

Table 3 Comparison of microbial plate counts between large-scale manufacturers and small-scale manufacturers/retailers in Lebanon

Microorganism	Mean (SD) plate counts (\log_{10} CFU/g)	
	Large-scale producers ($n = 13$ samples)	Small-scale producers/retailers ($n = 18$ samples)
Total aerobic count	4.36 (1.34)	4.48 (1.02)
Total coliforms	3.14 (1.19)	3.29 (0.85)
Enterobacteriaceae	3.41 (1.16)	3.85 (0.99)
Yeasts & moulds	4.21 (1.70)	4.78 (1.14)
Staphylococcus aureus	2.89 (1.24)	3.13 (0.66)

No significant difference between large-scale and small-scale producers, $P > 0.05$.

SD = standard deviation; CFU = colony-forming units.