

Bottom-Line Benefits of ISO 22000

ISO 22000 is a new International Standard designed to ensure safe food supply chains worldwide. Food safety management systems define the requirements for any organization in the food chain, providing a framework of internationally harmonized requirements for the global marketplace. The standard was developed by experts from the food industry, along with representatives of specialized international organizations. Ultimately the new standard will make it easier for organizations worldwide to implement the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) system for food hygiene in an effective and efficient methodology, which does not vary with the country or food product.

Food reaches consumers via supply chains that link different types of organizations and across multiple borders. A single weak link can result in unsafe food that is dangerous to health; the hazards to consumers are serious and the cost to food chain suppliers always considerable. As food safety hazards enter the food chain at any stage, control throughout the supply chain is essential.

ISO 22000 is designed to allow all organizations within the food chain to implement a food safety management system.

These firms include:

- Feed producers
- Primary producers
- Food manufacturers
- Transport and storage operators
- subcontractors to retail and food service outlets

Related organizations:

- Producers of equipment
- Packaging material
- Cleaning agents
- Additives and ingredients

The ISO 22000 standard became necessary due to the significant increase of illnesses caused by infected food in developed and developing countries. In addition to the health hazards, food-borne illnesses can give rise to considerable economic costs covering medical treatment, absence from work, insurance payments, and legal compensation.

A number of countries developed national standards for the supply of safe food; individual companies and organizations in the food sector developed their own standards for auditing suppliers. More than two dozen different auditing methodologies worldwide generated risks of uneven levels of food safety, as well as confusion over requirements and increased costs.

ISO 22000 incorporates the principles of HACCP and covers the requirements of key standards developed by various global food retailers all within a single document.

Technology Issues and ISO 22000/HACCP

According to Rebecca Gill, vice-president of Technology Group International, "Tracking domestic or worldwide food manufacturing and distribution is a daunting endeavor. To be able to manage these requirements effectively, an organization needs a structured and controlled operational environment in place and active. Managing such important procedures via paper and personal intervention is not only less than effective, it is highly dangerous. To truly comply with international food safety standards, an organization needs the assistance of an enterprise wide system to help control the operational

environment and properly track the entire supply chain."

From spinach to a myriad of other food products contamination continues to be a significant issue according to Gill that can only be addressed through technology that holds the process and people accountable. "Recently in the US, we have seen the horrific affects of tainted food products reaching our consumers. Some have died and many have become ill due to e coli in the food chain. Not only did this situation take FDA intervention to help minimize future fatalities, it took days to locate the source of this outbreak. Successfully deploying an ERP system and the associated operational controls it offers will not only offer better controls to foster limited exposure of contaminated products, it drastically speeds the process of damage control by swiftly facilitating a recall of the contaminated product across the supply chain. Attempting to manage this via a paper method is not only labor intensive, it wastes valuable time in controlling the negative effects in the marketplace."

Benefits of ISO 22000 Compliance:

Reduced cost of sales

ISO 22000 compliance immediately establishes a food company's credibility and commitment to safety. Demonstrating the effectiveness of a safety management system is straightforward and takes less time to earn customers' trust.

Lower risk of liability

The entire food chain suffers from consumers' exposure to hazards. Implementing ISO 22000, food companies take responsibility for consumer safety and lower the risk of insurance payments and legal costs.

Improved overall performance

A lean quality management system promotes continuous improvement in food products and processes, creating fewer errors, returns, and customer complaints. This generates improved relationships with suppliers and customers, providing a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

***Article captured from <http://www.ifsqn.com/index.php> By: Thomas R. Cutler**