



Remember, April showers bring May flowers in addition to the UCMR vulnerable period.

## *The UCMR UPDATE*

**Issue 6**

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### **The “Light at the End of the Tunnel” Issue**

**UMCR Update Issue Number 6-** This information sheet, **The UCMR Update**, is the sixth to be issued by the Technical Support Center (TSC) of the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW). Future issues will be distributed as needed to maintain information flow related to the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation (UCMR for those of you who may have forgotten).

**Editor’s Note:** March is gone but not forgotten, as I am still thawing from the icy weather here in Ohio. By June, I might actually feel warm again. However, here is a thought that will add warmth to anyone. With the changing of the calendar year, there is now a light at the end of the tunnel. The cynical among you might say it’s a train, but I digress. In any case, 2003 is the FINAL year of monitoring for the current cycle of UCMR! That’s right, F-I-N-A-L. Look at how far we have come in the past three years. We are in the home stretch now and it should be easy sailing from here on out.

As an aside, I have to give out a coveted “*UCMR Update* Lifetime Achievement Award” to....me! You probably have not noticed, but with this issue, I have gone where no previous UCMR Update editor has gone. I have served as editor of the Update for three, count them, consecutive issues. The previous record, held by Jim Walasek, was two. Having boldly crossed the three-issue barrier, I now seek to go on and publish four, maybe even five, more of these newsletters. That is of course, unless they decide to haul me out of here kicking and screaming first. Now, on with the info.

### **I. Final Year of Monitoring: Facts, Figures, and Statistics**

As it is officially the “Final Year of Sampling” in this cycle of the UCMR, TSC thought it would be interesting to see where we all are in this process thus far. To those of you who are into number crunching, feast on this. As for me, I detest simply posting stats, but here is where we stand as of right now:

- Screening Survey for Small System List 2 Chemical: 100% Complete!!!
- Screening Survey for Large System List 2 Chemical: 42.8% Complete (77 of 180)
- Assessment Monitoring for Small Systems: 65.3% Complete (522 out of 800).
- Assessment Monitoring for Large Systems: 1378 (and counting) systems have reported data to the Safe Drinking Water Accession and Review System.

TSC is exceedingly pleased with the participation thus far. Keep it up! Please note that this is the **LAST YEAR** for PWSs to conduct their List 1 assessment monitoring responsibilities. This was the subject of the previous, and now infamous, reminder letter that sent in November 2002. The Magic 8-Ball<sup>®</sup> on my desk indicates that there could be another reminder letter or calls at some point in the future with the message “Outcome Likely”. However, this same oracle has told me on numerous occasions that my lottery numbers were going to hit, and I haven’t seen a penny yet. Please remember that this letter or call, should it come, will only serve as a reminder of UCMR sampling duties to those that have yet to report List 1 Assessment Monitoring data to SDWARS.

## II. The First Semi-biannual “*UCMR Golden Faucet*” Award

The *Golden Faucet Award*, or simply the *Faucy*, was established last week when we here at TSC realized that we needed an instrument with which to reward those who went above and beyond in performing duties related to the UCMR. The award was established to honor “individuals, groups, PWSs, laboratories, States, and/or EPA Regions who exhibit extraordinary efforts supporting the implementation of the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Regulation”. This issue’s *Faucy* goes to **Robert Poon** of EPA Region 2 for his tireless efforts in following up with PWSs in the region that had not yet reported any data to SDWARS. Many of these systems had had difficulty in working with SDWARS and Robert was able to effectively help them resolve these issues. It is effort like this that helps everyone accomplish his or her respective responsibilities within the UCMR. We here at TSC appreciate Robert’s hard work, as it is often impossible for us to follow up with each and every system participating in the UCMR.

For his efforts, Robert would have received an actual golden faucet. However, security is watching the bathroom way too closely and I have no gold paint. As a compromise, he will be receiving an official commemorative certificate from TSC. In all seriousness, we here at TSC do like to acknowledge hard work in support of the UCMR. It makes the whole process go more smoothly. Anyone who would like to nominate a recipient for the *Faucy* award should feel free to contact me at [wagner.cory@epa.gov](mailto:wagner.cory@epa.gov).

## III. UCMR Forum

As it is the final year of this cycle of UCMR, TSC would like to gather some information and opinions about how this cycle of UCMR has gone for everyone who has been involved. This is your chance to tell us what you liked, disliked, and felt could be improved about all aspects of the UCMR implementation. Liked SDWARS but felt the *Aeromonas* reporting system was a pain in the donkey? Let us know! Were the instructions, technical assistance, and FAQs helpful or did they make you want to pull out your hair? Tell us about it! You are all very valuable stakeholders in this process and in

the development of the next cycle of the UCMR. We will attempt to post some of the most insightful comments and give an overall consensus of the opinions in the next *UCMR Update*. Please use the form at the end of the *Update* to submit your comments.

#### **IV. UCMR Data**

Yes, there are some! Actually, there are quite a lot. A new batch of data has been posted for public viewing at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/data/ucmrgetdata.html>. EPA is posting data on a quarterly basis. Now, you may go to the website and say “Hey, where’s my data? I reported it, why isn’t it here?” An excellent question, I must say. The answer is that it was likely held back by our data QC review system. Why? Well, there are several reasons data may be held for review.

