA)
National Agri-Food Innovation Campus
Sand Hutton
York
Processing contaminants

FERA
Sand Hutton
York
YO41 1LZ
Tel: 01904 462000

Salmonella in food

FW&E Microbiology Network
PHE Microbiological Services (Colindale)
61 Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5EQ
Tel: 020 8327 7160/7325