

BROOKSBIO

FREE GUIDE AND STOCK LIST

The Lab Inventory Tracker

A stock list that knows when to reorder, writes a Monday order list for you, and only ever asks you to count the items that are running out. Set up in an afternoon.

Louis Brookstein Brooks Bio www.brooksbio.co.uk

Why a lab needs reorder points

In most labs I walk into, ordering is a job nobody owns. Reagents run out mid-experiment. Two people order the same thing. A box sits in goods-in for a week because nobody knew it was coming. The "stock list" is a whiteboard, or a spreadsheet nobody trusts, and every order means manually hunting for the catalogue number again.

It shows up as one of the biggest time sinks: a scientist stood at a freezer looking for something that is not there, or stopping mid-experiment because a critical component has run out. Every scientist becomes a part-time buyer, pulled away from the bench work that matters.

The fix is a reorder point, a minimum stock level, for every item that matters; one list on Monday; and a count that only asks about the items near running out. This sheet does the calculations, so the numbers stop being a guess. It saves time by reducing stock checks, and it reduces costs by preventing over-ordering and delayed work.

What you need

One afternoon to set it up: suppliers, commonly used items, and a walk round the lab. The stock list works in Excel 2019 or later and in Google Sheets.

What you will receive

- A status per item you can act on: OK, Order now, On order, Critical.
- The Monday order list, grouped by supplier, ready to paste into a purchase request.
- The number of items that will run out before you can restock them.
- Cash tied up in stock, stock-outs by quarter, and spend by supplier.

9%

Share of the week going on ordering, inventory and chasing suppliers in a typical lab before.

3%

Where it usually lands with reorder points, a Monday list and an approved supplier list.

Typical figures from the teams I have worked with. In the demo, a fictional eight-person team goes from 26 hours a week on ordering to 9.

Why it pays

Save time. More of the week at the bench, less of it ordering, chasing and searching.

Save money. Spend by supplier gives you the negotiating position most labs never see.

Better cash flow. Order to a reorder point and less stock sits on the shelves waiting.

Set up in an afternoon

1 30 MINUTES

List your suppliers

On the **Suppliers** tab: add name, account number, how you order (email, phone, MyAmici) and the typical lead time in working days. Default to five if you do not know and update it after the first delivery. Every item's lead time defaults to its supplier's.

2 1 HOUR

Paste in the last three months of orders

Use the finance system, the purchasing inbox or supplier order histories to paste the last three months of orders into the **Stock list**. That gives you item, supplier, catalogue number, pack size and cost, and a rough use per week (units bought in twelve weeks, divided by twelve). Start with the fifty most commonly used items, not the whole lab.

3 1 HOUR

Walk the lab

Keep the sheet open and go round fridge by fridge, filling in the Stock list tab: **Location**, **Owner** and a first count (**Counted** and **Counted on**). Count whole units as you buy them: boxes, bottles, vials. Give every item an owner, so they are told when it needs counting or buying.

4 10 MINUTES

Check the Settings tab

Safety stock (one week), the count threshold (one week), order cover (four weeks). Add your locations and your people so the dropdowns match your lab.

5 MONDAY · 10 MINUTES

Open the Order list

It updates itself automatically. Page 5 shows the week from here.

Best practices

- **If set-up takes more than an afternoon, you are tracking too much.** Fifty items that matter beat four hundred that do not.
- **The count is the truth, the log is the explanation.** You never have to log every tube that leaves the shelf; the Thursday count corrects the estimate.
- **Whole units, as you buy them.** Packs not bottles, boxes not gloves.
- **One owner per item.** The owner gets the count request. Nobody else has to think about it.
- **Lead time as it happens.** The sheet is only as honest as the lead times. Correct them when a delivery does not match.

Already have a stock list, or buy through MyAmici?

Paste an existing list into the Stock list tab, column by column; the pale blue columns are the inputs. If you order through a procurement portal such as MyAmici, export the order history and use **Brooks Bio › Import an order history** in the Sheets edition (or the importer that comes with the file): it builds the item rows, suppliers, prices and a first use per week for you. Optional; the manual route works just as well.

BROOKS BIO

The maths.

Most labs guess their reorder points. The sheet makes the guess explicit, and an override column lets you correct it when you know better.

Status	Meaning	What to do
Critical	Stock will run out before a delivery placed today would arrive: days of cover is less than the lead time.	Order today. Chase if it is already on order. Borrow for the gap.
Order now	At or below the reorder point and nothing on order.	It is on Monday's list.
On order	Ordered and not yet received in full.	Log the delivery when it lands.
OK	Above the reorder point.	Nothing. It may be on Thursday's count if it is close.
No count	Never counted, so stock is unknown.	Count it once; it is on the Count tab.

Reorder point

Use per week × (lead time ÷ 7 + safety stock in weeks), rounded up.

The first term is what you will use while the delivery is on its way; the second is what you keep in hand in case it is late. One week suits most labs; raise it for an unreliable supplier or an item with no substitute.

