The FDA reports that there are five times more identified pathogens in food products than in traditional food products. Thus, there is a greater need for food safety testing and exporters as well as on each regulatory body that oversees and authorises food imports. Given that over 70% of the world's trade is food related, it is clear that this recent high profile incidents of food contamination have raised both public and political concerns that oversight of food production has not been stringent enough, or that food laboratories are required to deploy an increasing number of testing methods and to sort through the resulting data to highlight potential problems. Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) are purpose built to cope with changes in methods, regulations and customer demands. The current political focus on food safety means that regulations are one of the most rapidly changing areas for the laboratory. For example, The Food Safety Modernization Act recently legislated in the US places new demands on labs that are user configurable, our approach allows the laboratory to be able to cope with changes in methods, regulations and customer demands. The Data Mountain in Food Safety Labs

As we have seen, the workloads placed upon the laboratory is increasing. There are a number of key pressures that contribute to this.

• The latest innovations in analytical technology are being developed to meet the demands of the growing, ever more complex food safety industry.
• Regulatory authorities update standards that compel laboratories to carry out additional tests.
• Analytical techniques evolve to give higher sensitivity for contaminants.

As a result, laboratories are required to produce more data for the laboratory to process. It is also clear that the laboratory is required to perform more tests, thus increasing the number of data the laboratory is required to produce and handle.

In order to illustrates this point, consider the following two examples:

• The FDA reports that there are five times more identified pathogens in food products than in traditional food products. Hence, there is a greater need for food safety testing.
• Regulatory authorities update standards that compel laboratories to carry out additional tests.

Recent high profile incidents of food contamination have reigned both public and political concerns that oversight of food production has not been stringent enough, or that food laboratories are required to deploy an increasing number of testing methods.

Food production has become increasingly globalised in recent years, not only in terms of food production, but also in terms of global demand for specific food types - essentially as populations in developing countries have become more affluent, there has been a shift in the types of food being produced and consumed. In China, for example, the sales of food in general has increased every year since their introduction in 1999, and now represents a $1.8Bn industry.

The ensuing demands for surveillance of food ingredients and products means that food laboratories are required to deploy an increasing number of testing methods and to sort through the resulting data to highlight potential problems. Laboratory Information Management Systems (LIMS) are purpose built to cope with changes in methods, regulations and customer demands. An example of this is to be seen in the workloads placed upon the laboratory is increasing. There are a number of key pressures that contribute to this.

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Today’s Challenges in Food Safety Testing

The scope of food safety testing has increased markedly in recent times. The requirements for testing of food for human consumption encompasses not only finished products and ingredients, animal health, animal welfare and plant health, but also the necessity to ensure that food is produced in a safe manner. Food production has become increasingly globalised in recent years, not only in terms of food production, but also in terms of global demand for specific food types - essentially as populations in developing countries have become more affluent, there has been a shift in the types of food being produced and consumed. In China, for example, the sales of food in general has increased every year since their introduction in 1999, and now represents a $1.8Bn industry.

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