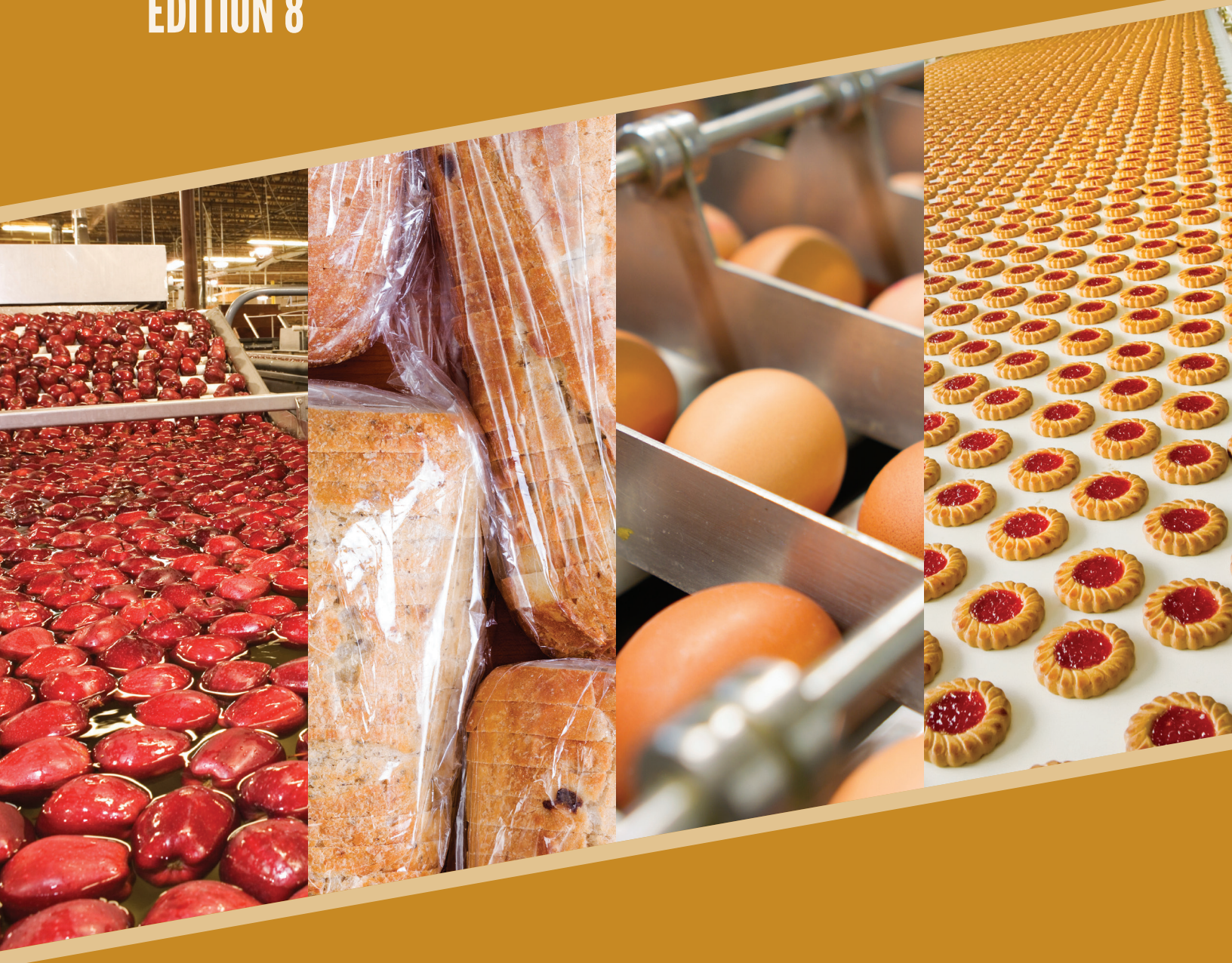
SQF Food Safety Fundamentals

EDITION 8



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Suggestions for improvements to this Code are encouraged from all parties. Written comments are to be sent to SQFI at 2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 800, Arlington, VA, 22202, USA.

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SQF Code, edition 8

The Safe Quality Food Institute's (SQFI) SQF Code, edition 8 has been updated and redesigned in 2017 for use by all sectors of the food industry from primary production to storage and distribution and now includes a food safety code for retailers. It replaces the SQF Code, edition 7.

The SQF Code is a site-specific, process and product certification standard with an emphasis on the systematic application of CODEX Alimentarius Commission HACCP principles and guidelines for control of food safety and food quality hazards.

Certification to the SQF Code supports industry- or company-branded product and offers benefits to certified sites and their customers. The implementation of an SQF System addresses a buyer's food safety and quality requirements and provides the solution for businesses supplying local and global food markets. Products produced and manufactured under SQF Code certification retain a high degree of acceptance in global markets.

First developed in Australia in 1994, the SQF program has been owned and managed by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) since 2003, and was first recognized in 2004 by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)* as a standard that meets its benchmark requirements.

Certification of a site's SQF System by a Safe Quality Food Institute licensed certification body is not a statement of guarantee of the safety of the site's product, or that it meets all food safety regulations at all times. However, it is an assurance that the site's food safety plans have been implemented in accordance with the CODEX HACCP method as well as applicable regulatory requirements and that the System has been verified and determined effective to manage food safety. Further, it is a statement of the site's commitment to

1. produce safe, quality food,
2. comply with the requirements of the SQF Code, and
3. comply with applicable food legislation.

SQF Code, edition 8 is applicable to all certification and surveillance audits conducted after January 2, 2018. Those sites with an existing SQF certification will be required to upgrade their Systems to meet the requirements outlined in edition 8 by that date.

