

# Things to Consider When Choosing a Laboratory

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# South Valley's Experience

- Local yogurt manufacturer discharging low pH process water.
- General Manager
- Facility Attorney
- State DEQ
- EPA CID
- Possibility of Going to Court

# Questions Asked

- Employee training
- Equipment calibration
- SOPs
- Documentation
- Quality Control
- Employee Ethics
- Current number of violations
- History
- Notification
- Possibility of willful or negligent discharge

# Result of the Review

- More Testing
  - Documentation of field calibration equipment
  - Duplicate samples
  - Bringing back a sample to facility lab within holding time.
  - Analysis by a certified lab
    - employee training, equipment calibration, written SOPs, and proper quality control

# Choosing a Laboratory

- Experienced management
- Properly trained employees
- Approved methods
- Written SOPs
- Equipment functioning & maintained Properly
- Acceptable quality control per batch
- Data review
- Properly “Flagged” data
- Proficiency testing
- Initial and ongoing training

# National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program



“generate data of known and documented quality”

# Sampling Issues

- Proper technique
- Proper containers
- Adequate volume
- Preservation
- Holding times
- Cross contamination

# Audit Your Laboratory Annually

- Clean and well organized
- Adequate space
- Reconstruct supporting information
- Ask to see training records
- Employee turnover
- Adequate equipment for volume of samples
- Equipment maintenance records
- Document storage
- Disposal of hazardous waste



# Other Things to Watch For

- Pay attention to “flagged” data
- Immediately review reports and ask questions
- Substituted methods
- Reporting outside calibration curves
- Dilution to remove interferences
- Modified methods
- Use of adequate sample volume
- Proper Method Detection Limit (MDL)