
IDFL NEWS

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Improving Testing Accuracy

The accuracy, reliability and reproducibility of down and feather testing has improved greatly since test methods were developed many years ago.

Down and feathers are a natural non-homogeneous product. Each lot is slightly different. Because of settling, etc., even material within the same lot can sometimes differ if sampling is not done correctly.

IDFL has completed several research projects to improve testing accuracy even further.

Several steps can be taken to improve testing accuracy.

1. Repeat or double testing
2. Training of testing analysts.
3. Improved sampling methods.
4. Testing larger samples.
5. Regular calibration of down testing equipment
6. Implementation of laboratory quality assurance programs

IDFL Has taken all of the above steps to improve its internal operation. IDFL has also recommended many changes to existing test methods to improve accuracy.

DOUBLE TESTING

The conclusion of every research project is that double testing is the single most important factor in improving the accuracy of results.

Double (or split) testing improves the accuracy of testing in the following manner:

Average Results

Unlike synthetic material, each sample of down & feathers is different. The average of two or more results will always be more accurate than a single test.

IDFL has double tested for several years. The new European methods requires 2-3 tests per sample. JIS

requires two tests.

Weighing Problems

Weighing down and feather components can be difficult because of the small weights involved. Static electricity and moisture can affect weight. Down fiber, feather fiber and residue need careful attention when weighing. Double testing eliminates these problems.

Clerical Errors

Double testing will eliminate clerical errors in data reporting and calculation.

Analyst Training Tool.

New analysts have a training period of several months. Double testing with an

IDFL Celebrates its 20th Birthday

IDFL was founded by Wilford and Mary Jean Lieber in late 1978.

IDFL was one of the first laboratories approved and recognized by the International Down & Feather Bureau (IDFB) in Frankfurt, Germany.

IDFL serves as Technical Advisor to the IDFB trade organization.

IDFL has over 1,200 clients in 35 countries.

IDFL has trained people from industry, government, retail and testing organizations in 70 locations in 15 countries.

IDFL has completed over 150,000 tests on nearly 50,000 samples.

experienced analyst speeds the training process and insures analyst consistency.

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TRAINING PROGRAMS

Ongoing evaluation and training programs for laboratory testing staff is very important.

Each analyst should participate in an external or internal round robin test to compare results with another analyst.

At IDFL, each test result is compared against a duplicate test by another analyst. IDFL uses its computer data base to discover trends in analyst work.

SAMPLING METHODS

Accurate results require careful sampling. Sampling begins with a determination of how many bales of down or pieces of finished products should be tested. Careful mixing and random sampling continues until the small 4-6g sample is selected for actual testing.

TESTING LARGER SAMPLES.

The larger the sample size the more accurate the result. The cost of testing is the limiting factor. Current methods provide accurate information from small samples at a reasonable cost.

CALIBRATION OF TESTING EQUIPMENT

Equipment must be regularly maintained and calibrated. Balances must be calibrated at least yearly. Fill power

cylinders should be cleaned regularly and calibrated against those of another lab. Tweezers, beakers, etc. should be kept in good working order.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LABORATORY QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAMS

Every laboratory should have a quality assurance program that uses proven techniques to insure consistent results.

How many tests has IDFL completed?

IDFL has received nearly 50,000 samples and performed over 150,000 tests.

Our capability includes over 30 tests for feathers and down and related textile/fabric tests.

Who are IDFL's clients?

We test for a wide variety of clients in the industry:

Retailers	30%
Manufacturers	24%
Importers / Exporters	21%
Down Processors	12%
Government Agencies	10%
Other Laboratories	2%
Consumer Groups	1%

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Our most interesting client is a woman whose father had purchased an Eiderdown sleeping bag in 1929.

After water damage to her home her insurance company wanted some certification that the Eiderdown would, in fact, still be usable. We tested some of the material and found it in remarkably good condition.

Our mission is to provide impartial, independent results to each and every client.

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER OR OTHER IDFL SERVICES PLEASE CONTACT:

International Down and Feather Testing Laboratory

Employee Spotlight -- Shauna Linde

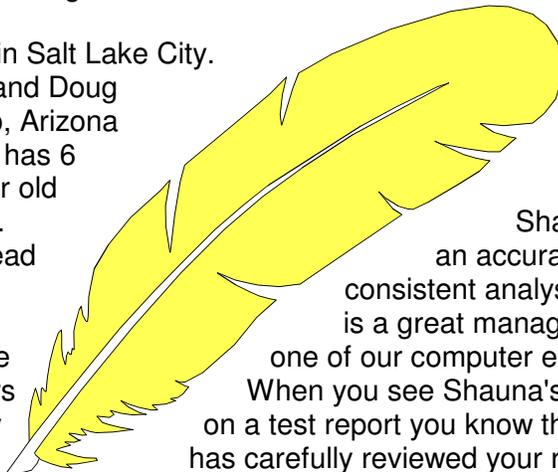
Shauna Linde is a Senior Analyst at IDFL. She is a 5-year veteran of down and feather testing.

Shauna was born in Salt Lake City.

She and her husband Doug have lived in Idaho, Arizona and Utah. Shauna has 6 children and 3-year old twin grandchildren.

Shauna loves to read quilt, and sew.

Shauna loves to be home but considers IDFL "home" away from home.



Shauna is an accurate and consistent analyst. She is a great manager and one of our computer experts. When you see Shauna's name on a test report you know that she has carefully reviewed your results.