

PERSISTENCE AND DIVERSITY OF *LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES* ISOLATES IN NORWEGIAN PROCESSING PLANTS

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Summary. Five salmon processing plants were investigated for periods of eight (plants A and B) and four (plants C, D and E) months for the occurrence of *Listeria monocytogenes*. A total of 226 strains of *L. monocytogenes* were isolated and subtyped. Automated ribotyping with DuPont Qualicon RiboPrinter[®] system with the enzyme *EcoR*I was used to differentiate and characterize isolates for simple molecular tracking. The isolated strains could be divided into 16 DuPont ribotypes. The ribotypes DUP-1023C, DUP-1039C, DUP-1044E, DUP-1045B, DUP-1046A, DUP-1062B and 1062C were found to be persistent in the plants, as they were found through the whole sampling period. The remaining 9 ribotypes were isolated sporadically. Five of the persistent subtypes (DUP-1023C, DUP-1039C, DUP-1046A, DUP-1062B and 1062C) were isolated in high numbers. Ribotype DUP-1045B and DUP-1039C were found in four of the five investigated plants.

Keywords: *Listeria*, food safety, salmon, ribotyping, lineages, biofilm, cluster analysis.