
**Microbiology of food and animal feeding
stuffs — Horizontal methods for sampling
techniques from surfaces using contact
plates and swabs**

*Microbiologie des aliments — Méthodes horizontales pour les
techniques de prélèvement sur des surfaces, au moyen de boîtes de
contact et d'écouvillons*



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Foreword

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Introduction

It can be important to determine the presence of, or the number of, viable microbes on the surfaces of utensils, work surfaces and other equipment in contact with food to estimate the level of contamination during production, or the effectiveness of cleaning and disinfecting protocols.

The horizontal methods described in this International Standard include a surface contact method using contact plates and a swab method. The contact plate method is only applicable to flat surfaces, whereas the swab method can be used for all types of surfaces. For the sampling of large surfaces ($> 100 \text{ cm}^2$), sterile cloths or sponges can be used. This alternative method is useful for the estimation of the microbial load of surfaces. Results are often presented as hygiene scores based on the number of colony-forming units (CFU) per square centimetre present on a test surface.