



PREMIUM CHICKEN PRODUCTS

Amick Farms Tackles *Salmonella* & *Campylobacter* Challenges with the Hygiena™ BAX® System



Amick Farms, a poultry processing facility in the United States, runs two slaughter shifts daily, processing ~300,000 birds per shift and producing over 1 billion pounds of quality chicken products annually. They primarily produce bulk product and products for further processing. Their three integrated poultry production complexes (Batesburg, SC; Laurel, MS and Hurlock, MD) must actively manage each step of the production process from the egg to the final product. As a result, they must have a robust system for pathogen management, requiring rigorous control measures at each step of handling. This ensures the highest quality product reaches consumer's hands.

According to Bethany Ellison, QA laboratory supervisor, "*Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* contamination is a major concern for us at each step of our production process. It is vital that we have a system that provides reliable, consistent results and is cost-effective for our facilities."

In the past, Amick Farms used other various systems to detect *Salmonella*. Unfortunately, the systems required some "guesswork" and required reading each test individually. In addition, they sometimes experienced false-positive and false-negative results with these tests, which required retesting and verification using traditional culture methods. This resulted in extra work, loss of valuable time and an increased cost to the facility.

In late 2020, Amick Farms started using the BAX® System for the detection of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*. According to Ellison, "We liked the simplicity of the method and how easy the system is to use. We liked the consistency of results and a simple visual read - solid results with each use."

With the SC facility running up to 40 samples per day, it was vital to have an easy-to-use system that provided reliable results quickly and didn't drive the cost per test too high. The BAX System met all these requirements and more. In addition, the BAX System reduced the company's overall costs for testing. When looking at the annual cost for testing *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, Amick Farms saved over \$30,000 per year just by changing testing methods.

The BAX System helped Amick Farms streamline their testing processes while saving money and allowing for not only *Salmonella* detection but also quantification with the SalQuant™ method. It allowed the facilities to see initial results before the prevalence time point. In fact, the real-time *Salmonella* quantification method provided results after only a 6-hour incubation time. The onboarding of SalQuant in partnership with their routing prevalence testing has provided Amick Farms with a more defined picture of their food safety program and intervention process, which allows for better decision making.

As an added bonus, the new testing system allowed Amick Farms to track *Salmonella* levels all the way from the farm to packaging. According to Ellison, "As we use [it] more and expand our companies' facilities, we are looking to continue to utilize the BAX [System] and its innovative methods to track organisms from the farm, or before, to the packaging point of

our product." As Amick Farms expands its poultry processing facilities, they continue to utilize the BAX System for pathogen testing. In fact, they recommend the BAX System to others as well. According to Ellison, "It has given us so much more insight into the levels of bacteria/organisms at each point of production in our facility. We really wanted to be able to see what levels of *Salmonella* were being detected throughout our process; it gives much more detail than just the typical positive or negative result. We have enjoyed the ability to test more areas due to lower costs as well as track and trend what we are testing with the data provided through the BAX System".

With five people trained on the BAX System, testing can be run efficiently, no matter the shift or day. In addition, with Hygiena™ support and training programs, the transition was seamless. "One of the biggest deciding factors when choosing to switch to the BAX system, besides the cost efficiency, was how great the BAX and Hygiena teams have been. The entire team, from sales to training and support, has been nothing but helpful; personally, I have appreciated that tremendously. I do a lot of ordering and organize all of our trainings and vendor support so when a team comes around that is as easy to communicate with and is as helpful as the Hygiena team has been, I just really appreciate it".

