

AGRICULTURAL CHIEF MICROBIOLOGIST

This is administrative, supervisory and advanced technical work in directing the food, feed, pesticide, cosmetic and drug laboratory in the Department of Agriculture.

Under primarily administrative and limited technical supervision of the State Chemist, employee plans, directs and organizes the evaluation of food, feed and pesticides that are produced, processed or marketed in the state to ensure that they are microbiologically safe and are of the quality claimed by the producers. Employee applies an advanced level of the theory and concepts of microbiology to review and evaluate the most complex and controversial cases; to serve as a technical resource for the agency to establish microbiological criteria for determining the wholesomeness and safety of products; and to participate as a representative of program management in providing review, comments and recommendations in the development of regulatory guidelines in the area of microbiology. Employee is the primary agency resource in researching and evaluating the trends and developments in the field of food, feed and pesticide microbiology and determines the laboratory procedures and biological parameters which will most efficiently and effectively meet the goals and objectives of established or proposed regulations. Employee also determines the number and type of survey samples to be collected for analysis. Work may also include reviewing documentation of industry or private laboratory procedures or observes procedures by conducting on-site reviews of critical control points in food processing facilities.

I. SUPERVISORY AND MANAGERIAL FUNCTIONS:

Planning - Employee delegates daily and weekly work schedules and short term priorities and is responsible for establishing long-term plans and objectives. Although some laboratory procedures are well established, employee may delete or introduce new procedures to the laboratory. Employee must consider trends in new laboratory technologies, food-borne outbreaks and complaints, new processing techniques and packaging introduced onto the market, and changes in federal and state regulations in order to anticipate workload and laboratory demands. In conjunction with the compliance programs served, employee determines the number of samples and sample types reviewed seasonally and annually.

Organizing and Directing - Employee delegates laboratory functions and directly assigns work to subordinates of a nonrecurring nature. In the event of food-borne outbreaks, large volume of complaints or other emergencies, employee may be required to reassign or redistribute work or make short or long-term staffing changes to meet program objectives. Employee establishes the priorities of work conducted in the laboratory, establishes the operating procedures by which work is conducted, determines what procedural tests to run on complaints and emergencies, and determines what procedures will be introduced, adopted and deleted from the laboratory.

Budgeting - Employee does not have a separate operating budget, but has responsibility for recommending manpower and equipment needs which may include determining allocations and needs for federal monies.

Training - The majority of on-the-job training is delegated to subordinate lead microbiologists, however, the employee may train staff or compliance staff on new procedures or techniques introduced. Employee determines when staff are rotated among the programs for cross-training purposes and also recommends refresher courses and seminars for staff.

Setting Work Standards - Employee develops laboratory standards governing the quality and quantity of work performed, documentation and record keeping requirements and laboratory safety protocols. Employee also develops microbiological parameters by which regulatory and enforcement actions are taken. Standards developed are primarily delegated to the lead microbiologists for implementation.

Counseling and Disciplining - Employee is responsible for reviewing and resolving informal complaints and grievances and would participate in any formal actions. Employee has the authority to issue oral and written warnings before discussing matters with the supervisor.

Performing Other Personnel Functions - Employee is responsible for screening, interviewing, and making the final technical qualification decisions on all applicants in the laboratory. Employee approves leave and conducts performance appraisals of subordinates directly supervised.

II. SCOPE AND NATURE OF WORK SUPERVISED:

Dynamics of Work Supervised - The work environment can be fairly dynamic and can include changes brought about by emergencies or food-borne outbreaks, high volume of samples received, new regulations or products that impact regulatory compliance standards and new procedures introduced in the laboratory.

Variety of Work Supervised - Position supervises basically one professional discipline that includes three major work fields in microbiology (food, feed, pesticides with some work also in cosmetics and drugs in the event of complaints).

Number of Employees Responsible For - Employee supervises approximately 8 professional and 4 technical positions.

III. EXTENT OF SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Employee receives no technical supervision and general administrative supervision. Work is evaluated by the overall performance of the laboratory.

IV. SPECIAL ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Supervision of Shift Operations - Work supervised is primarily one shift with rotating weekend duty required of the staff to complete laboratory procedures.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Thorough knowledge of microbiology and microbiol ecology, physiology, metabolism, immunology and serology as related to the areas of work. Thorough knowledge of standard and advanced microbiological evaluation techniques and procedures. Thorough knowledge of contemporary laboratory automation and equipment. Thorough knowledge of epidemiological principles during food-borne investigations. Considerable knowledge of the state laws and regulations pertinent to the regulatory microbiological work being performed. Ability to plan, organize and direct a comprehensive program of microbiological evaluation of consumer commodities. Ability to interpret and evaluate laboratory findings and to make valid recommendations concerning needed regulatory activities.

Minimum Training and Experience - Bachelor's degree in microbiology, food science or a related curriculum from an appropriately accredited institution supplemented by one year of graduate study and three years of progressive laboratory experience; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Special Note - This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions in this class, but may not be applicable to all positions.