

International Fruit Preparation Leader Stays in Compliance, On Budget, and Up to Date on Pesticide Issues over Six Continents

To avoid potential customer, consumer, or regulatory nightmares, growers, brokers, grocery chains, and food industry processors must properly address pesticide management. The fact is any food organization needs to stay in step with the latest regulations and guidelines not only in their home country, but also anywhere around the world where they source, process, or ship food ingredients.

For Charley Schmidt, the task was not just to stay in pesticide compliance, but to do so economically and efficiently from sources that span six continents. As Director of Regulatory and Quality Systems for ATYS-US, which provides high quality fruit preparations to US and Canadian food manufacturers, he was responsible for quick and accurate testing of fruit for pesticides prior to shipment.

In his role, Schmidt also dealt with European pesticide compliance issues for his parent company, the ATYS Group, a world leader in fruit preparation for the food industry. In Europe, not only were lower pesticide detection levels required than in the US, but also testing for heavy metals and other contaminants was required as well.

“We needed a testing consultant who could give us an authoritative look at pesticide and contaminant regulations not only in the US but also abroad,” said Schmidt. “They had to be knowledgeable on a range of chemicals used to stop insect infestations domestically and internationally. They had to keep us abreast of regulatory changes such as those brought on by the Food Quality Protection Act of 1995, which restricted the use of many chemicals and eliminated tolerances for many others. They had to be capable of clarifying our questions in a range of different countries, even on



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low volume crops. And they had to do this all economically, while meeting logistics timelines.”

Based on previous experience, ATYS-US turned to The National Food Laboratory (The NFL), an independent subsidiary of the National Food Processors Association (NFPA), for their scientific expertise in food testing, formulation, processing, and sensory evaluation. The NFL has almost 30 years of experience assisting the food industry, including the joint development and validation of testing methods with the FDA, and the development and execution of pesticide management programs for clients.

Taking into account ATYS-US’s needs for compliance, quality control, and risk assessment, all done in a time and cost-efficient manner, The NFL implemented a number of Multi-Residue-Analysis (MRA),

custom screens and single residues methods based on the fruit, country of origin, market sold to, special circumstances, and other factors. The NFL did the research and consulted Grace Bandong, an in-house pesticide expert, to determine which tests best fit ATYS-US's needs.

Schmidt talked directly with The NFL's chemists and project managers to discuss and quickly resolve any pesticide issues. On one occasion, when differing pesticide test methods were encountered in Japan, one of The NFL's account managers flew to Japan. There, she met with her counterparts at a Japanese testing lab to resolve any lingering issues.

"The NFL helps us search out chemicals used in various countries and understand the regulations, so wherever we ship or process product we are in full compliance with the law," says Schmidt. "Their level of expertise helps us efficiently and economically test for the pesticides or contaminants in question. They validate test procedures, develop a specific test if needed, and are able to check for stringent European tolerances. They're flexible enough to expedite the process when needed, while maintaining high quality data and analysis."

To help clients stay in compliance and maintain overall product quality whichever country they purchase from or process in, The NFL tests for pesticides and contaminants all the way down to 10 ppb. Besides offering comprehensive MRA screens including those for Organophosphate, Organonitrogen, Organosulfur, n-Methyl Carbamates, and Chlorinated Hydrocarbons, they also provide special tests for compounds not covered by MRA screens such as benomyl, glyphosates, and phenoxy acids.

The NFL can test for or advise on a wide range of food contaminants including pesticides, mycotoxins, and heavy metals. Their decades of inter-disciplinary expertise also expedites resolving other related problems, such as chemical-packaging interactions, when the need occurs. Pesticide reports from The NFL are similarly flexible for clients' needs. For example, separate reports can be generated for multiple samples and formatted as needed, including customized detection limits, sample numbering, etc.

For a clear-cut discussion of pesticide issues in food or to get a better understanding on how to thoughtfully analyze your samples, please call Grace Bandong at 925-551-4206 or email her at BandongG@TheNFL.com. For other information, write to The NFL at 6363 Clark Ave., Dublin, CA 94568, or visit them on the Web at www.TheNFL.com.

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