

Conference Call Summary and Recommendation

1. Labs were behind a blind sample program
2. Communications were not as good as they could have been.
3. Results should not be published

These three comments were stated quite frequently in the conference call on September 4th. There were a couple of other good suggestions made.

1. Develop an SOP for the blind sample program.
2. Have regularly scheduled conference calls with the labs.

I recommend the following:

1. I will appoint a committee to establish an SOP for the blind sample program. This SOP will include but not be limited to the following:
 - A. Sample prep
 - B. Communication
 - C. Statistics
 - D. How results should be handled.

This committee should have a report for the board of directors of NFTA by the time we have our annual meeting in 2009.

National Forage Testing Association

Laboratory Feedback Session

September 4, 2008

1:00 p.m. CT, Teleconference

TRANSCRIPT

Don Meyer—Labs, President	Yes
John Andrae—AFGC	No
Bob Bishop—NHA	No
Kevin Grooms—Labs	Yes
Marvin Hall—AFGC	No
Dennis Hogan—Labs	No
Nick Huntsman—NHA	No
Tom Keene—NHA	No
Aron Quist—Labs	No
Harold Thiessen—Labs	Yes
Dan Undersander—AFGC	Yes
Todd Whatley—Labs	Yes
Brian Shreve—Data Manager	No
Dee Fogarty—Secretary	Yes

Laboratories Scheduled:

Jerome King, Midwest Laboratories	1
Dave Taysom, Dairyland	2
Marcus Meilhan, Weld Laboratories	3
Lisa Bauman, Univ WI	4
Eric Hurst, Soiltest Farm Consultants	5
Pamela Hole, USU Analytical	6
Kelly Houston, Custom Dairy	7
Ralph Ward/Sharon Weaver, Cumberland Valley	8
Doug Harland, AgSource Forage	9
Laurie Lancaster, CRI Northwest	10
Crystal Maiden, Ag Health Lab	11

Nonscheduled Comments

Nancy Thiex, SDSU	A
Frank _____, Soiltest	B
Lois Parker, A&L Great Lakes	C

Don Meyer

Since we do have quite a number of people that do want to speak today, I do want to get going with the comments very quickly here. A couple of things. I set this out in the email, first that each lab will be given

10 minutes for comments and I have a lab timer here and we're going to strictly enforce that. What we don't want to do to necessarily take time away from the labs, is try to answer all the questions that the labs have, but the Board of Directors of NFTA will record the questions and we will come back with answers to those questions after our next board meeting. Hopefully, everyone is here that is listed to speak. We've had a little bit of change in the order because some people have dropped out. The order will be [as above]. One of the things that is important here is that the Board of Directors of NFTA has gone ahead with blind sample studies for a couple of reasons. The first is to evaluate the entire sample handling process of the labs, grinding methodology, wet chemistry and NIR results and pretty much to try and cover all the processes of the lab. The second was to increase credibility of forage testing with the public. So those are a couple of things to keep in mind. Now, Jerry, we're going to start with you and one of the things that you should know is that your letter has been forwarded to all of the people on the Board of Directors. I don't know if you want to go through your letter or not, but we're going to start out with you.

Lab 1

In the essence of time and since my letter has already been forwarded, basically there is a couple of points highlighted that I want to mention. First of all, I speak for the entire laboratory, I think if the intent of the program is to make forage testing better and more reliable and accurate, I'm 100% for that. I have no problem with trying to better the industry, and I have no problem with a blind check program. The biggest concern and I've indicated in my letter, is some of the people and maybe some of the users that this information, is now using it as well, this lab is a failure, this lab ached the program. I think for the betterment of all the laboratories, we need to find some way of looking at the process, looking at what's involved in sample preparation, sample distribution, and then communication. One of the concerns I had as indicated in my letter, is that it was my understanding that we were contacted, laboratories were contacted that we have had outliers on our testing and that we were to have an opportunity to reply to that. We have no recollection of getting

anything like that. So that's kind of a bad part. Because communication, obviously, if there's going to be a program and to better the program, there has to be some form of communication there and a way of sharing what we have as far as ideas and innovation. The one comment in one of the letters I got was that the laboratory that has failed basically were not willing to use modern technology, and without, the average public reads that and says, okay this laboratory is a bum laboratory. Even my brothers, I have family members who are farmers, and they said, your lab sucks. Those are the exact words. Because we read in a publication that you failed the program. I don't think that's really the intent for it, but that is some of the words that have gotten out there. In order for us to make the program work, I want to work with NFTA, work with other laboratories and make forage testing better. That's my bottom line.

