

Primerdesign launches real-time PCR kit for onsite detection of norovirus in oysters

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Primerdesign (part of the Novacyt Group), a company focusing on the design, manufacture, validation and supply of real-time PCR kits and reagents, launched the genesig Easy oys Detection Kit for Norovirus in oysters. The quantitative PCR (qPCR) assay enables rapid and reliable detection of genogroup (G)I and GII Norovirus pathogens in oyster tissue. The user-friendly workflow offers a cost-effective solution that can be used on-site to identify the contamination points across the production line, helping to reduce public health risks and minimise shellfish farm closures.

Norovirus is a major cause of viral gastroenteritis and foodborne transmission is responsible for an estimated 16 per cent of cases in the UK. Human sewage discharge around oyster beds results in bioaccumulation of the virus in their digestive glands, with more than 500 genome copies/gram of Norovirus GI / GII presenting a major risk of infection when consumed by humans.

There is a growing need for methods to detect and quantify viruses in bivalve shellfish to control and risk manage potential outbreaks and spread. The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) in England and the Marine Institute in the Republic of Ireland, the only ISO 15216-accredited laboratories for PCR quantification of Norovirus in oysters in the British Isles, currently perform a limited number of tests from each grower due to resource constraints. This places food safety in jeopardy and farms at risk of closure if a Norovirus outbreak is linked to their oysters.