

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO MICROBIOLOGY EQA

Effective October 2008

From the new cycle, we are switching to the use of commercial material called the KWIK-STIK. The KWIK-STIK includes a lyophilized microorganism pellet and reservoir of hydrating fluid. This is the most convenient and easy-to-use option, and has many advantages, such as increased stability, more controlled reconstitution, an increased range of organism available, traceability to standard cultures, and more guaranteed and consistent quality.

There has been no choice but to move to this new system as we are unable to continue the quality production of our previous "home-grown" products for a variety of technical reasons.

There will be one option only:

1. In future the Microbiology EQA will consist of a pack of six (6) organisms. This will be the new Full pack and will replace all other options (previously called full and half packs). The cost will be R2,625 for 6 samples over a period of 6 months (1 sample per month). For non SA labs the cost will be R3,125.

Any price increase is regretted, but there is no option in this case, as the "old" means of production is no longer an option. We hope that the many advantages will offset the increase.

Please note that we will continue to score the organisms as we do currently, and that the CPD notes will continue.

Also, we will issue a questionnaire soon to establish if there is a need for an "Extended Microbiology EQA" to satisfy the wider testing protocols of central or regional laboratories. This questionnaire will list the organisms we are planning to use for the Microbiology EQA and ask what others your laboratory might wish to see on an EQA programme.

We hope to see you all registered on the new cycle and trust that you will all be please with the new system from October 2008.

With best regards,

Dr Jim McCulloch
August 2008