- Duplication. If a sample ID is duplicated at different facilities within a PWS or if a record is entered twice, the data are held back. Believe me, once is plenty for EPA.
- Accuracy results below 2%.
- Perchlorate results reported from a laboratory that is not approved by EPA. Please make sure your lab is APPROVED to test for Perchlorate.
- Reporting List 2 data to SDWARS using methods from List 1 or reporting List 2 data when a PWS was not assigned to monitor for List 2 contaminants. TSC does appreciate the extra mile, but we certainly don’t want anyone to be sampling anything they aren’t required to.
- Extraction/analysis date before sample collection date. Unless you can prove possession of a time machine, I don’t think this is possible.
- Sample point delineation issues. In SDWARS, sample points associated with List 1 and List 2 Chemical monitoring should only be designated as either entry point (EP) or source water (SR). TSC is aware that SDWARS includes other options, but they aren’t valid for List 1 or 2 chemical monitoring. Please do not select them. Midpoint (MD), Lowest Disinfectant Residual (LD), and Maximum Residence (MR) were developed for *Aeromonas* sampling (which is not being reported via SDWARS). Unknown (UK) should not be used, as TSC will have to call you later and find out if the sample point is a SR or EP. Furthermore, laboratories should only assign sample analysis type “raw field sample (rfs)” or “raw duplicate sample (rds)” to SR sample points. In contrast, sample analysis type “treated field sample (tfs)” or “treated duplicate sample (tds)” should only be assigned to EP sample point types, with the exception of a system that uses no water treatment.

If your data are not posted, please review them and see if they fall under one of the above categories. Also, please keep the above rules in mind when posting data in the future.

#### **V. *Aeromonas* Updates**

As stated in past issues, the following section will only apply to those systems selected to participate in the List 2 Screening Survey for the microbiological contaminant *Aeromonas*.

- The first set of data sheets from the PWSs that sampled in January have begun to come in. For those of you that have sent them in already, great job! We look forward to receiving the data sheets from the rest of the water systems soon. Anyone who has questions about the reporting system can send an email to [CI TSC-Micro@epa.gov](mailto:CI TSC-Micro@epa.gov).
- Recently, the question has been raised as to whether a system that is supposed to sample in a given month is required to submit data in that month as well. The answer is no. TSC requests that you send your data sheets in as soon as you can but it is not required that it be the same month as you sampled. A general rule of thumb would be to try to submit your data sheet within the month after you sampled.
- One thing that TSC has noticed on the data sheets is that some of you have not filled in the approval date and method fields. The approval date is the date that you review the results from the lab and decide that they are fit for submittal to EPA. The method is simply the method used to obtain the water quality parameters. Please fill these in, as they will save EPA and you a phone call in the future.
- TSC would also like to request that you use the data sheets that were sent to you for the month in which you were supposed to sample. Please do not make your own sheet, or adapt a template that you may have come across via your *Aeromonas* Laboratory. If you do not have your sheets, TSC will be happy to resend them. The reason for this is that the sheets are coded for consistency with database that we are using to upload the data you send us. If the sheet is incorrectly coded, it is like trying to pass a square peg through a round hole. It just doesn't work.
- The list of approved *Aeromonas* laboratories has been expanded since the last *UCMR Update* was released. If you are still trying to find a laboratory to handle your *Aeromonas* analyses, be sure to follow the link at the end of this paragraph for the options. Remember that the lab that you use for *Aeromonas* analyses must be approved by EPA. The link for the list is <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/standard/ucmr/aprvlabs.html>.

## VI. Coming Attractions

*It came upon them in the fall of 1999, innocently enough. It looked to be an easy regulatory action. After three years of sampling, reporting, reviewing and barely clinging to sanity, they thought it was over. The survivors believed nothing like it could ever happen again. They were wrong.*

### UCMR CYCLE 2: The Next Batch Coming to a PWS near you in 2006

While it reads like a B-horror movie trailer, the reality is that the UCMR is on a five-year cycle. So as this cycle concludes, a new one begins to take shape. It's almost enough to keep you up at night, I know. However, the UCMR plays a crucial role in the protection of public health, a common goal of water systems, states, and the EPA. This new UCMR will require additional regulatory action to promulgate a different contaminant list and other specific requirements. We will keep all interested parties

informed about developments through the normal *Federal Register* publications, web postings, and most certainly the continued publication of the UCMR Update. Stay tuned.

## **VII. Contact Information:**

A general reminder to laboratories and PWSs: when contacting EPA about UCMR issues, please use your USEPA Lab ID number or PWSID number, respectively.

General UCMR questions may be directed to the **Drinking Water Hotline** at:

1-800-426-4791

Questions regarding registration for or use of the SDWARS/UCMR reporting system may be directed to the **SDWARS Help Desk** at:

1-888-890-1995

Correspondence with TSC may be directed to:

**UCMR Coordinator**  
Technical Support Center (MS-140)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
26 W. Martin Luther King Drive  
Cincinnati, OH 45268  
Fax: 513-569-7191

**UCMR Forum Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

PWSID#(or USEPA Lab ID#): \_\_\_\_\_

PWS (or LAB) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**UCMR Likes**

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**UCMR Dislikes**

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**Comments**

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May we publish your comments? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Mail to Cory Wagner, c/o U.S. EPA, 26 W. M.L. King Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45268

Office of Water, Cincinnati, OH 45268, EPA-815-N-03-002a, April 2003