



Recommended Practices for Vibrio Season 2016

Who?

Processors and Farmers of live oysters destined for raw consumption

When?

Vibrio season (May 1 – October 1, 2016)

Why?

The Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program requires processors to have a Quality Management Program (QMP) that includes a *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Vp) control program.

BCSGA Recommendations

- **Processors who have not validated a Vp control program should submit five (5) final product samples, in subsets of 14 live oysters, to an ISO/IEC accredited laboratory for Vp analysis to ensure Vp levels are <100 MPN/gm.**
- **Farmers operate within the parameters of a Supplier Quality Assurance (SQA) agreement with the processor.**

Suggested Elements of an SQA:

- Schedule to monitor ocean buoy temperatures
- Controls when ocean buoy temperatures are equal to or greater than 15°C
- Consistent sampling (e.g., one sample per lease weekly) to monitor Vp levels at the harvest site
- Method to notify processors when Vp levels are equal to or greater than 100 MPN/g
- Limitation on activities/conditions that could elevate Vp levels; e.g., size grading the day before harvest
- Harvest practices that support the lowest possible Vp levels; e.g., harvest from deeper, colder waters
- Time and temperature controls during harvest
- Effective chilling to drop the internal temperature of harvested oysters to 0°C–10°C as quickly as possible – with an ultimate temperature target of 4°C
- System for storage and transportation that maintains chilled product between 0°C–4°C
- Regular verification of thermometer calibration
- Process (e.g., Bill of Lading) to document time, air temperature and internal oyster temperature at transfer points in the delivery chain from farm to processor

The BCSGA encourages processors and farmers to work together to develop SQA protocols to minimize the risk of Vp contamination in live oysters destined for raw consumption. Accurate record keeping at the harvest site and product testing at the processor level will help to validate an SQA. The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has published a [food safety note](#) for food premises serving raw oysters as well as related [vibrio information](#). It is our hope that, working together, we can reduce the risk that contaminated shellfish are served in retail.

The BCSGA reminds farmers to familiarize themselves with the:

- DFO Conditions of License, particularly subsections 9.3, 9.4 and 12.6
- CFIA's *Update to the Vibrio parahaemolyticus Guideline* (May 20, 2016) and SQA requirements (Appendix E of the *QMP Reference Standard*).