This reference document is published in English, but is also available in other languages. Where there is any divergence between the translated version and the reference document, the English reference document will prevail. For further definition of words used in this document, please refer to *Appendix 2: Glossary.*

**The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is an industry initiative established by the international trade association, the Consumer Goods Forum.*

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Part A: Implementing and Maintaining the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals

SQF is a food safety code for all sectors of the food supply chain from primary production through to food retailing and the manufacture of food packaging. Edition 8 is now available in separate documents depending on the industry sector and the stage of development of the site's food safety system.

This document is an entry level for new and developing businesses covering only GAP/GMP/GDP requirements and basic food safety fundamentals. Other documents are available for:

The SQF Food Safety Code for Primary Production

The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing

The SQF Food Safety Code for Storage and Distribution

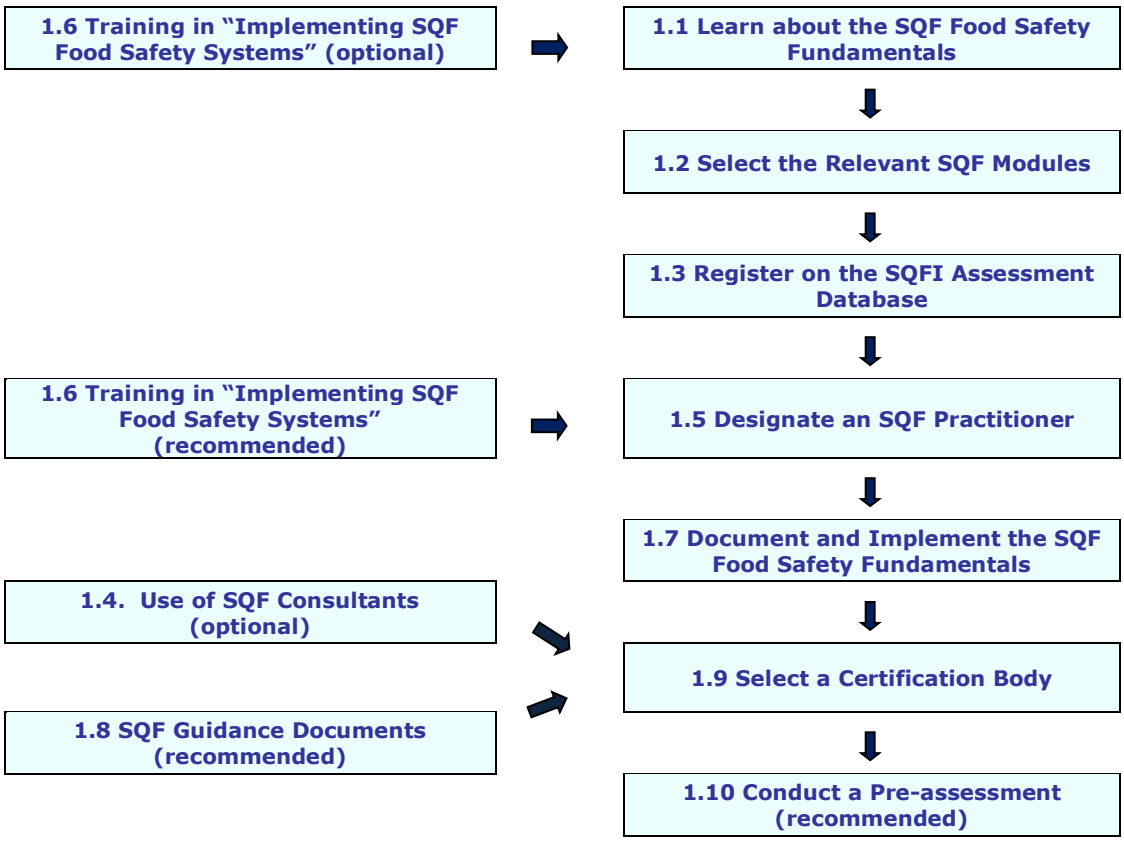
The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacture of Food Packaging

The SQF Food Safety Code for Food Retail

The SQF Quality Code

1. Preparing for Certification

Figure 1: Steps for Certification



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1.1 Learn about the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals

There are several ways to learn how to implement the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals within your site. The following options are available:

- Attend a training course "Implementing SQF Systems" (refer Part A, 1.6) through a licensed SQF training center (recommended);
- Take the online training course "Implementing SQF Systems" available from the SQFI website (sqfi.com);
- Train yourself by downloading the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals from the SQFI website (sqfi.com) free of charge, and read how to apply it to your industry sector.