Don Meyer

Excellent. Anyone on the board, since you've read his letter, have any questions or anything else that they would like to find out?

Dan Undersander

I guess the only thing I'd ask you is what specifically you have in mind in the way of how things are promulgated?

Lab 1

I wish you hadn't asked that question because I do not have an answer for that. I guess the, I know with the NFTA program, the sample program does have a variety of protocols. Okay this laboratory follows this, this laboratory follows this, etc. So there is some _____ with different policies and different procedures that are carried out with the laboratories, but maybe, I would guess that this would be the place to start is to say, let's say we were an outlying laboratory. To go to our procedures and have somebody either work with us or be kind of an arbitrator. Obviously when you start dealing with competing laboratories, there is some proprietary information that is necessary there, too, just like everybody else. How to get past that and work for the betterment of the laboratories. I think communication and looking at step by step by step, what are the protocols involved with how we prepare samples, how we grind samples, how we dry samples, how much sample we use. And basically all this to try

and identify, okay we're different than everybody else, what are we doing different than everybody else. As indicated in my letter, sometimes different is not wrong. Sometimes there's a protocol that maybe is followed by one laboratory and followed by another different laboratory may be completely different results or somewhat different results, now it is not because the results are inaccurate, it's just for that sample that was the analysis that was obtained. So something to go through and look at step by step by step, okay if we are different, does our variation make that much of a difference. That is a big concern. Does that answer your question?

Dan Undersander

Yeah, it's a start.

Lab 1

Okay, I appreciate that.

Don Meyer

Actually, we do appreciate that you did put a lot of your comments down in the letter because it does give us an opportunity to go over that a little bit more in depth as we review what we are going to be doing in the future. I do appreciate that and do you have any other comments you'd like to go with?

Lab 1

As of right now, no, I think the letter will speak for itself and a lot of what I'd like to do today is listen and to find out, get a global picture of what's going on here.

Don Meyer

Okay. Excellent. Again, thank you for your time. We appreciate it.

Lab 12

You're welcome. Thank you for making the industry better, because that is my concern also. I want to make the industry better.

Don Meyer

Okay, Dave, you are next on the list.

Lab 2

Thank you very much. My first request would be, I know that you asked us to keep our comments focused toward the blind sample portion of the program. I would also ask the board if they would entertain another of these meetings at some point just for the labs to give input as a whole of the general makeup and scope of NFTA and the direction it has gone the last two or three years. So, I'll throw that out

there with the hopes that it will receive some consideration. Regarding the blind sample program, I guess my reservations are: (1) the need or the desire or the fact that it was made public throughout the press. I guess I question that. From my understanding from feedback from board members previously when this whole study was initiated, it was to gather data to comprehend how much variation did exist, and to outline a program to be able to move forward. To publicize that throughout the Midwest in the hay industry, did not help improve NFTA's credibility. I have three specific consultants that called me up and said who in heck is NFTA kidding that they gave these labs a good report. If you ever tried to balance a ration off that lab's reports, they would fail miserably. So, if NFTA thought they were accomplishing something by doing that, I can tell you direct feedback from our groups that it had the reverse effect. I'm in favor of a blind sample program. It's used in other areas, however, the blind samples are never made public. There isn't a certification program out there, from the Department of Revenue, the Department of Ag, Minnesota Certification, anybody, that makes blind samples, or even other analyses public. And I would question NFTA's desire to do that if that is my understanding of that. I guess that's my biggest question. Why the results were publicized and what they hoped to gain from that, would be the biggest question. I'm supportive of a blind sample program as long as the data is handled confidentially. I think that will help labs move forward as well as NFTA to be able to move forward. Those are the main questions are I have so far.

