

A REVIEW OF THE BRC GLOBAL STANDARD FOR FOOD SAFETY (ISSUE 5)

INTRODUCTION

The latest version of the Global Standard for Food Safety (Issue 5) has recently been released (January 2008). It was originally published in 1998 by the British Retail Consortium (BRC) but has now been adopted as a world-wide standard.

Dr Verner Wheelock of Verner Wheelock Associates has produced this document to help identify the major changes to the latest Standard and how we can help you ensure that you meet all the requirements of your next BRC audit, with particular reference to your training requirements.

BACKGROUND

When the Food Safety Act of 1990 came into force, the responsibility for the safety of Own Brands was placed fairly and squarely on the retailers. Initially, each retailer conducted an audit of their suppliers in an attempt to ensure that the products on sale were safe for human consumption.

For manufacturers supplying several different retailers, this could mean that they had to deal with a succession of audits. Furthermore, there were often significant differences between the various auditors.

It soon became apparent that it would be much more effective and economical for one audit to be carried out, provided the results were acceptable to all the parties involved.

In the event, a number of companies has evolved which conduct independent third party audits.

DEVELOPING THE STANDARD

A Working Party of the BRC devised a series of requirements to provide the basis for the audit to ensure consistency and confidence in the results.

The initiative has proved to be highly successful and has been adopted by many other companies throughout the world, hence the current title ~ Global Standards for Food Safety.

The **benefits** of using the Standard are as follows:

- It provides a single standard which allows an accredited audit by a third party certification body.

- It provides for a single audit which enables a manufacturer to demonstrate its level of competence in food safety and quality to customers and potential customers.
- It covers quality, hygiene and product safety.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

The Standard has been updated at regular intervals in the light of experience and to reflect the latest thinking on food safety. The current version is **Issue 5**.

The **key changes** in this version are as follows:

- There is much greater emphasis on the senior management commitment and continual improvement. The senior management shall demonstrate full commitment to the implementation of an effective food safety plan. In particular, **adequate resources**, both human and financial, must be provided to ensure improvement and implementation of the quality management system and the food safety plan (Section 1).
- When an audit for the Global Standard for Food Safety certification is being carried out, the most senior production or operations manager on the site must attend the opening and closing meetings (Section 1.12). This also reinforces the emphasis on senior management commitment outlined in Issue 5.
- The section on the HACCP Food Safety Plan (Section 2) has been thoroughly reviewed and contains guidance to ensure that a comprehensive HACCP study is done. The **Codex Alimentarius principles** must be used to develop and manage the HACCP plan.
- **The HACCP team leader must be qualified (Section 2.1.2). Experience alone is not enough.** All members of the HACCP Food Safety team should also have specific knowledge of HACCP as well as relevant knowledge of products, processes and hazards (Section 2.1.1). Records must be kept to show that HACCP team members have the required knowledge and understanding of HACCP (2.1.3).
- There is detailed guidance on the Management of Incidents, Product Withdrawal and Product Recall (Section 3.11), with the emphasis on contingency planning in the event of disruption of service, disaster or sabotage
- **More detailed guidance on the handling and labelling of Allergens** and Identity Preserved Materials to ensure the safety, legality and quality of the products are maintained (Section 5.2). **All relevant staff should be appropriately trained in handling procedures for allergen-containing materials** (Section 5.2.1.7).

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU MEET THE NEW STANDARD?

There are a number of areas within the Global Standard that specify a **need for training or qualifications**. Verner Wheelock Associates has been providing training courses for the food industry for nearly 20 years. Our courses have always been recognised as providing the necessary level of training for HACCP teams in a food manufacturing environment.

We can offer the following training courses to help you comply with the Global Standards for Food Safety in order to gain certification

HACCP

- **HACCP 'Making it Work'**
The ideal training course for all members of a HACCP team is our 2-day *HACCP 'Making it Work'* course. Successful completion of this course leads to the **RIPH Intermediate Certificate in Applied HACCP Principles**.
- **HACCP 'Taking it Further'**
For team leaders, and those who aspire to be team leaders, our 4-day *HACCP 'Taking it Further'* course must now be regarded as essential. This course leads to the **RIPH Advanced Certificate in Applied HACCP Principles** and is designed specifically for all those employed in the food industry who wish to establish, implement and manage HACCP systems and lead HACCP planning and implementation teams

We can also offer **basic HACCP training** to ensure that operatives have an awareness of the principles of HACCP.

Allergens

- We have developed a new course on Allergens and Food Labelling which will assist you in meeting the revised BRC requirements on Allergens (Section 5.2.1).

The first of these courses will run in September 2008

Auditing

We offer an Auditing Skills course which can provide your staff with the skills required to carry out an internal audit of systems and procedures covered by the Global Standard for Food Safety (Section 3.5).

- **Auditing Skills**
This 2-day course provides the theory, practical skills and confidence necessary to conduct an effective internal, third party or supplier audit.

We have also introduced a course which focuses specifically on Supplier Auditing. This course will provide the necessary skills to audit and monitor existing and potential new suppliers (Section 3.6)

- **Supplier Auditing**
This 1-day course is suitable for anyone who already has some experience of the auditing process, or for those who have completed our 2-day Auditing Skills course (above).
- **Auditor/Lead Auditor**
This four day course is specifically designed for the food and packaging industry and will provide delegates with an understanding of ISO 9001:2000, and the skills necessary to audit a complete quality management system.

All of the above courses are held regularly in Skipton. If you require training for 6 or more people we can arrange **tailored courses** at a time and place to suit you.

We can offer you a **FREE Training Needs Analysis** to help you identify any gaps in your current skills base, or a need for new qualifications or refresher training for your personnel.

This will enable us to devise a training programme specifically for your staff, to ensure that they fulfil the requirements of the Global Standard. The new Standard will be enforced from **July 2008** so it is imperative that training plans are implemented as soon as possible if you find that you are not currently meeting the requirements of Issue 5.

Contact **Helen Moore** on **01756 700802** or Helen.moore@vwa.co.uk to request a free review of your current training plan or further information on any of the above courses.

www.vwa.co.uk