

Update

NPMA LIBRARY UPDATE

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The GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY Initiative



Background of GFSI

Decades ago, forward-thinking global leaders in the retail and food industries established a forum in which executives could share information and promote productivity in the global business world. Through this forum, these industry leaders acknowledged the need to standardize certain business practices. This led to the creation of food safety requirements.

The descendant of CIES-The Food Business Forum, established criteria for food safety which could be truly international. This led to the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), which was released nearly ten years ago in Europe. The GFSI faced specific challenges as it related to existing food safety standards that focused on retail food safety. Rather than rewriting standards, the GFSI accepted certain existing

standards as acceptable and in compliance with post harvest food safety requirements. They have adopted other standards for agricultural processes. This Update is limited to manufacturing and distribution standards. The standards which may affect our work in pest management include:

- The British Retail Consortium's BRC Global Standards Version 5
- SQF 2000 Level 2
- International Food Standard Version 5
- Dutch HACCP Standard Option B
- Food Safety System Certification 22000 (currently conditional recognition)
- Global Red Meat Standard Version 3

Compliance with any of these standards meets GFSI criteria. As the CIES was composed of large retailers such as Wal-Mart, Metro (grocery) and others, these retailers will accept any supplier audited against any of the above four standards, unless they specify one in particular. CIES-The Food Business Forum (CIES originates from the French Comité International d'Entreprises à Succursales) merged with The Global Commerce Initiative (GCI) and the Global CEO Forum in mid-2009 and the group now represents over 650 retailers, manufacturers, service providers, and other interested parties from seventy countries. Now called the Consumer Goods Forum, gross revenues from member organizations total over two trillion Euros per year. The GFSI is an important part of the group.

GFSI Mission

According to GFSI documents, the GFSI Mission is (italicized text is from the GFSI documents):

Continuous improvement in food safety management systems to ensure confidence in the delivery of safe food to consumers

The GFSI Objectives are:

1. *Convergence between food safety standards through maintaining a benchmarking process for food safety management schemes.*
2. *Improve cost efficiency throughout the food supply chain through the common acceptance of GFSI recognized standards by retailers around the world.*
3. *Provide a unique international stakeholder platform for networking, knowledge exchange and sharing of best food safety practices and information.*

How is the Global Food Safety Initiative adding value to the Supply Chain?

Under the umbrella of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), 7 major retailers have come to a common acceptance of four GFSI benchmarked food safety schemes.

Retailers accept certificates based on standards in order to be able to make an assessment of their suppliers of private-label products and fresh products and meat, to ensure that produc-

tion is carried out in a safe manner. There are many of these standards and suppliers with many customers may be audited many times per year, at a high cost and with little added benefit.

The GFSI Guidance Document Version 5 (released September 2007), contains commonly agreed criteria for food safety standards, against which any food or farm assurance standard can be benchmarked. GFSI does not undertake any accreditation or certification activities.

The benchmarking work undertaken by the standard owners and other key stakeholders on four food safety schemes (BRC, IFS, Dutch HACCP, and SQF) has now reached a point of convergence. Each scheme has now aligned itself with common criteria defined by food safety experts from the food business, with the objective of making food manufacture as safe as possible. As a result, this will also drive cost efficiency in the supply chain and reduce the duplication of audits.

The GFSI vision of 'once certified, accepted everywhere' has now become a reality. Carrefour, Tesco, Metro, Migros, Ahold, Wal-Mart and Delhaize have agreed to reduce duplication in the supply chain through the common acceptance of any of the four GFSI benchmarked schemes.

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) coordinated by The Consumer Goods Forum, was launched in May 2000. The GFSI Foundation Board, a retailer-driven group, with manufacturer advisory members, provides the strategic direction and oversees the daily management. Membership of the Board is by invitation only.

The GFSI Technical Committee was formed in September 2006 and is composed of retailers, manufacturers, standard owners, certification bodies, accreditation bodies, industry association and other technical experts. It provides technical expertise and advice for the GFSI Board and replaces the previous GFSI retailer-only Task Force.

GFSI Stakeholders are also invited to participate in the decision-making process of GFSI through annual meetings and regular exchange of information. Stakeholders are any interested party that would like to have a voice within the GFSI structure.

GFSI Specific to Pest Management

The Standards for GFSI are specific in many areas, however, the pest management portions for manufacturing and distribution is practical and is consistent with the NPMA Pest Management Standards for Food Plants:

Good Manufacturing Practices and Good Distribution Practices

Pest control should be carried out by a reputable organization or by trained in-house personnel

Inspections should include the periphery and internal and external buildings

A bait map should be available A bait map should be available

Inspections should be carried out to a frequency based on risk

Inspections, recommendations and corrective action should be documented

Where appropriate correctly sited, permanently operational electric fly killers should be in place

All incoming goods should be inspected for pest infestation

The building should be adequately (pest) proofed

Beyond that, details are left to the benchmarked standards groups.

