

Pinnacle Foods Group on 3M™ Petrifilm™ Environmental Listeria Plates

A Customer Testimonial

Pinnacle Foods Group

Pinnacle Foods Group is a producer of frozen TV dinners, pot pies, and other processed food products under the Hungry-Man and Swanson labels to name a couple. It also sells Vlasic products, one of the top brand names in the United States for pickles, jalapeños, and other peppers.

Pinnacle Foods Group was one of the first adopters of the 3M Petrifilm Environmental Listeria (EL) Plate when it was launched in 2004. They are very happy with the plate. “We love it!” exclaims Carol Striegler, QA Lab Supervisor of the Pinnacle Foods Groups plant in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

On the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate’s ease of use:

“Prior to using 3M Petrifilm EL Plates, we used another method that was too labor-intensive. The 3M Petrifilm EL Plate is definitely much easier to use, does not require any complicated enrichment steps or equipment, and is easy to interpret.” Ease of use is very important because it translates to more efficiency and better use of your lab staff’s time.

On the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate’s performance:

“We performed a side-by-side evaluation of the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate against our old method,” says Striegler. “We wanted to see how well it would compare to our old method, which required an enrichment step. What we found was that the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate was more sensitive than our old method.” This is also supported by various studies that show that results from the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate is equivalent to or better than enrichment-based standard methods.

On the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate’s quantitative results:

“Currently, we are only required to report results as positive or negative. However, the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate’s quantitative nature allows us to identify the degree of contamination whenever a positive result occurs. It also validates the effectiveness of our procedures when we retest after cleaning and/or sanitation.” Many of 3M’s customers use the qualitative results (positive or negative) for more traditional reporting purposes while the quantitative results (actual colony count on the plate) is used internally to gain additional important information on the severity of a positive and the effectiveness of sanitation and cleaning procedures.

On the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate’s cost-effectiveness:

“The old method we used to have not only required more labor time but was also more expensive in terms of material costs when compared to the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate. Now, we test multiple sites at a fraction of the cost. We also now have the ability to perform more tests if we needed to,” said Striegler. The 3M Petrifilm EL Plate is cost-effective, giving you the opportunity to test more often than ever before without increasing your budget. This additional information will allow you to track and better manage *Listeria* in your plant environment. In addition, the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate is sample-ready, has an easy-to-use procedure, and utilizes a familiar 3M™ Petrifilm™ Plate format, reducing labor time and presenting fewer opportunities for variability.

On the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate's time-to-result:

“We also love how fast you can get results with the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate. It is definitely an added benefit to get our results 29 hours after we take our sample,” said Striegler. With the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate, there is no lengthy enrichment step—just a one-hour repair step and it is ready for inoculation and incubation. Faster results mean that you can react more quickly and take corrective action if necessary, giving you a tighter control on *Listeria* in the plant environment.

On the use of 3M Petrifilm EL Plates to monitor the plant environment:

More and more plants are switching to the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate. “One of our other plants has started to use the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate after calling me for advice on how to manage *Listeria*,” according to Striegler. Despite Pinnacle Foods Group’s zero tolerance policy on *Listeria*, the food manufacturer appreciates the 3M Petrifilm EL Plate’s quantitative results. The 3M Petrifilm EL Plate’s results allow them to determine the extent or severity of a positive, take corrective action more quickly, confirm the effectiveness of their sanitation procedures, and keep tighter surveillance of environmental *Listeria* in their plant.

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