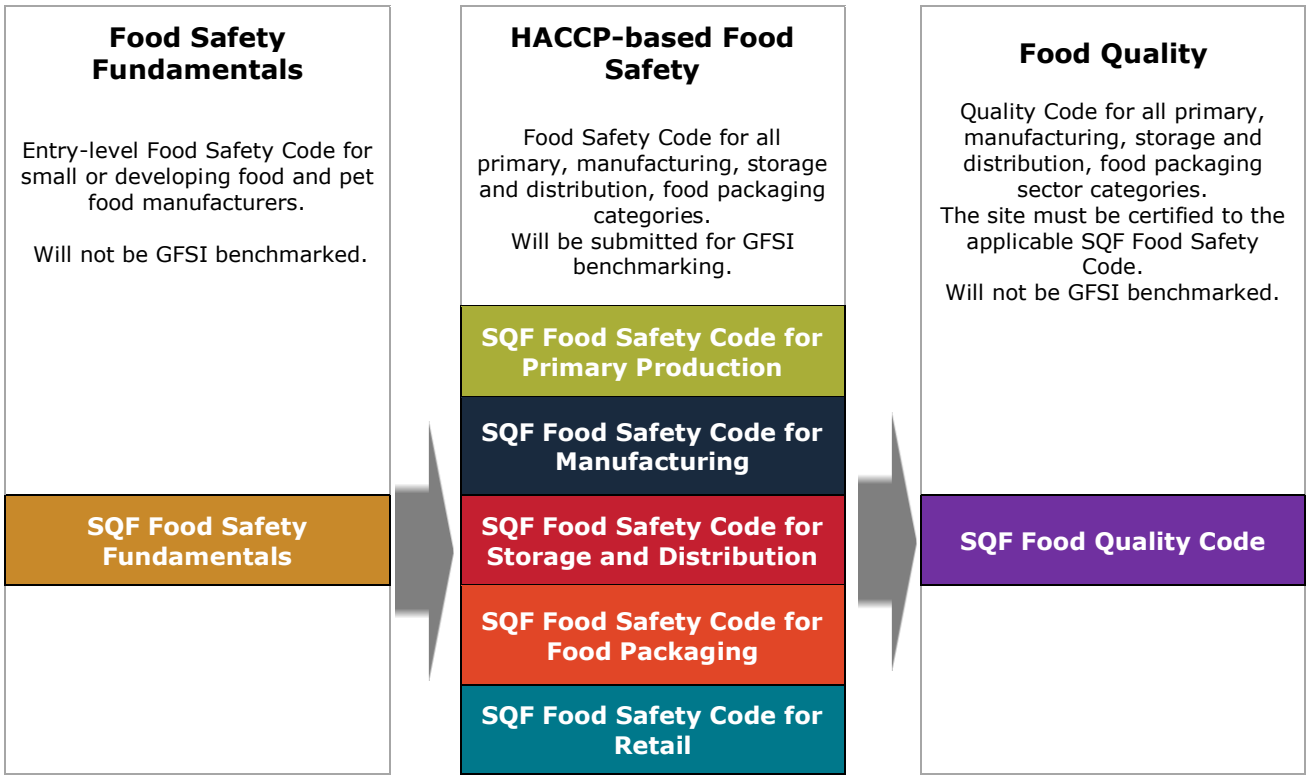
1.2 Select the Relevant SQF Modules

SQFI recognizes that food safety practices differ depending on the food safety risk to the product and the process, and has designed the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals to meet the individual requirements of each industry sector.

The SQF food sector categories and applicable modules are listed in full in Appendix 1. It includes a more detailed description with examples, level of risk, and the relationship with the GFSI industry scopes outlined in the GFSI Requirements Document.

However the following provides a guide to the SQF Codes and modules that apply to each primary production, food manufacturing, storage and distribution, and manufacture of food packaging industry sector or groups of industry sectors.

This document contains the certification program owner management requirements (Part A), the system elements, and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)/Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP) modules across all industry sectors (Part B).



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SQF Food Safety Fundamentals **Entry level Food Safety Code for small or developing food and pet food manufacturers**		
FSC	**Category**	**Applicable GMP Modules**
3	Growing and Production of Fresh Produce and Nuts	Module 7: GAP for farming of plant products (fruit and vegetables) Or Module 7H: GAP for farming of plant products
8	Processing of Manufactured Meats and Poultry	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
9	Harvest and Intensive Farming of Seafood Processing	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
10	Dairy Food Processing	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
11	Apiculture and Honey Processing	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
12	Egg Processing	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
13	Bakery and Snack Food Processing	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
14	Fruit, Vegetable and Nut Processing, and Fruit Juices	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
15	Canning, UHT and Aseptic Operations	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
16	Ice, Drink and Beverage Processing	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
17	Confectionery Manufacturing	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
18	Preserved Foods Manufacture	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
19	Food Ingredient Manufacture	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
20	Recipe Meals Manufacture	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
21	Oils, Fats, and the Manufacture of oil or fat-based spreads	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
22	Processing of Cereal Grains	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
25	Repackaging of products not manufactured on site.	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
26	Food Storage and Distribution	Module 12: GDP for storage and distribution of food products
27	Manufacture of Food Packaging	Module 13: GMP for manufacture of food packaging
31	Manufacture of Dietary Supplements	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products
33	Manufacture of Food Processing Aides	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products

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1.3 Register on the SQF Database

To be considered for SQF certification, sites are required to register in the SQFI assessment database. The database can be accessed from the SQFI website (sqfi.com).

Registration is annual, and there is a fee per site payable at registration and renewal. The fee scale is dependent on the size of the site as determined by gross annual sales revenue. The fee scale is available on the SQFI website (sqfi.com).

Sites must register with SQFI prior to achieving certification, and must remain registered at all times to retain their certification. If the site fails to maintain registration, the certificate will be invalid until the site is properly registered in the SQFI assessment database.

1.4 Use of SQF Consultants

Sites can choose to develop and implement their SQF food safety System using their own qualified resources or they can utilize the services of a registered SQF consultant. All SQF consultants are registered by the SQFI to work in specific food sector categories (refer Part A, Table 1 and Appendix 1). They are issued with an identity card indicating the food sector categories in which they are registered. Sites are encouraged to confirm an SQF consultant's registration details on the SQFI website (sqfi.com) before engaging their services. The criteria outlining the requirements necessary to qualify as an SQF consultant and the application forms are available on the SQFI website (sqfi.com). The SQF Consultant Code of Conduct outlines the practices expected of SQF consultants.