Don Meyer

Okay. Anybody on the board have any questions for Dave. Do you have anything else at all, Dave, that you want to share.

Lab 2

I guess if, I wasn't prepared to go on so early.

Don Meyer

Just having an open conference call for input from labs doesn't sound like a bad idea. I will schedule that on our next Board of Directors meeting and see if we can go ahead with something like that. Having input from the membership is never a bad thing.

Lab 2

It all goes back to I only know half the information, so then you make conclusions based on half but I don't like doing that. IN the event that if NFTA decided to go ahead with the blind sample program and make it public, I would challenge them to understand the consequences and that things like chain of custody report. I mean, if you're gong to send samples that have been scanned on an NIR to ensure the homogeneity and then you're going to send it out to a hay producer either in California or Nebraska, and then they're going to send it to a lab, what do you have in place to provide the chain of custody and that nothing happened to those samples in the process. Because if you're going to make it public, there will be consequences by making that information public and from labs that don't do a good job on that, or if labs do a good job. It's not a threat. It's not a you gotta do this or that. I just think you need to think through how you're going to do it, how you're going maintain the integrity of that sample going to the lab. The final note, I know a lot of people have taken a lot of heat over this blind sample program. I'm not here to bash it, I just hope we all move forward and learn. There are some good things that came out of this and continue to work for improving the forage testing of the industry.

Don Meyer

Excellent. Okay. Thank you, I appreciate your comments. By the way, one of the things I should mention to everyone at this point, I believe that the transcript of this conference call, or a recording of it would be available at some point. If anybody is interested in getting that at any time, drop an email to Dee (nfta@cox.net) and we'll see what we can do about getting that. Again, thanks a lot Dave. Moving on, Marcus Meilhan.

Lab 3

I'd like to call your attention to there has been another blind sample by the University of Nebraska. The results have been published in the common domain. I've analyzed the data. I've sent my analysis to Dan Undersander based on ADF, NDF. You want a copy of my analysis I'd be happy to get it to you. There were 26 NFTA certified labs subjected to two independent studies using blind analysis techniques. Of those, four labs in both studies rated as good or excellent; 12

labs were rated in one study as good and six labs were rated as poor and in the fibers they missed the fibers typically from 4 to 9 points. This constitutes a minimum of 27% lab failure or poor rating as far as I can determine. What bothered me is that each of these labs _____ correct results on the NFTA standards but when blind samples come in the results are all over the map. It makes no sense. If you can do NFTA check samples you can do blind samples. So there has been discussion that some people may be sending their NFTA check samples to other labs for results, or, alternative methods for getting the correct answer. Both are not condoned by the NFTA or allowed. The proposed problem causes a great deal of comments for the concerns. It looks like we're adding another performance level. Are we still going to have the NFTA certification as it exists? Do we report the correct answers by whatever means your lab gets certified? Or, once you've achieved NFTA certification then you can purchase blind samples and if you get the correct answer NFTA will publish the results of the blind studies? We've been doing NFTA studies for 20 years, doing another one another two or three years, I think we'll still get the correct answers, do we need to continue doing that? The message that I'd like to bring across is for NFTA to regain its credibility, NFTA must ensure that every commercial lab achieving certification reports accurate results for NFTA check samples as well as NFTA blind samples. Anything else is not acceptable as far as I'm concerned. The University of Wisconsin study did an excellent job on several small issues and we have received thousands of cored alfalfa samples, hundreds of grass samples and three funny samples. The funny samples were the blind study samples. I unpacked the box, I knew immediately that this was not typical samples. It doesn't matter, we did them the way we always do them. But, if you're going to send out samples like this in one or two iterations, everybody's going to know, "blind check sample." The only way this is going to work is by submitting cored samples to the laboratories. The University of Nebraska did it. There are some problems, but it worked out reasonably well. I'm comfortable with my analysis of their results. Moisture is a problem that I'm concerned how you are going to handle. Moisture results in both studies are

