Australian Standard™

Food microbiology

Method 11.1: Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs—Preparation of test samples, initial suspension and decimal dilutions for microbiological examination—General rules for the preparation of the initial suspension and decimal dilutions

PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee FT-004, Food Microbiology, to supersede part of AS 1766.1.2: 1991, *Food microbiology,* Method 1.2: General procedures and techniques—Preparation of dilutions.

This Standard is identical to and reproduced from ISO 6887-1:1999, *Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs—Preparation of test samples, initial suspension and decimal dilutions for microbiological examination,* Part 1: *General rules for the preparation of the initial suspension and decimal dilutions*.

This Standard was prepared by the Australian members of the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee FT-004. After consultation with stakeholders in both countries, Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand decided to develop this Standard as an Australian Standard rather than an Australian/New Zealand Standard.

The objective of this Standard is to specify general rules for the aerobic preparation of the initial suspension and of decimal dilutions for microbiological examinations of products intended for human and animal consumption.

As this Standard is reproduced from an International Standard, the following applies:

(a) In the source text, 'this part of ISO 6887' should read 'this Australian Standard'.

(b) A full point substituted for a comma when referring to a decimal marker.

(c) Substitute 'mL' for 'ml' wherever it appears.

References to International Standards should be replaced by references to equivalent Australian Standards as follows:

Reference International Standard	*Australian Standard*	
ISO	AS	
7218	5013	Food microbiology
	5013.14	Method 14: Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs—General rules for microbiological examinations

The laboratory should have a clearly defined quality control system to ensure that the apparatus, culture media, reagents and technique are suitable for the test. The use of positive controls is part of this system.

STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

INTRODUCTION

Because of the large variety of food and feed products, this horizontal method may not be appropriate in every detail for certain products. In this case, different methods, which are specific to these products may be used if absolutely necessary for justified technical reasons. Nevertheless, every attempt should be made to apply this horizontal method as far as possible.

When this part of ISO 6887 is next reviewed, account will be taken of all information then available regarding the extent to which this horizontal method has been followed and the reasons for deviations from this method in the case of particular products.

The harmonization of test methods cannot be immediate, and for certain group of products International Standards and/or national standards may already exist that do not comply with this horizontal method. It is hoped that when such standards are reviewed they will be changed to comply with this part of ISO 6887 so that eventually the only remaining departures from this horizontal method will be those necessary for well-established technical reasons.

This part of ISO 6887 defines the general rules for the preparation of the initial suspension and of decimal dilutions for microbiological examination. Part 2 of ISO 6887 (under preparation) will specify specific rules for the preparation of the test sample and of the initial suspension, taking into account the variety of food and feed products to which ISO 6887 applies.

For a number of products, it is necessary to take special precautions, especially when preparing the initial suspension, because of the physical state of the product (such as a dry product, a highly viscous product), or the presence of inhibitory substances (such as spices, salted fishes), or the acidity, etc.

It is recommended that, whilst waiting for the publication of part 2, any special diluents or practices specified for particular products in an appropriate specific standard be used in the preparation of the initial suspension. This may include:

— adjustment of the pH of a food suspension to neutrality;

— the use of buffered peptone water, and not other diluent, for products with high inhibitory effect, or products containing microorganisms that have been stressed (e.g. acidic pH);

— specific rehydration procedures for foods of low water activity to minimize osmotic shock;

— the use of adequate temperatures to aid suspension of cocoa, gelatine, milk powder, etc.;

— resuscitation procedures for the improved recovery of stressed microorganisms resulting from food processing and storage;

— homogenization procedures and duration specific to certain products (e.g. cereals) and/or to certain determinations (e.g. yeasts and moulds);

— the use of surface-active agents for high-fat foods.

1 Scope

This part of ISO 6887 defines general rules for the aerobic preparation of the initial suspension and of decimal dilutions for microbiological examinations of products intended for human or animal consumption.

This part of ISO 6887 is applicable to the general case, except for products mentioned in ISO 6887-2.

2 Normative reference

The following normative document contains provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of ISO 6887. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, this publication do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this part of ISO 6887 are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 7218, *Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs — General rules for microbiological examinations*.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this part of ISO 6887, the following definitions apply.

3.1
initial suspension (primary dilution)
suspension, solution or emulsion obtained after a weighed or measured quantity of the product under examination (or of a test sample prepared from the product) has been mixed with a nine-fold quantity of diluent, allowing large particles, if present, to settle

NOTE See clause 5 and notes 1 and 2 of 9.1.

3.2
further decimal dilutions
suspensions or solutions obtained by mixing a measured volume of the initial suspension (3.1) with a ninefold volume of diluent and by repeating this operation with further dilutions until a decimal dilution series, suitable for the inoculation of culture media, is obtained