1.5 Food Safety Responsibility

Whether or not an SQF consultant is used, the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals requires that every site has a suitably qualified full time employee to oversee the development, implementation, review and maintenance of the SQF System, including the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/ Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). The requirements for a qualified person responsible for implementing and maintaining the SQF system are described in the system elements, 2.1.2.4 and 2.1.2.5.

Some sites may choose to have more than one person responsible for the SQF System to meet shift and operational requirements.

1.6 SQF Implementation Training

An "Implementing SQF Food Safety Systems" training course is available through the SQFI network of licensed training centers. Employees who are responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining the requirements of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals are encouraged to participate in a training course. Details about the training centers and the countries in which they operate are available on the SQFI website (sqfi.com). The dates and locations of the courses can be obtained by contacting the training centers.

The "Implementing SQF Food Safety Systems" training course is not mandatory for the person responsible for implementing and maintaining the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals, but is strongly recommended.

The SQFI also has an "Implementing SQF Food Safety Systems" online training course which can be accessed from the SQFI website (sqfi.com). The online training solution is a web-based education portal where staff can enroll and complete SQF Systems training in their own time and at their own pace.

Training in other food industry disciplines, such as HACCP, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Internal Auditing may also be required and licensed SQF training centers can provide details of the other training courses they provide.

1.7 Document and Implement the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals

To achieve SQF food safety certification, the site must document and implement the system elements and the relevant GMP/GDP/GAP Modules of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals (refer Part A, 1.2). This requires a two stage process:

Document the SQF System – prepare policies, procedures, work instructions and specifications that meet the system elements and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/ Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) modules of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals. In other words, "say what you do."

Implement the SQF System – implement the prepared policies, procedures, work instructions and specifications, and keep records to demonstrate compliance to the relevant modules of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals. In other words, "do what you say." SQFI recommends that a minimum of two months of records be available before a site audit is conducted.

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1.8 SQF Guidance Documents

Guidance documents are available for some SQF modules and food sector categories from the SQFI website (sqfi.com). These documents are available to help the site interpret the requirements of the SQF Code and assist with documenting and implementing an SQF System. The documents are developed with the assistance of food sector technical experts.

The guidance documents are available to assist the site, but are not auditable documents. Where there is a divergence between the guidance document and the SQF Code, the SQF Code in English prevails.

1.9 Select a Certification Body

Certification bodies are licensed by SQFI to conduct SQF audits and issue the SQF certificate. SQFI licensed certification bodies are required to be accredited to the international standard ISO/IEC 17065:2012 (or subsequent versions as applicable) and be subject to annual assessments of their certification activities by SQFI licensed accreditation bodies.

The site is required to have an agreement with a certification body in place at all times which outlines the SQF audit and certification services provided. These include as a minimum:

i. The scope of certification (refer Part A, 2.2);

ii. The expected time to conduct and finalize the audit and the reporting requirements;

iii. The certification body's fee structure;

iv. The conditions under which the SQF certificate is issued, withdrawn or suspended; and

v. The certification body's appeals, complaints and disputes procedure.

A current list of licensed certification bodies is available on the SQFI website (sqfi.com). Certification bodies are also listed in the SQFI assessment database and sites can request a quote or select a certification body online once they have registered.

Sites seeking to implement an SQF multi-site program (refer Appendix 4) must indicate this in their application to the certification body. The agreed multi-site program, including the identification of the central site and number and names of the sub-sites, must be included in the agreement with the certification body.

1.10 Conduct a Pre-assessment Audit

A pre-assessment audit is not mandatory, but is recommended to provide a "health check" of the site's implemented SQF food safety System. A pre-assessment audit can assist in identifying gaps in the site's SQF food safety System so that corrective action can occur before engaging the selected certification body for a full certification audit. It can be conducted using internal resources, a registered SQF consultant, or a registered SQF food safety auditor.

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2. The Initial Certification Process

2.1 Selection of the SQF Auditor(s)

SQF food safety auditors must be employed by or contracted to an SQFI licensed certification body, and must be registered with the SQFI.

The certification body shall select the most appropriate qualified SQF food safety auditor(s) for the site's SQF certification audit, including vertically integrated sites. The SQF food safety auditor must be registered for the same food sector category (ies) as the site's scope of certification (refer Part A, 2.2). The certification body shall ensure no SQF food safety auditor conducts audits of the same site for more than three consecutive certification cycles.

The certification body must advise the site of the name of the SQF food safety auditor at the time that the SQF audit is scheduled. The site may check the registration and food sector category (ies) of the SQF food safety auditor in the register on the SQFI website (sqfi.com).

2.2 Identifying the Scope of Certification

The scope of certification shall be clearly identified and agreed upon between the site and certification body prior to the initial certification audit and included in the scope of the initial certification audit and all subsequent audits (refer Part A, 2.4). The scope of certification shall determine the relevant system elements and GAP/GMP/GDP modules to be documented and implemented by the site and audited by the certification body, and cannot be changed during or immediately following a certification or re-certification audit.

For requirements on changing the scope of certification, refer Part A, 5.1.

The scope of certification shall include:

> **The site.** SQF certification is site specific. The entire site, including all premises, support buildings, silos, tanks, loading and unloading bays and external grounds must be included in the scope of certification. Where a site seeks to exempt part of the premises, the request for exemption must be submitted to the certification body in writing prior to the certification audit, detailing the reason for exemption. If approved by the certification body, exemptions shall be listed in the site description in the SQFI assessment database and in audit reports(s). However, all parts of the premises and process that are involved with the production, processing and storage of products included in the scope cannot be exempted.

When activities are carried out in different premises but are overseen by the same senior, operational, and technical management, and are covered by the one SQF System, the site can be expanded to include those premises.