all over the map. I can understand how people get low values. I have no idea how people can get high values unless there is high moisture in the samples. You're talking about 120 labs, they all do NFTA check samples. The University of Nebraska used 15 different samples. You don't have to send out the same sample to all 120 laboratories. You can evaluate 10 labs and if you have 27% not passing, 63% are getting good results as it stands now, that scales up. So you are looking for labs that for whatever reasons, don't get the results on blind samples and one or two iterations, they're going to be identified. They can be helped. They can do whatever they want to do so they get results. Then I don't have to deal with customers who say, well, I sent it to this lab, I got this, I sent it to this lab I got this. Where is the truth? I think what we want to do is have the truth. But if we're going to have NFTA certification like it is now, I don't want any part of it because there are lots of lab which get different results than I get and I'm telling my customer that, if it's an NFTA certified you get the right answer. Well, that's no longer true. So I think I vented for long enough.

Don Meyer

Anybody on the board have any questions for Marcus? Again, Marcus, I believe at one point you did send the letter with your analysis of the data also and we appreciated that. We discussed that at the board meeting.

Lab 3

Yep. I sent that because the report I got didn't make any sense and once I started I couldn't stop. It was easier to do the Nebraska study. But I would recommend that you look at the moisture data. I looked at the first table and there's four more labs in there that would not meet certification or blind study samples on there right now, plus the four, which missed the fibers. So suddenly you're looking at half of the blind samples would not pass if that's the way they went. But I think you really need to look at that. There's a real issue with moisture. And I think sending out an analysis, one of the three Wisconsin studies, with all the data and not identifying all the labs to everybody would go a long way in helping people understand the issues that we're dealing with. I got to get back to work, you guys have a good day.

Don Meyer

Okay. Again, thank you very. Move on to Lisa.

Lab 4

Good afternoon. We were not involved in the blind study the first time around but Don and I were discussing it and the reason I'm here today is just kind of listen to everybody's comments and see if it is something that we want to get involved with, the letter that you sent out, samples for \$250. We just wanted to hear the comments and what everybody else had to say about the program. So I guess I'll yield the floor to the next person. I don't really have any comments at this time.

Don Meyer

Okay, thank you, Lisa. Eric.

No. 5

I have a few questions here. The first one is, I'd like to be able to see specific methods, standard operating procedure written out that we can look at for this blind study program. How things are calculated, what is used where, from the machine the unground sample is scanned on. Something that clearly defines every step. We have no problem with blind studies. We do them in soils and other things all the time. One question I have, what was the reasoning for publishing the names of the failing labs when the NFTA does not do that for the regular certification program. As Jerry mentioned earlier, it has obviously hurt his business. He has family members; they have no reason to lie; he received a failing grade. I have an issue with that and the fact that at the beginning of the year when all of us signed up, we knew that we would be receiving six samples a year and that the names of the passing labs would be published on the website, we sign our name to it, send our money. That's what we gave permission for. We did not give permission for anything else. Now a blind study, in a board meeting last winter, I think an announcement should have gone out to everyone rather than relying on people to read the minutes of a board meeting. _____ communication. There was an assumption that the labs would receive the letter. We did not receive the letter. Jerry did not receive the letter. We have no way to prove otherwise. You guys had no way to prove that we did. I don't understand how anyone could believe that labs receiving a letter saying that they failed and their name would be

published, would not be on that phone the instant they read the letter. Our business, our income, is based on a good name. And if I sent something out like that and not received a timely response, say within two weeks, I sure would be emailing or making phone calls to make sure they had received it. I do think it should have been sent out certified mail to begin with. I think lack of initial communication, lack of follow-up communication is a big issue. Yu say the purpose is to educate, train and improve the industry, but not to punish and yet that is exactly what happened. So I would like to have that clearly addressed.

Don Meyer

Okay, anybody from the board have any comments or questions for Eric. Any other comments Eric?

