Two hundred thirty-six randomly selected food and mild samples were examined to obtain aerobic colony counts by two dry sheet media methods and a standard Public Health Laboratory Service spiral plate method. Results for 40 samples were outside the limits of detection for one or more of the tested methods and were not considered. (The limits of detection for the spiral plate method were 200 to $1 \times 10^8$ CFU/ml for the spiral plate method and 100 to $3 \times 10^6$ CFU/ml for the dry sheet media methods.) The remaining 196 sets of results were analyzed further. When the results from the three methods were compared, correlation coefficients were all $> 0.80$ and slopes and intercepts were close to 1.0 and 0.0 respectively. Mean log values and standard deviations were very similar for all three methods. The results were evaluated according to published UK guidelines for ready-to-eat foods sampled at the point of sale, which include a quality acceptability assessment that is based on aerobic colony counts. Eighty-six percent of the comparable results gave the same verdict with regard to acceptability according to the aerobic colony count guidelines. Both dry sheet media methods were comparable to the spiral plate method and can be recommended for the examination of food.