Exempted parts of the site must not be promoted as being covered by the certification. Instances where promotion of exempted equipment or areas of the site are identified and substantiated (either by regular audit or by other means) shall result in immediate withdrawal of the SQF certification.

> **The products.** SQF certification is product specific. The food sector category (ies) and products processed and handled on site shall be identified and agreed in the scope of certification. Where a site seeks to exempt any products processed or handled on site, the request for exemption must be submitted to the certification body in writing prior to the certification audit, explaining the reason for exemption. If approved by the certification body, product exemptions shall be listed in the site description in the SQFI assessment database and in audit reports(s).

Exempted products must not be promoted as being covered by the certification. Instances where promotion of exempted products or processes are identified and substantiated (either by regular audit or by other means) shall result in immediate withdrawal of the SQF certificate. The scope of certification forms part of the certificate. It describes the location of the site, the food sector categories (refer Appendix 1) and the products processed and handled on that site.

All products produced, stored or processed on the site shall be included on the site's certificate, unless exempted by the site. The site must demonstrate that exemptions of part of the site or products from the scope of certification does not put certificated product at food safety risk.

2.3 The Initial Certification Audit

The SQF certification audit consists of two stages:

i. The desk audit is undertaken to verify that the site's SQF System documentation meets the requirements of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals.

ii. The site audit is conducted on site and determines the effective implementation of the site's documented SQF food safety System.

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Where a site operates under seasonal conditions (a period in which the major activity is conducted over five (5) consecutive months or less) the certification audit shall be completed within the season.

2.4 Identifying the Scope of the Audit

The site and the certification body shall agree on the audit scope before the certification audit begins. The scope of the audit shall include:

- The agreed scope of certification including any approved exemptions (refer Part A, 2.2);
- The version of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals, and the applicable GAP/GMP/GDP Modules;
- The audit duration (refer Part A, 2.5);
- The designated registered SQF food safety auditor; and
- The certification body's fees structure including travel time, report writing, ancillary costs, and costs for close-out of non-conformities.

Once the audit scope is agreed between the site and the certification body, it cannot be changed once the audit has commenced.

2.5 Audit Duration Guide

Once the certification body and site have agreed on the scope of certification, the number of different processes and products manufactured and handled on the site, the certification body shall provide the site with an estimate of the time it will take to complete the certification audit.

The audit times will vary according to the size and complexity of the site operations. Factors that can impact on the audit duration include:

i. The scope of the audit;
ii. The size of the site and the design of product and people flows;
iii. The number and complexity of product lines and the overall process;
iv. Whether the product is high or low risk;
v. The complexity of the SQF System design and documentation;
vi. The level of mechanization and labor intensiveness;
vii. The ease of communication with company personnel (consider different languages spoken);
viii. The cooperation of the site's personnel.

Tables 2 and 3 provide a guide to the duration of an SQF certification audit. Justification is required if the certification body deviates from this guide by greater than thirty (30) percent.

This is a guide only, and the certification body must determine the duration of each certification audit based on the scope of certification, the food safety risk, and the complexity of the processes.

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Table 2: Desk Audit Duration Table

Code	Basic duration (days)
Food Safety Fundamentals	0.5 days

Table 3: Site Audit Duration Table

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
Code	Basic duration (days) (includes three HACCP plans)	Additional Days based on Number of employees	Additional Days based on Size of site
Food Safety Fundamentals	1.0	1 to 200 = 0 201 to 400 = 0.5 401 to 600 = 1.0 601 to 1000 =1.5 1001 to 2500 = 2.0 2501 to 4000= 2.5 > 4,000 = 3.0	0 – 200,000 ft^2 = 0 (0 – 19,000 m^2 = 0) 200,001 – 300,000 ft^2 = 0.5 (19,001 – 27,000 m^2 = 0.5) 300,001 – 500,000 ft^2 = 1.0 (27,000 – 46,000 m^2 = 1.0)
Additional time for each HACCP plan(s) *(where there are multiple / different plans)*	0.5 day per additional 3 HACCP plans or 3 additional production/manufacturing processes		

In addition to audit time, the certification body shall provide the site with the time and expected costs for planning, travel, report writing, and close out of non-conformities.

2.6 The Desk Audit

An independent desk audit is conducted by the certification body only for initial certification. The desk audit is conducted by the registered SQF food safety auditor appointed by the certification body, and ensures:

i. An appropriately qualified person responsible for implementing and maintaining the SQF System is designated;

ii. The documented system is relevant to the scope of certification

The certification body shall notify the site of corrections or corrective action, or any aspects of the SQF food safety System that requires improvement or adjustment. The certification body will also verify that all corrections or corrective action for major and minor non-conformances have been addressed before proceeding with a site audit.

Desk audits are not scored or rated and the close out times indicated in Part A, 3.2 do not apply.

2.7 The Site Audit

The site audit is conducted on site by the SQF food safety auditor appointed by the certification body. It is conducted at a time agreed between the site and the certification body when the main processes are operating. The site audit must include a review of the entire site, including the inside and outside of the building, regardless of the scope of certification and agreed exemptions. The site audit shall include a review of all operational and cleaning shifts and pre-operational inspections, where applicable.

The site audit determines if the SQF system is effectively implemented as documented. It establishes and verifies the:

i. Effectiveness of the SQF food safety system in its entirety;

ii. Food safety hazards are effectively identified and controlled;

iii. Effective interaction between all elements of the SQF system; and

iv. Level of commitment demonstrated by the site to maintaining an effective SQF system and to meeting their food safety regulatory and customer requirements; and

v. The exempted products or areas of the site do not pose a food safety risk to the products covered under certification.