No. 5

We do support the idea of the blind sample study program. I want to make that clear, okay. Just want to make sure it is done correctly and set standards out there.

Don Meyer

Okay. We appreciate your comments and your time. We will be, like I said, sending out information after our next board meeting about what the program will look like with that. Appreciate your comments. Next up we have Pamela.

No. 6

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this program. I am new to forage testing. I am not new to research in many different fields over the course of 25 years. I have been part of AAOAC off and on over the 25 years and I am supportive of blind samples as well as laboratory check samples. I also want to take a brief moment to say I also support an open conference call on the general NFTA program. Back to the forage samples, the first thing that strikes me is we've got a much more complex matrix of sample coming into the blind samples and it would be interesting to know if that more complex matrix was taken into account when variation was considered or if we were held to a much tighter variation as in the normal check samples. My understanding is that we pay to be part of the blind check sample program. This is a significant cost in addition the cost of being part of the NFTA program, and for having that turned around and used against us in a publication of something that

should have been left confidential, seems to me to be highly unethical and potentially some vendetta against specific labs. As a commercial lab we are heavily reliant upon good reputation. We work hard to maintain them and it is incredibly easy to lose it with one publication that we had a poor result. I'm not saying that our lab got the poor result, as far as I understand. If we were part of it, I only took over in December of this last year so I did not receive any communication that we did participate, but I understand that we are listed as having had a good result, but it would be so easy to lose a reputation to get a poor and then have it published. If want to publish the percentages in general, that is acceptable. However, I truly believe to publish individual laboratory names was unethical. That is all the comments I have at this time.

Don Meyer

Anyone on the board have a question for Pamela?

Dan Undersander

Could you expand a little bit on your comment about whether or not the more complex matrix was taken into account? What specifically do you mean by that?

Lab 6

From what I understand of the letter, and like I said I do not have any recollection of having received a blind sample in our laboratory, but it was to mimic a cored sample and the check samples we get have been presumably well blended and completely ground. It seems to me that just the sheer fact of cutting them and not blending them, would potentially lead to larger variation. When you have a very fine sample, the finer the sample, the more blended it is, the more precise your sample results should be. However, when you've got larger particle size it is much more difficult to adequately blend them and so you may have built in biases that would be reflected in a larger variation.

Dan Undersander

I might just comment that's why we scanned the samples by NIR unground, in triplicate, before they were sent out so that we could quantify the specific kind of sample being sent to each laboratory.

Don Meyer

Okay, thank you very much, Pamela, appreciate your time. Next, we have Kelly Houston.

Lab 7

I only have just one issue. I'm thinking it would be more appropriate not to make this optional and I don't know if we can lower the price or if everybody does it or whatever, but it needs to be a mandatory thing and basically you're checking your sample prep. In regard to that, I would like to suggest that for the first year it would be mandatory and that the results would be used to work with labs that are outliers on that, and report, maybe not specifically to each lab, but to report problems and what problems they had that related to their varying results so we could all learn from it. I have a couple of Wiley mills and there are things that go wrong with that, the screening size. One mm screen diameter, after 3, 4, 5 years, it turns out to be 1.5 mm screening size. So I think just to be able to, have a grace period to get everybody up to speed and if we do that for qualifying or standardization, then that would be fine after a year. That's the only comment I have. Thanks for the time.

Don Meyer

Okay. Thank you, appreciate that. Anybody on the board have a question for Kelly. Ralph.

Lab 8

Having been on the board a number of years, I would grant the frustrations that the board dealt with in inconsistency in certifying labs _____ results is not a new issue and certainly not an issue that improved significantly despite efforts to make progress. I also grant the fact that it has been frustration. The blind study I think has been an effort by the board to get their arms around this issue and try to move things forward. My biggest frustration with the blind sample study is the fact that it was published. Our initially discussions were that this would be used for internal purposes, that this was to be used to determine a course of action as to how blind sample studies might be incorporated into the program. I think release the information to the public was premature. I would be in favor of a blind sample program as part of NFTA, but I would also advocate that it be a confidential report, internally published program. I think if it were publicly published, it might not _____ much support from member labs _____. I applaud the effort at making this happen. I know I have been somewhat critical, but I have stepped back and looked at the overall process. So I do see the need

for the change and for the industry to move forward, and I do appreciate the efforts and challenges the participants had to deal with. Thank you.