> **Anti-CD3 antibody: 3.5 vials a week, ten days from Ardent, one week in hand.**
> **3.5 × (10 ÷ 7 + 1) = 8.5, so the reorder point is 9 vials.**
>
> Two vials left means four days of use. A delivery placed today arrives in ten. That is a Critical item.

Order quantity

Use per week × order cover (four weeks by default), rounded up, at least one. Override it to match a pack of six or a supplier's minimum order.

Stock now

The last count, plus deliveries logged since, minus any use you chose to log. If you only ever count, that is fine.

Critical is the number that converts

On the Summary, **Items Critical** is the count of things that will run out before you could restock them. In most labs the first number is between two and six. It is the clearest case you will ever make for reorder points, and the Monday list usually clears it within a fortnight.

"Our use varies week to week"

Use the average over a quarter and let safety stock absorb the variation. If one item swings wildly, give it two weeks of safety stock with the override, or a reorder point of your own. Do not try to model the campaign calendar in a spreadsheet.

Lead time is the honest number

Working days from placing the order to the box in your goods-in, as it actually happens. Each item takes its supplier's lead time unless you override it; an antibody that ships from the US gets its own.

Counting and ordering.

Monday: the Order list

Everything at Order now or Critical that is not already on order is organised into an order list, grouped by supplier with catalogue numbers, quantities and line costs. Paste the lines into your purchase request. Then, on the Stock list, put the date in **Last ordered** and the quantity in **Ordered qty**: the item moves to On order and drops off next week's list. In the Sheets edition that is one tap.

Thursday: the weekly count

Full stocktakes are massive time sinks. The Count tab names only the items within a week's use of their reorder point, never counted, or not counted for eight weeks. Five to ten items, sorted by location so you walk the lab once. Type the counts in; the sheet corrects itself.

When a delivery lands

Add a Received row to the **Log**: date, item, quantity. On order drops, stock now rises. Ran out of something? Add a Stock-out row; the Summary counts them by quarter.

Shown: Tarnside Bio, a fictional eight-person team, on demo Monday.

Stock list | **Order list** | Count | Log | Summary

As of 20 Oct 2026: **6 items to order, £1,240, from 3 suppliers.**

Supplier	Item	Cat. no.	Qty	Line	Status
Ardent Antibodies	Anti-CD3 antibody, 100 µg	AB-100302	12	£696.00	Critical
Ardent Antibodies	Anti-CD28 antibody, 100 µg	AB-100315	4	£220.00	Order now
Starline Plastics	Filter tips, 200 µL, sterile	S1120-8810	4	£180.00	Order now
Starline Plastics	Serological pipettes, 10 mL	S7550-1010	2	£64.00	Order now
Starline Plastics	Microcentrifuge tubes, 1.5 mL	S1615-5500	4	£48.00	Order now
Westbury Lab Supplies	Nitrile gloves, medium	GL-NIT-M	4	£32.00	Order now
	Total			**£1,240.00**	

Stock list | Order list | **Count** | Log | Summary

Thursday count: **8 items.** Walk the lab in this order and count only these.

Location	Item	Sheet	Why	Count
Fridge 2 (4 °C)	RPMI 1640, 500 mL	10	Near the reorder point	
Freezer B (-80 °C)	Human IL-2, recombinant, 50 µg	3	Near the reorder point	
Cell culture room	Cell counting slides	3	Near the reorder point	
Chemical store	Spill kit refill	2	Not counted for 14 weeks	
Store room	Pipette tips, 1000 µL	3	Near the reorder point	
Store room	Centrifuge tubes, 50 mL	3	Near the reorder point	
Store room	Safety glasses	2	Not counted for 14 weeks	
Office	Printer toner, black	2	Not counted for 14 weeks	

BROOKS BIO

Switching on the automated Sheets edition

The Google Sheets edition automates the week for you: Monday's list with a button to confirm what you ordered, Thursday's count form to the item owners, a button to log deliveries, and one alert when anything turns Critical or a delivery is late. It runs inside your own Google account; nothing is installed or sent to anyone else, including me.

1

ONCE · 2 MINUTES

Copy the sheet

Open the Google Sheets link from the download page and click **Make a copy**. Signed in to more than one Google account? Use a private window with only your work account.

2

ONCE

Open the Brooks Bio menu

Choose **Brooks Bio › Set up the tracker**. The first time, Google asks you to authorise your copy to send email and create a form: **Review permissions › Advanced › Go to Lab Inventory Tracker › Allow**. The warning appears because it is your own spreadsheet and not a published app.

3

ONCE

Fill in the panel, click Start

Your email, the item owners' names and work emails, the three times: Monday before you place orders, Thursday when people are between runs, the Critical check first thing. If someone else raises your orders (a MyAmici buyer, say), add them as the procurement contact and the Monday list is copied to them. **Send me the order list now** shows Monday in advance.

4

EVERY WEEK

Let it run

Monday: paste the list, tap **Confirm what you ordered**, tick the items. Thursday: each owner gets their items and one button. A delivery arrives: tap **Log a delivery** in any message. A delivery is late: one nudge the morning after it was due. **Stop the reminders** keeps your data.

