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Australian Standard®

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**Food microbiology**

**Part 0: General introduction and list  
of methods**

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The following interests are represented on Committee FT/4:

Australian Government Analytical Laboratories  
Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology  
Australian Poultry Industries Association  
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization  
Confederation of Australian Industry  
Council of Australian Food Technology Associations  
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Department of Primary Industries, Qld  
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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Australian Standard methods for the microbiological examination of foods other than eggs and dairy products were first published in 1975 with the introduction of AS 1766, *Methods for the microbiological examination of food*, in response to a request from the National Health and Medical Research Council. The Standards are prepared by the Standards Australia Committee on Food Microbiology and new Standards have been added continually to the AS 1766 series.

For convenience, the methods are grouped into a series as follows:

- 1766.1 *General procedures and techniques*—these are procedures which are commonly used in all microbiological laboratories, such as sterilization techniques, preparation of dilutions, plate counts, and estimation of most probable number (MPN) of organisms.
- 1766.2 *Examination for specific organisms*—these Standards set out the methods for detecting, and enumerating in some cases, specific microorganisms in a sample of food after it has been suitably prepared for microbiological examination.
- 1766.3 *Examination of specific products*—these Standards set out procedures for the microbiological examination of different types of foods and describe the preparation of samples so that they are in suitable form (the first dilution) for examination for specific microorganisms using the methods prescribed in Parts 1 and 2.
- 1766.4 *Sampling of foods*—these Standards set out the procedures for obtaining samples of foods for microbiological examination and for their handling until they are delivered to the laboratory.
- NOTE: Sampling procedures for eggs and for dairy products are dealt with in AS 1918, *Methods for sampling eggs and egg products*, and AS 1166, *Methods for sampling milk and milk products*, respectively.
- 1766.5 *Preparation of media, diluents and reagents*—this Standard sets out the formulations and procedures for preparing the culture media, diluents and reagents specified in AS 1766 methods.

Prior to 1980, Standards in the AS 1766 series were published in the form of A5 booklets each of which contained several methods. Since 1980, new methods and revised editions of existing Standards have been published as individual A4 method sheets.

Until 1987, methods in the series were prepared for examination of various foods but excluded eggs and egg products and dairy products. Methods for the microbiological examination of the latter two commodities were issued, respectively, as AS 1142, *Methods for the microbiological examination of eggs and egg products*, and AS 1095, *Microbiological methods for the dairy industry*. In order to dispense with the need for separate technical committees preparing Standards which are similar in nature and subject matter, the committees were amalgamated into a newly-constituted committee with responsibility for preparing Standard methods for the microbiological examination of all foods including eggs and dairy products. The new Standard has retained the designation AS 1766 with the same group series explained above, and with the new title *Food microbiology*.

The methods for microbiological examination of eggs have been revised and reissued in AS 1766, *Food microbiology*, and the former Standard AS 1142 has been withdrawn. In similar manner, all methods for microbiological examination of dairy products issued in AS 1095 are being progressively withdrawn as they are revised and amalgamated into the new AS 1766 series. In due course, AS 1766, *Food microbiology*, will be the only series of Australian Standard methods for the microbiological examination of foods produced by all sectors of the primary and secondary food industries.