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2.8 Corporate Audits

Where a site is part of a larger corporation and some food safety functions are conducted at a corporate head office (i.e. an office that does not process or handle products), an optional corporate audit can be conducted by the certification body of the Code elements managed by the corporate office.

The decision on whether a separate corporate audit is required shall be made by agreement between the certification body and the site and communicated to SQF certified sites managed by the corporate office.

Where a corporate audit is conducted, the audit evidence shall be reviewed and all identified corporate non-conformities closed out before the site audits are conducted. Any open non-conformities shall be attributed to the site or sites.

The SQF food safety auditor shall also audit the application of the corporate functions relative to the site's scope of certification during the audit of each site managed by the corporate office. All mandatory and applicable elements of the SQF food safety Code shall be audited at each site irrespective of the findings of the corporate audit.

Corporate head office audits do not apply to designated central sites within an SQF multi-site program (refer Appendix 4).

2.9 Seasonal Production

Initial certification audits for sites involved in seasonal production (i.e. a period in which the major production activity is conducted over not more than five consecutive months) shall be conducted during the peak operational part of the season.

Where sites seek to include products from more than one season within their scope of certification, the site and certification body shall agree to conduct the initial certification audit during the highest risk and/or highest volume production operation. Documentation and records for other seasonal production shall be reviewed as part of the certification audit.

2.10 System Elements

All applicable system elements and the relevant Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/ Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) modules(s) shall be assessed as part of the certification audit. Where an element is not applicable and appropriately justified, it shall be stated as "not applicable" (N/A) by the SQF food safety auditor in the audit report.

Within the system elements, the elements listed below are mandatory elements that cannot be reported as "not applicable" or "exempt" and must be audited and compliance/non-compliance reported. The mandatory elements are:

2.1.1 Food Safety Policy
2.1.2 Management Responsibility
2.1.3 Management Review
2.1.4 Complaint Management
2.2.1 Food Safety Management System
2.2.2 Document Control
2.2.3 Records
2.4.1 Food Legislation
2.4.2 Food Safety Fundamentals
2.4.4 Approved Supplier Program
2.5.1 Validation and Effectiveness
2.5.2 Verification and Monitoring
2.5.3 Corrective and Preventative Action
2.5.5 Internal Audit
2.6.1 Product Identification
2.6.2 Product Trace
2.6.3 Product Withdrawal and Recall
2.7.1 Food Defense Plan
2.8.1 Allergen Management for Food Manufacturing (mandatory for food manufacturers only)
2.9.2 Training Program

Mandatory elements are designated with "Mandatory" in the system elements in the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals.

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2.11 Non-conformities

Where the SQF food safety auditor finds deviations from the requirements of relevant modules of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals, the SQF food safety auditor shall advise the site of the number, description, and extent of the non-conformities. Non-conformities may also be referred to as non-conformances.

Non-conformities against the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals shall be graded as follows:

- **A minor non-conformity** is an omission or deficiency in the SQF System that produces unsatisfactory conditions that if not addressed may lead to a risk to food safety but not likely to cause a system element breakdown.
- **A major non-conformity** is an omission or deficiency in the SQF System producing unsatisfactory conditions that carry a food safety risk and are likely to result in a system element breakdown.
- **A critical non-conformity** is a breakdown of control(s) at a critical control point, a pre-requisite program, or other process step and judged likely to cause a significant public health risk and/or where product is contaminated.

A critical non-conformity is also raised if the site fails to take effective corrective action within the timeframe agreed with the certification body, or if the certification body deems that there is systemic falsification of records relating to food safety controls and the SQF System.

Critical non-conformities cannot be raised at desk audits. Timelines for the resolution of corrective actions are addressed in Part A, 3.2.

2.12 Audit Evidence Record and Audit Report

The SQFI provides the certification body with the electronic audit checklist to be used by the SQF food safety auditors when conducting SQF food safety audits. The SQF food safety audit checklist is available from the SQFI assessment database and is customized for SQF industry sector. The SQF checklist is designed to ensure the uniform application of SQF food safety audit requirements. It is used by SQF food safety auditors to record their findings and determine the extent to which site operations comply with stated requirements (i.e. the audit evidence record).

Mandatory elements (refer Part A, 2.10) must be reported for the SQF food safety audit report to be submitted.

Non-conformities identified during the SQF food safety audit shall be accurately described in the SQF food safety audit report and shall fully describe the clause of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals and the reason for the non-conformity. Non-conformity reports shall be left provided to the site by the SQF food safety auditor before the close of the site audit.

The electronic audit evidence record shall be completed by the SQF auditor and provided to the certification body for technical review.

The certification body shall review and approve the audit evidence record and make it available to the site within ten (10) calendar days from the last day of the audit. A final audit report, with completed and approved corrective actions shall be made available to the site before the final certification decision is made (45) calendar days from the last day of the site audit (refer Part A, 3.4).

The SQF food safety audit reports shall remain the property of the site and shall not be distributed to other parties without the permission of the site.

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3. The Initial Certification Decision

3.1 Responsibility for the Certification Decision

It is the responsibility of the certification body to ensure that audits undertaken by their SQF food safety auditors are thorough, that all requirements are fulfilled, and the audit report is complete. The audit report is in draft form and the audit evidence is only recommended until technically reviewed and approved by the authorized certification manager of the certification body.

The certification decision shall be made by the certification body based on the evidence of compliance and non-conformity recommended by the SQF food safety auditor during the SQF audit. Although SQFI provides guidance on certification, the certification body is responsible for deciding if certification is justified and granted based on the objective evidence provided by the SQF food safety auditor.

Any certification decisions that are made outside the scope of this clause require the certification body to provide written justification to SQFI.

