

Ask the Experts: Process Monitoring



5 QUESTIONS WITH AGROPUR'S QUALITY TEAM

- On behalf of QualiTru Sampling Systems, Agropur's quality control team — Julie Audy, Ph.D., senior director of food safety and laboratories; Anna Colavecchio, Ph.D., food safety and validation manager; and Michelle Braun, food safety and validation manager — explains how validated sampling and process monitoring work hand in hand to detect risks early, verify sanitation and deliver the reliable data needed to protect quality, safety and consumer trust.

1. How does process monitoring help prevent contamination in dairy processing environments?

Process monitoring enables us to proactively detect issues before they become a larger problem. We routinely monitor critical processes like pasteurization, CIP and other key points in the system that are essential for food safety and quality. Many of our systems are closed, and in-process sampling verifies that they are clean and working as intended.

2. What role does sanitation validation play in a food safety monitoring plan?

Each production cycle starts with sanitation, and successful completion is one of the most important parts of our process to ensure food safety. Validating the efficacy of cleaning provides a scientifically sound basis for demonstrating that our procedures are effective and reliable.

3. What key risks can routine monitoring help detect before product release?

Routine monitoring can detect critical risks prior to product release, including:

1. Pathogen or other microbial contamination

2. Foreign materials
3. Allergens or chemical residues

By identifying these risks before product release, we protect consumers and reduce the likelihood of product recalls.

4. How is process monitoring data used to drive continuous improvement?

Data gathered from monitoring helps us proactively identify trends and deviations that may signal emerging issues. Early detection allows for prompt investigation to identify the root cause. Proactively responding to trends improves consistency in our process, reduces non-conformity, supports optimization and increases operational efficiency.

5. Why is validating sampling and monitoring protocols important for data integrity?

We are only as good as our data, and the entire team makes decisions that rely on the integrity of the data. Validating our sampling and monitoring protocols ensures that the data we collect is consistent, representative and accurate. If data has not been validated, we risk making decisions based on flawed or incomplete information. ●