

To: CAEAL Membership

Date: November 2002

Re: Information Package – Membership Satisfaction Survey

The objective of this mail-out is to provide feedback to CAEAL members with respect to comments that were received in response to the August 2002 Membership Satisfaction Survey, conducted on behalf of the CAEAL Program Committee. The Committee reviewed all the comments and has provided replies to each of the items (see the Notes that follow each comment).

The results of the survey have been tabulated and a summary has also been made available on the CAEAL web site at www.caeal.ca.

Sincerely,

Debbie Macey
Proficiency Testing Manager

Email: dmacey@caeal.ca

CAEAL PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAM
MEMBERSHIP SATISFACTION SURVEY

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

I appreciate your flexibility regarding delivery of results when PT shipments arrive very late at our lab. About the PT samples, I have two comments to make. Firstly, we are highly interested in a PT sample for total petroleum hydrocarbons in soil and water (does anyone offer such a material?). Secondly, in the first round for organophosphorous pesticide testing, I found the concentrations too high. Real world samples are much lower and we got a contamination problem in the GC when first running the PT sample extracts undiluted. In terms of service and attention, reports and policies, we are satisfied and I have no suggestions to make to improve your "performance".

Notes: Addition of PHC's to PT Program is currently under consideration. MOE will provide CAEAL with a list of recommended concentrations for organophosphorous pesticides and other drinking water parameters.

To the question "PT Sample preparation is appropriate" I just wanted to recall you the problems we had with the concentrations of one of the last PT program regarding the Microtox (the volume recommended for the preparation were odd). And to the question "PT sample container are appropriate" I just wanted to mention that the sample volume for the phosphorus and total nitrogen is too low (50 mL would be more appropriate).

Notes: the Microtox samples for the Oct. 2002 study were adjusted so that the dilutions were more straightforward to prepare. The current volume for phosphorus and total nitrogen is 250 ml.

With regard to section G – PT Fees, I strongly disagreed that your fees (either PT or Accreditation fees) are reasonable.

I respectfully request that some sort of provision be made for small/startup laboratories, perhaps in terms of lower fees, extended payment plans or a complete waiver of fees until accreditation is achieved.

Note: to be raised at next Board meeting in Jan/03.

The functionality and usefulness of PT samples for laboratories with a history of successful participation no long has benefit.

Note: Program Committee disagrees with this comment – PT is necessary to monitor ongoing performance.

For proficient laboratories (example have passed 6 rounds of PT), the program would be better served if the PT samples dealt only with new methods, and were conducted as a "development exercise" (QUASIMEME PT program is an example).

Note: Program Committee disagrees with this comment – the QUASIMEME PT program is not intended to simply monitor proficiency; it is also designed to test new methods and to assist with problem-solving.

Labs are required to sign an agreement that they process the samples in a "routine" manner when submitting results. However, in many cases these samples cannot be treated as "routine". Turnaround times are shorter than normal, extensive dilutions are required, data must be transcribed to special tables etc.

Note: this is a technical requirement of ILAC-G13:2000, section 3.5.1.5.

Observations of PT sample errors by proficient labs is usually a matter of deviation (dilution, data transposition) from the standard method to accommodate the PT sample. As such, it would be beneficial to separate types of failure.

Note: Program Committee disagrees with this comment – the onus is on the lab to conduct an investigation and submit a Corrective Action (CAR) form.

Re: failures due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. strikes) - to be raised at next Board meeting in Jan/03.

There is no diagnostic value from the results of the current CAEAL PT program.

Note: Program Committee disagrees with this comment.

CAR form is simply a duplication of a process already incorporated into our QMS.

Note: this is also a requirement of ILAC-G13:2000.

Complaints arising from the PT program (other than shipping problems) take a very circuitous route. Could there not be a more effective way of dealing with issues? Is there an SOP describing this process that could be communicated with labs. The PT Related Policies does not really cover this.

Note: the procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals are documented in the CAEAL Quality Manual.

CAEAL PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Total number of responses: 106
Number of unique respondents: 106

1) Lab Name

Left unanswered by 0% of respondents

2) CAEAL Membership number

Left unanswered by 0.9% of respondents

3) Contact name

Left unanswered by 0.9% of respondents

4) Phone number

Left unanswered by 0.9% of respondents

5) PT Sample preparation is appropriate (e.g. sample concentrations, matrices, preservatives used, etc.)