3.2 Site Audit Corrective Actions

All non-conformities and their resolution shall be documented by the SQF food safety auditor. The close-out timeframe for major and minor non conformities identified below apply to the site audit only.

- **A minor non-conformity** shall be corrected, verified and closed out by the SQF food safety auditor within thirty (30) calendar days of the completion of the site audit. Extensions may be granted by the certification body where there is no immediate threat to product safety, and alternative, temporary methods of control are initiated. The site shall be advised of the extended timeframe. Where an extension is granted, the non-conformity shall still be closed out and the SQF food safety auditor shall document all details of justification of the extension, how the risk is being controlled, and the agreed completion date.
- **A major non-conformity** shall be corrected and appropriate corrective action verified and closed out within thirty (30) calendar days of the completion of the site audit.

  In circumstances where the corrective action involves structural change or cannot be corrected due to seasonal conditions or installation lead times, this period can be extended provided the corrective action time frame is acceptable to the certification body and temporary action is taken by the site to mitigate the risk to product safety. However, in such cases, the non-conformity shall be closed out and the SQF food safety auditor shall document all details of justification of the extension, how the risk is being controlled, and the agreed completion date. A documented root cause analysis shall be submitted by the site as part of the corrective action evidence for every major non-conformity.
- If the SQF food safety auditor considers that a critical non-conformity exists during a certification audit, the SQF food safety auditor shall immediately advise the site and notify the certification body. A critical non-conformity raised at an initial certification audit results in an automatic failure of the audit, and the site must re-apply for certification (refer Part A, 3.5).

3.3 Audit Score and Rating

Based on the evidence collected by the SQF food safety auditor, each applicable aspect of the SQF certification food safety audit is automatically scored in the audit report. Desk audits are not scored.

The calculation uses the following factors:

0 aspect meets the criteria

1 aspect does not meet the criteria due to minor variations (minor non-conformity)

10 aspect does not meet the criteria (major non-conformity)

50 aspect does not meet the criteria (critical non-conformity)

A single rating is calculated for the site audit as (100 – N) where N is the sum of the individual rating criteria allocated. The rating provides an indication of the overall condition of the site against the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals, and also provides a guideline on the required level of surveillance by the certification body. The audit frequency at each rating level is indicated as follows:

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Score	Rating	Certification[1]	Audit Frequency
96 - 100	E - Excellent	Certificate issued	12 monthly re-certification audit
86 - 95	G – Good	Certificate issued	12 monthly re-certification audit
70 – 85	C - Complies	Certificate issued	6 monthly surveillance audit
0 - 69	F – Fails to comply	No certificate issued	Considered to have failed the SQF audit

[1.] Certification also requires that all major and minor non-conformities are closed out within thirty (30) calendar days.

3.4 Granting Certification

Certification of the SQF System shall be awarded to sites that achieve a "C - complies" audit rating or greater with no outstanding non-conformities. The certification decision shall be made within forty-five (45) calendar days of the last day of the site audit. Once SQF certification is granted, the SQFI issues a unique certification number which is specific to that site.

Within ten (10) calendar days of granting certification, the certification body shall provide an electronic and/or hard copy of the site's certificate. The certificate is valid for seventy-five (75) days beyond the anniversary of the initial certification audit date.

The certificate shall be in a form approved by the SQFI and include:

i. The name, address and logo of the certification body;

ii. The logo of the accreditation body, and the certification body's accreditation number;

iii. The heading "certificate;"

iv. The phrase "(site name) is registered as meeting the requirements of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals, edition 8;"

v. The scope of registration – SQF Food Safety Fundamentals, edition 8, food sector category(ies) and products;

vi. Dates of audit (last day), date of next re-certification audit, date of certification decision, and date of certificate expiry;

vii. Indication of unannounced re-certification audit (where applicable);

viii. Signatures of the authorized officer and issuing officer; and

ix. SQF logo.

Certified site's information shall be posted to the SQFI website (sqfi.com).

3.5 Failure to Comply

Where a site achieves an "F – fails to comply" rating at a food safety certification audit, the site is considered to have failed the SQF food safety audit. The site must then re-apply for another site audit.

When the site's re-application occurs within six (6) months of the last audit date, and with the same certification body, a site audit shall be scheduled, but a desk audit is not required. If the re-application occurs after six (6) months from the last audit date, or with a new certification body, then a desk audit and site audit are required.

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4. Surveillance and Re-certification

4.1 Maintaining Certification

To maintain SQF food safety certification, a site is required to attain a "C - complies" audit rating or greater at re-certification audits, ensure that surveillance and/or re-certification audits occur within the required timeframe, ensure that no critical non-conformities are raised at surveillance or re-certification audits, and that all major and minor non-conformities are corrected within the time frame specified.

All re-certification audits shall be considered announced unless otherwise indicated as unannounced on the audit report and certificate.

4.2 Surveillance Audit

The surveillance audit is conducted when the site attains a "C - complies" rating at a certification audit or re-certification audit. The surveillance audit shall be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days either side of the six (6) month anniversary of the last day of the previous certification or re-certification audit.

A new score and rating is issued at the surveillance audit, but the re-certification audit date is not affected.

The surveillance audit is a full SQF system audit. In particular, the surveillance audit is intended to:

i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous audits;

ii. Verify that the SQF system continues to be implemented as documented;

iii. Consider and take appropriate action where changes to the site's operations are made and the impact of those changes on the site's SQF System;

iv. Confirm continued compliance with the requirements of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals;

v. Verify all critical steps remain under control; and

vi. Contribute to continued improvement of the site's SQF System and business operation.

Major or minor non-conformities raised at the surveillance audit shall be closed out as indicated in Part A, 3.2.

