Building a Safer Food Future: The DOST-ITDI Food Safety Testing Laboratory Story

The Department of Science and Technology - Industrial Technology Development Institute (DOST-ITDI) has been at the forefront of ensuring the safety and quality of food products in the Philippines. One of its flagship projects is the establishment of a state-of-the-art Food Safety Testing Laboratory, a testament to the agency's commitment to protecting public health and promoting the country's food industry.

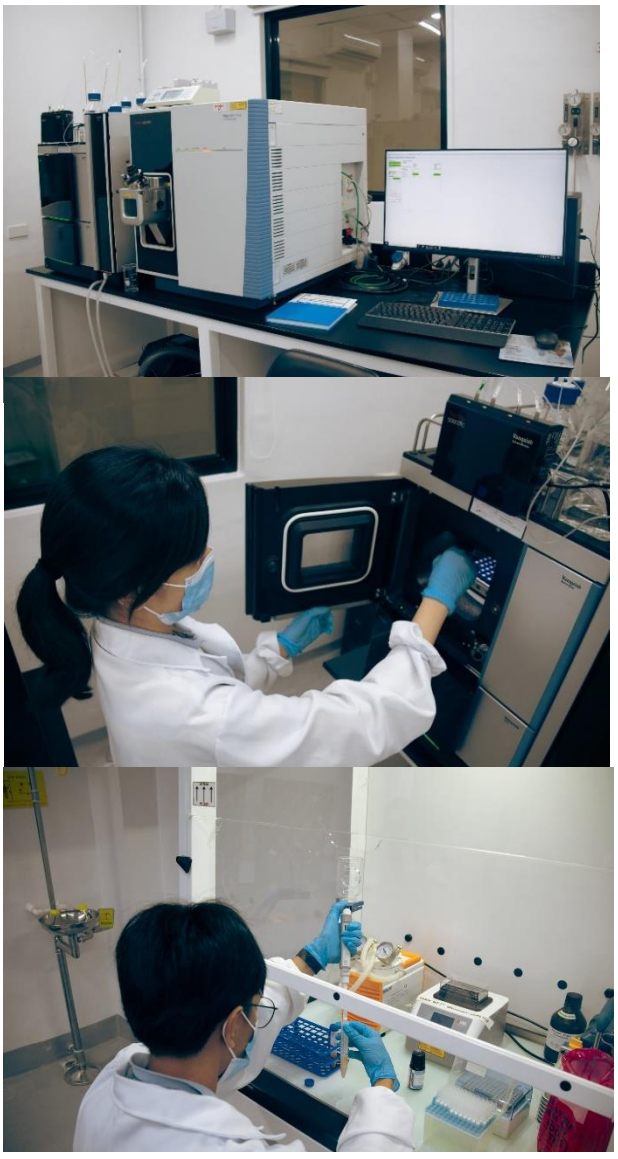
The laboratory's creation was sparked by a real-life challenge faced by a local food manufacturer seeking to export dried fruits to the European Union (EU). The EU's stringent food safety regulations posed a significant hurdle, prompting DOST-ITDI to expand its services to meet industry needs better. Coincidentally, the DOST Food Safety Technical Working Group was created, which identified priority parameters for method validation, including allergens and preservatives.

In the last episode of Siyensikat: Pinoy Popular Science Para sa Lahat, which aired on December 13, 2025, on Super Radyo DZBB 594 kHz, Ms. Ma. Rachel Parcon said, “We wanted to ensure that our laboratory services meet the industry's requirements and help Filipino products access the global market." "Our goal is to provide comprehensive testing services that go beyond nutrition, ensuring that products are not only nutritious but also safe to eat."

The laboratory's development was guided by a survey of priority food safety concerns in the ASEAN region, which highlighted the need to address allergens and preservatives in processed foods. With this focus, the team worked tirelessly to establish a world-class laboratory, equipped with advanced technology and staffed by highly trained professionals.

The new laboratory's testing services include nitrites in meat, phosphorus in fish and fish products, parabens in sauces, and allergens in baked cookies. The laboratory also provided hands-on training on these test methods to some DOST Regional Standards and Testing Laboratories (RSTLs) to cater to the testing needs of industries in the region.

The DOST-ITDI Food Safety Testing Laboratory is now in its second phase, focusing on mineral oils saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH) and mineral oils aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH)—contaminants that can pose health risks to consumers. This phase aims to develop and validate testing methods for these parameters, further enhancing the laboratory's capabilities.



The DOST-ITD Food Safety Testing Laboratory in operation

The establishment of the laboratory is a significant milestone in the country's food safety efforts, demonstrating the government's commitment to protecting public health and promoting the food industry. As Ms. Parcon noted, "A product can be nutritious, but if it's not safe to eat, it's worthless. We're proud to offer a service that makes a difference in people's lives."

The DOST-ITDI Food Safety Testing Laboratory is under the Chemistry Laboratory of the Standards and Testing Division, an ISO/IEC 17025-accredited laboratory, recognized internationally for its technical competence and quality management. Its services are available to food manufacturers, regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders, providing a critical link in the country's food safety chain. (DDGotis, ITDI S&T Media Service)

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