Slack or Teams as well

Paste a webhook address into the panel and the Monday list, the count and the alerts land in a channel too. A channel member can usually make one without an administrator.

- **Slack:** Tools › Workflow Builder › New workflow › **From a webhook**. Add a variable called **text**, add a step **Send a message to a channel** using it, publish, copy the URL.
- **Teams:** channel › ··· › **Workflows** › **Post to a channel when a webhook request is received**. Copy the URL.

On Excel, or no Google account?

The sheet works in Excel 2019 or later; the Order list and Count tabs still write themselves. What you lose is the sending. Two recurring calendar reminders, Monday 09:00 "Open the Order list" and Thursday 14:00 "Walk the Count tab", run the same week with you pressing the buttons.

Where does the data go?

Your sheet, your form, your Google account. The script asks for the narrowest permissions it can: this spreadsheet, forms, sending mail as you, and a web request only if you give it a webhook.

The Summary, and what to do with it.

Order list | Count | Log | **Summary** | Suppliers

This week	Value	
Items tracked	42	
Items to order this week	6	
Value of this week's order	£1,240	
Items Critical	4	Look here
Items on order	2	
Stock-outs, last quarter	2	
Stock-outs, the quarter before	7	
Cash tied up in stock	£18,411	
Annual spend, all items	£191,591	
Suppliers in use	6	
Ordering hours per week now	26.0	
What that costs a year	£47,840	

Spend by supplier	Items	Annual	Share
Northfield Scientific	11	£78,611	41%
Merrick Life Sciences	9	£45,958	24%
Ardent Antibodies	5	£37,206	19%
Starline Plastics	9	£23,504	12%
Caledon Gases	2	£4,680	2%
Westbury Lab Supplies	6	£1,633	1%

Illustrative: Tarnside Bio on demo Monday. Annual spend is estimated from use per week and unit cost, not from invoices.

Four numbers to read

Items Critical. Order those today, whatever else happens. If one is on order, chase it. This number should be zero within a fortnight of starting and stay there.

Stock-outs by quarter. Log every one, even the ones you borrowed your way out of. The quarter-on-quarter comparison is the proof the system is working, and the thing to show whoever signs off the ordering time.

Cash tied up in stock. Usually more than people expect. If it hurts, drop the order cover from four weeks to two for expensive items with short lead times.

Spend by supplier. The first time most labs see it. Usually one supplier takes a third or more of the spend without a negotiated price, and three or four carry one or two items each. Both are the opening for an approved supplier list: fewer accounts, agreed prices on the top ten items, one ordering route.

When you have outgrown the sheet

Around 300 items, two sites, lot numbers and expiry per unit, or an approval step before orders go out. Then move to a system built for it: Quartzy and eLabInventory are the usual next steps for research labs, or a LIMS inventory module if you run one. Export the Stock list and keep the reorder-point habit; the tool changes, the maths does not. Until then, one **Expiry** column and the FEFO habit (first expired, first out) is enough.

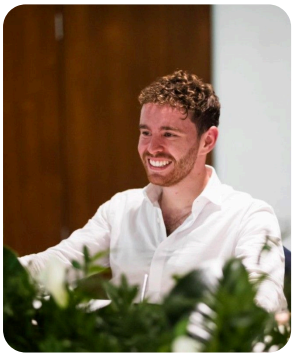
Want the proper version?

A free audit, up to half a day on site.

I walk the lab with your team, follow a sample from arrival to result, and look at how ordering, equipment, SOPs and data are actually handled day to day. Bring the Summary tab from this sheet and the Lab Time Audit if you have run them; they give us a head start. Within a week you get a short written report ranking the two or three operational problems costing you the most, with a recommended first fix. There is no obligation to go further.

brooksbio.co.uk

The supplier-consolidation work (approved list, agreed prices, one ordering route) is the usual follow-on from this sheet. Outside the UK? The audit works as a video call too. Email louis@brooksbio.co.uk



About Louis

I am the founder and principal consultant at Brooks Bio, a lab operations and compliance consultancy. Having spent countless hours in many labs, from highly regulated cell and gene therapy manufacturing to state-of-the-art cultivated meat facilities, and having founded my own startup, I know first-hand how to get the most out of a lab.

My approach is flexible and hands-on. I integrate into your team to find the areas that are costing you the most, work to unblock the bottlenecks, and implement systems that endure after I leave: LIMS implementations, automated ordering, data pipelines and equipment automation, built around the tools your team already uses.

Email louis@brooksbio.co.uk **Web** brooksbio.co.uk

LinkedIn Louis Brookstein

© Brooks Bio. You are welcome to share this guide and the stock list with your team and your network, unchanged and with this notice. Tarnside Bio and its suppliers are fictional. The thresholds and typical figures are drawn from Brooks Bio's work with client labs and are offered as guidance, not as benchmarks for any particular organisation.