Don Meyer

Anybody have a question for Ralph. Thank you again Ralph, for your time and your comments. We appreciate it. Next we have Doug.

Lab 9

I'm sitting in for Steve who is not able to be here today but I have a few comments that he has given to me on behalf of the lab. I think the general thing is in our discussion, we are not against the blind sample study, but at looking at what he has directed with me, is that looking at the program as it is proposed under the current description of that program, with the names being published, that we would not participate. Again, noting a lot of the concerns of many of the other labs that when you are publishing the names, you can be looking at some reputations involved, a lot of different issues. We agree with the viability of the blind sample study, but under the guise that you are using it to help the labs get better. If it is something they can do internally or something to help them get better, that is obviously a viable program. But under the guise that the names, we would participate under the guise that the names would be without publication. I believe those have been the sentiments of many others. Without repeating what others have said, I would agree with that and I would leave it open to the next speaker.

Don Meyer

Any questions for Doug. Anything else Doug?

Lab 9

Not right off, just looking through some of the things here, the main thing is that the study should be for the use of labs to assess their internal controls and monitoring processes.

Don Meyer

Okay, again, thank you very much for your time, Doug, and your comments. We appreciate it. Next we have Laurie.

Lab 10

I just had a few points I would like to bring up. Most of them have been discussed by previous speakers but I would also like to reiterate that we support NFTA's efforts to make hay testing better and we also support

the blind sample study if it is conducted properly. An issue we had on this last one was lack of proper communication. This had been brought up by previous speakers as far as with letters not being received, not being received in a timely manner, and also when a specific response was not specifically asked for and it was never indicated that the names would be published. Another point I had is, in a blind sample study you need to make sure it is a program to help make labs better and not be a punishment for labs. The blind sample results should not be made public because currently they are being used to punish labs and give other labs a competitive advantage. There is also some confusion with having your NFTA ratings and then you also come out with your blind sample study results. We have received quite a few comments from customer concerning this. So, as far as any other comments, pretty much the same as what has been reiterated before. We have no problem with the blind sample study as long as the communication is there and the results would not be made public.

Don Meyer

Thank you. Anybody on the board with questions for Laurie. Okay, anything else Laurie? Thank you and your comments, we appreciate it. Crystal.

Lab 11

No response

Don Meyer

Is there anyone present that has not had an opportunity to comment?

Lab A

I would just like to make three quick comments and most of it is just repeating what I've heard. One is we did not or have no recollection of any communication from NFTA about opportunity to ask questions. We did not receive the letter of today's participants if they had letters. We have not received the Nebraska study. So, I'm not sure if we are supposed to have received all that but we have not or don't believe we have. Two, any protocol for this process should be very well established as someone said. There should be standard operating procedures. They should be reviewed by the membership rather than a perceived haphazard sort of protocol. And, three, the project should definitely be for the improvement, figure out

where problems are and not for public dissemination. And, again, in our lab we participate in probably 15 different proficiency testing programs and the blind study concept is excellent, excellent, and it should be mandatory. But it needs to be a procedure that all the participants are very confident in and where there is unanimous support, or nearly unanimous support for it. Just basically, nothing new.

Don Meyer

I'm going to answer your first question though, on the letters and things like that. A number of letters that we talked about here were letters that laboratories wrote to the Board of Directors and those letters that they wrote to the Board of Directors were only given to the board. Some of the other letters that were talked about were letters written after the blind study report went out, a letter was sent to the labs notifying them how they did. So that's the other one. The Nebraska study, NFTA does not have anything to do with that, but if you were a part of the NFTA study, you would have been contacted for sure by us.

