



## AQC presents laboratory working group results

The Association Pour L' Assurance Qualité Des Fabricants De Bracelets Cuir (AQC) has unveiled the results of its 5th Laboratories Working Group, which looked into the ability of testing labs to reproduce results on leather samples.

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Beginning in 2019, the working groups aimed to investigate issues with labs achieving drastically different results when testing for chemical compliance with the same ISO method. The number of labs involved began at six and increased to 11 in the latest study.

This study looked at chromium VI, extractable cobalt, PFAS, total organic fluoride and bisphenols with mixed results. The goal is to feed back to the European Normalisation Committee and improve leather testing methods and the ability of the industry to meet chemical restrictions.

The labs achieved reproducible results for chromium VI, monomeric PFAS and total fluorine used to detect polymeric PFAS. The samples in the chromium VI testing used method ISO 17075-2:2017 and were all non-compliant within a similar range of detected chromium VI, with only one major outlier. The monomeric PFAS testing (with ISO 23701-1) also had a reproducible result with a close grouping.

The testing for total fluorine to detect polymeric PFAS used each lab's choice of testing method and was reproducible, with some outliers in the testing of positive samples and a closer grouping in the testing of negative samples.

However, the study found weak reproducibility for the testing of extractable cobalt and bisphenol S. The former used ISO 17072-1:2019 and resulted in the samples showing 33% non-compliance with REACH restriction proposals – 15mg/kg of dry matter – with a wide grouping and one major outlier. Meanwhile, the bisphenol testing used ISO 11936:2023 and samples with no, low and high bisphenol content. The result was that the first two samples showed 100% compliance and reproducible grouping while the high bisphenol sample had a very wide range of results and varying compliance (27% compliant).

Going forward, the study will allow the AQC to identify which analytical parameters can be improved in the next study, which is due to take place in the third quarter of 2024.