The accepted standards take the guidelines listed under GFSI and expand them into measurable components. Detail varies from group to group.

BRC Global Standards

Pest management requirements for the British Retail Consortium Standards, one of the accepted standards for GFSI, or BRC Global are summarized as follows:

- the facility is responsible for minimizing the risk of pest infestation on the site
- a preventative program must be in place
- written procedures and documentation must be maintained
- bait stations, glue boards, and/or sticky traps must be of design and used in a man-



ner which reduces risk of contamination to the product

- insect light traps and/or pheromone traps must be used properly and in a manner which reduces chance of contamination of the product by expelled insects
- in the event of an infestation, immediate action must be taken and in the event of potential product contamination, action must be taken to determine the damage and disposition of the product
- records must be properly maintained
- records must be analyzed for trends upon observation of an infestation or at least annually

Copyright laws prohibit the exact language from being printed; however, the BRC Global Standards can be viewed at www.brcglobalstandards.com.

SQF 2000

SQF 2000, a division of the Food Marketing Institute based near Washington, DC, also has requirements consistent with the NPMA requirements. SQF (Safe Quality Food) does get more specific (it addresses container disposal, but in the US, states have already addressed that issue with regulation and the EPA label has requirements documented). SQF Standards can be viewed at www.sqfi.com/SQF_2000_Code_Edition6.pdf, as copyright restrictions prohibit the publishing of the actual text in this document.

There are few differences between SQF 2000 and the BRC Global Standards. At this

time, the BRC and the SQF Standards are the most prevalent of the four standards in North America. Both systems are consistent with NPMA Standards.

Global Red Meat Standard

This program is for red meat producers and originated in the United Kingdom. The standards can be viewed at www.grms.org/smcms/grms/uk/standard/Index.htm?ID=11031.

Food Safety System Certification

Food Safety System Certification is administered by the Foundation for Food Safety Certification and incorporates the ISO 22000 certification for manufacturing. The standards can be found at www.fssc22000.com/page.php.

Dutch HACCP and International Food Standards (IFS Food)

The remaining two groups are European and their standards are not available for viewing online. Dutch HACCP is closely aligned with ISO 22000, an ISO standard for retail. ISO 22000 is being considered by the GFSI Technical Committee and that group will highlight parallels and differences between ISO 22000 and GFSI. IFS, or International Food Standards, is a part of International Featured Standards. Links to the groups can be found at www.foodsafetyinfo.com and www.food-care.info respectively.

How GFSI Affects Pest Management in the Field

As the senior management of many food producers and retailers are now part of the global Consumer Goods Forum, their support of the initiative will lead to a requirement that their facilities and supply chain comply with GFSI. Wal-Mart, for example, as an active member in the Consumer Goods Forum, supports the program and may require that suppliers comply with GFSI standards.

The GFSI standards can be met by using any of the adopted standards. Third party auditors such as AIB International, Silliker, etc., are now auditing facilities for compliance with GFSI, measuring observations against the benchmarked standards or GFSI in general. The facility is then "certified" as meeting the standards

and thus the standards of GFSI. Certification is now a prerequisite for vendors to many of the members of the Consumer Goods Forum. Also, requiring GFSI compliance is common for companies that are not members of the Consumer Goods Forum since their final product might be shipped to members of the CGF.

As part of the audit and certification process, auditors will examine the pest management program for compliance, similar to other auditing standards. As always, customers can specify to the auditing groups which standards are to be used for the audit. For example, a company may specify AIB standards, their own company standards, or BRC or SQF standards. Some of the pest management portion of the audit will require the facility to provide pest proofing, raw material inspection for pests, etc., so not all pest management practices fall on the pest management company.

Pest management companies should work closely with their customers to know what standards are to be met and what type of audit can be expected. It can be possible to have one audit to comply with GFSI, and then one audit conducted by the same auditor to comply with a customer corporate standard, so GFSI standards have not eliminated all other standards. While this may seem counterproductive, not all companies are on board with GFSI and some will take GFSI standards and add their own. This is why communication with the customer is so vital.

NPMA continues to work with GFSI and NPMA has received assurances from GFSI offices in Paris that the NPMA standards do in fact meet the standards of GFSI for pest management. While some auditors might not know about the NPMA standards, it is important that pest management companies continue the dialogue with the auditors.

GFSI is gaining ground in the standardization of the requirements for food safety. Pest management is a very important part of the GFSI standards and will become more visible in most facilities in years to come.

For further information about GFSI or to monitor updates, go to <http://www.mygfsi.com/>.