Lab A

Okay, we did get a letter saying we were included in the study with our results but we did not get a letter, or I don't recollect one, saying that if we had questions about it. Or that please contact us if you have questions prior to the distribution of that letter. And that's what I understood, that we were supposed to have had a letter asking us if we had questions in between the public letter and the receipt of the samples. It's just a communication thing and I think it's part of this, if you get these SOPs and protocols documented and in place, that a lot of that is going to be more transparent, I guess.

Don Meyer

Yes, because some of that can be written into an SOP. Anybody from the board have some questions for Nancy? Anything else Nancy?

Lab A

No, thanks, and I think the conference call is just an excellent idea and I really support those people who have suggested that future conference calls occur on other aspects of NFTA. Definitely is a very excellent idea.

Don Meyer

Okay. Thank you very much for your time. We appreciate it. Was there anyone else that had any other comments?

Lab B

I would just like to let the board know, you might already know this, there are already models out there for blind testing samples and how they're done. I would urge that you look at those protocols. Granted, forages are different than some of the other blind samples out there, but this doesn't have to be made from scratch, there's already models out there that can be followed.

Don Meyer

Excellent. I appreciate that. Any other comments?

Lab C

We were a participant and I have not signed up to talk but I just wanted to make one comment. I had written an email stating concern about the fact that wet chemistry laboratories and NIR laboratories were being compared to one another. When I went down the April 10, 2008 letter which listed the participating laboratory and their grade category and went to the NFTA website and tried to figure out whether they were wet chemistry laboratory or doing analysis by NIR, what I came up with was that those laboratories receiving the excellent rating, three of them were NIR specifically under the NFTA testing program, four of them tested both ways, and I'll assume as a routine that they would be doing NIR analysis. I'm not sure of that but I would assume that's what is going on. Of the good labs, one was an NIR, two did it both ways and two were chemistry. And of the four labs, two were chemistry and two did it both ways. And once again, I don't know how the laboratories that are doing the NFTA analyses on both methods, how there are doing their routine samples that come through the laboratory. As part of the NFTA study though, the wet chemistry laboratories are compared to one another and the NIR laboratories are compared to one another, and I'm always concerned in a blind study that we're now throwing everybody together and if you don't have the NIR with the right equation, the wet chemistry laboratories are facing an uphill battle just trying to match the other laboratories that aren't having to do an actual analysis or multiple analyses if they're doing an NIR scan with some kind of canned equation.

Don Meyer

Okay. Anyone with a question for Lois?

Mike Wolf

One comment I would like to make, there was one thing that Lois said which was not quite on par. The evaluation of the check sample program, the NIR results being compared against NIR and wet chem versus wet chem is not correct. The way the program is set up, the questionnaire that you fill in determines which labs are actually running the reference method, and the average, the RMA, the reference method average, is what everybody is compared to. So everyone is compared to the same standard. I just want to make sure that was understood.

Lab C

Thank you, I did not understand that.

Dan Undersander

And that's a good point. Whether it's NIR or wet chemistry, the comparison is to the wet chemistry of the reference labs, or of the labs running reference methods only. And that should be stated on your report, I think, or at least we put out some summaries periodically. That is why you'll see like 15 labs are reference method for nitrogen, 15 or 20 are reference for NDF, and it's just whoever reports that they are running procedures that match the reference methods are those who are averaged, and against which everyone else is compared.

Don Meyer

Thank you Mike, I appreciate you doing that.

Lab 2

I do have one more question for the board though. I want to stray a little bit. Are there still positions open on the board for laboratory representatives?

Don Meyer

No, they are all full. A couple of people added and they are not on the website yet.

Lab 2

Just wanted to make sure labs had equal representation on the board.

Don Meyer

Any other questions. If not, thank you all for your time, I really appreciate it and the NFTA board will be meeting, we were going to meet on Monday but we are going to take a little bit of time and summarize the information we got today and discuss it at a board

meeting, a week from Monday (September 15), and then we will be putting out some information back to the full membership as to how we're going to go ahead with this and answer some of the questions that were asked today and just move forward. But, again, thank you very much for your time and effort, and your comments.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Dee Fogarty, Secretary