Strongly Disagree	7.5%
Disagree	0.8%
Neutral	8.5%
Agree	39.6%
Strongly Agree	21.7%

Left unanswered by 1.9% of respondents

6) PT Sample containers are appropriate(e.g. sample volumes, bottles used, etc.)

Strongly Disagree	1.9%
Disagree	10.4%
Neutral	6.6%
Agree	46.2%
Strongly Agree	33%

Left unanswered by 1.9% of respondents

7) Labs are given sufficient notice of shipments

Neutral 0.9%
Agree 37.7%
Strongly Agree 56.6%
Left unanswered by 4.7% of respondents

8) Time allowed to make changes to PT registration is adequate (2 weeks prior to ship date)

Disagree 0.9%
Neutral 8.5%
Agree 46.2%
Strongly Agree 41.5%
Left unanswered by 2.8% of respondents

9) Shipments are generally on time (i.e. overnight or next day, in Canada)

Disagree 2.8%
Neutral 10.4%
Agree 45.3%
Strongly Agree 39.6%
Left unanswered by 1.9% of respondents

10) PT Samples are not compromised during transit (e.g. are not broken, leaking, frozen, etc.)

Strongly Disagree 0.9%
Disagree 2.8%
Neutral 9.4%
Agree 40.6%
Strongly Agree 44.3%
Left unanswered by 1.9% of respondents

11) Shipping problems are resolved promptly

Strongly Disagree 0.9%
Neutral 32.1%
Agree 28.3%
Strongly Agree 35.8%
Left unanswered by 2.8% of respondents

12) Instruction sheets that accompany the samples are clear and complete

Disagree 10.4%
Neutral 5.7%
Agree 46.2%
Strongly Agree 34%
Left unanswered by 3.8% of respondents

13) Due dates for submitting results are reasonable

Disagree 0.9%
Agree 47.2%
Strongly Agree 48.1%
Left unanswered by 3.8% of respondents

14) PT Reports are clear and easy to understand

Strongly Disagree 3.8%
Disagree 1.9%
Neutral 8.5%
Agree 57.5%
Strongly Agree 24.5%
Left unanswered by 3.8% of respondents

15) PT Reports are free from error

Strongly Disagree 2.8%
Disagree 5.7%
Neutral 11.3%
Agree 47.2%
Strongly Agree 31.1%
Left unanswered by 1.9% of respondents

16) Report turnaround time is reasonable (2-3 weeks following due date)

Disagree 2.8%
Neutral 4.7%
Agree 53.8%
Strongly Agree 35.8%
Left unanswered by 2.8% of respondents

17) PT Policies are reasonable and equitable to all labs

Strongly Disagree 4.7%
Disagree 13.2%
Neutral 16%
Agree 41.5%
Strongly Agree 21.7%
Left unanswered by 2.8% of respondents

18) Labs are given sufficient notice of PT Program or Policy changes

Disagree 2.8%
Neutral 7.5%
Agree 55.7%
Strongly Agree 30.2%
Left unanswered by 3.8% of respondents

19) Appeals and complaints are addressed in a timely fashion

Strongly Disagree 0.9%
Disagree 4.7%
Neutral 29.2%
Agree 38.7%
Strongly Agree 22.6%
Left unanswered by 3.8% of respondents

20) Content of Corrective Action Report (CAR) form is useful to lab

Strongly Disagree 2.8%
Disagree 7.5%
Neutral 30.2%
Agree 34%
Strongly Agree 22.6%
Left unanswered by 2.8% of respondents

21) Due dates for submitting CAR forms are reasonable (30 days)

Disagree 2.8%
Neutral 23.6%
Agree 35.8%
Strongly Agree 34%
Left unanswered by 3.8% of respondents

22) PT Sample fees are reasonable

Strongly Disagree 6.6%
Disagree 21.7%
Neutral 18.9%
Agree 44.3%
Strongly Agree 6.6%
Left unanswered by 1.9% of respondents

23) Suspension/withdrawal fees are reasonable (\$150.00 per notice letter)

Strongly Disagree 9.4%
Disagree 32.1%
Neutral 26.4%
Agree 25.5%
Strongly Agree 2.8%
Left unanswered by 3.8% of respondents

24) Invoicing is free from error

Strongly Disagree 2.8%
Disagree 7.5%
Neutral 22.6%
Agree 42.5%
Strongly Agree 22.6%
Left unanswered by 1.9% of respondents