4.3 Surveillance Audit – Seasonal Operations

Seasonal operations are sites whose major activity is conducted over not more than five consecutive months in any calendar year.

Seasonal operations that attain a "C - complies" rating at a certification or re-certification audit are subject to a surveillance audit.

Where the due surveillance audit date falls within the operational season, the surveillance audit shall occur within thirty (30) days either side of the six (6) month anniversary of the last day of the previous certification or re-certification audit.

Where the due date of the surveillance audit falls outside the operational season, the certification body shall conduct a pre-operational audit no less than thirty (30) days prior to the next season. The pre-operational audit shall comprise a full review of corrective actions from the last audit, and preparedness for the next re-certification audit.

4.4 Re-certification Audit

The re-certification audit of the SQF System is undertaken to verify the continued effectiveness of the site's SQF System in its entirety.

The re-certification audit shall be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days either side of the anniversary of the last day of the initial certification audit.

The re-certification audit score is calculated in the same way as the initial certification audit, and the same rating applied (refer Part A, 3.3).

Written approval by the SQF Compliance Manager is required to issue a temporary extension to a site's re-certification audit timeframe and certificate expiry date including instances in extreme circumstances such as acts of nature or extreme weather. Seasonal sites shall refer to Part A, 4.5.

Situations that require a permanent change to the re-certification audit date require written approval by the SQF Compliance Manager and the site's new re-certification date may be moved earlier than the anniversary and the new re-certification date fixed as the new initial certification audit date.

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All extension requests shall come from the certification body that issued the site's SQF certificate.

The purpose of the re-certification audit is to:

i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous audits;

ii. Verify that the SQF food safety System continues to be implemented as documented;

iii. Verify that internal audits, annual reviews of the crisis and food defense plans and recall system, and management reviews have been effectively completed;

iv. Verify that corrective and preventative actions have been taken on all non-conformities;

v. Consider and take appropriate action where changes to the site's operations are made and the impact of those changes on the site's SQF food safety System;

vi. Verify all critical steps remain under control and the effective inter-action between all elements of the SQF System;

vii. Verify the overall effectiveness of the SQF System in its entirety in the light of changes in operations;

viii. Verify that the site continues to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of the SQF System and to meeting regulatory and customer requirements; and

ix. Contribute to continued improvement of the site's SQF System and business operation.

4.5 Re-certification Audit – Seasonal Operations

The re-certification audit of seasonal operations shall follow the requirements of Part A, 4.4. However, where there is a significant change in seasonal operations whereby the re-certification audit sixty (60) day window cannot be met, the certification body and site shall temporarily reset the re-certification audit date so that it falls during the peak operational part of the season.

If the site wishes to permanently change the re-certification audit date due to seasonal conditions, the request must be made to the SQF Compliance Manager in writing.

4.6 Variations to the Re-certification Process

The requirements for the re-certification audit are the same as those described in Part A, 2.1 – 3.4 for the certification audit, with the following exceptions:

i. An independent desk audit is not required as part of a re-certification audit. However, an integrated desk and site audit shall be conducted at each re-certification. The site's documentation shall be reviewed as necessary as part of the site audit.

ii. If the site fails to permit the re-certification or surveillance audit within the agreed timeframe, the certification body shall immediately suspend the site's certificate.

iii. If the site receives an "F – fails to comply" rating at the re-certification or surveillance audit, the certification body shall immediately suspend the site's certificate.

If the site fails to close out non-conformities within the agreed timeframe, the certification body shall immediately suspend the site's certificate.

4.7 Unannounced Re-certification Audit

Within three (3) certification cycles the certification body shall conduct one (1) unannounced re-certification audit of the site. The unannounced food safety audit shall occur within the sixty (60) day re-certification window (i.e., the anniversary date of the initial certification audit +/- thirty (30) days). SQF sites shall be required to undertake one (1) unannounced audit within the three (3) year certification cycle.

i. The site's certification cycle begins with the initial certification audit date. Unannounced re-certification audits shall occur once in every three (3) certification cycles.

ii. Unannounced audits shall not be conducted on the initial certification audit or on a surveillance audit.

iii. If a site changes certification bodies, the site's unannounced re-certification audit schedule shall not change.

iv. The unannounced re-certification audit shall follow the protocol under the SQF Code, Part A, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6.

v. Those sites that fall under the SQF multi-site program are exempted from unannounced audits.

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vi. The unannounced audit year shall be determined between the site and certification body.

vii. The date of the unannounced audit shall be determined by the certification body within the sixty (60) day re-certification audit window.

viii. A defined blackout period shall be established by negotiation between the site and their certification body that prevents the unannounced re-certification audit from occurring out of season or when the site is not operating for legitimate business reasons.

ix. Immediate suspension of the site certificate will occur in facilities that refuse entry to the SQF food safety auditor for an unannounced audit.

x. Certificates issued following unannounced re-certification audits shall indicate that the audit was unannounced.

A site may forgo the three year certification cycle requirement and voluntarily elect to have annual unannounced re-certification audits. If annual unannounced re-certification audits are conducted by the site then the protocol outlined for the three year certification cycle audit shall be followed. Sites with annual unannounced re-certification audits shall be recognized on the SQF certificate as an "SQFI select site."

4.8 Suspending Certification

The certification body shall suspend the SQF certificate if the site:

i. fails to permit the re-certification or surveillance audit,

ii. receives an "F – fails to comply" rating,

iii. fails to take corrective action within the timeframe specified for major non-conformities,

iv. fails to permit an unannounced audit,

v. fails to take corrective action within the timeframe specified in Part A, 3.2,

vi. where in the opinion of the certification body, the site fails to maintain the requirements of the SQF food safety Fundamentals.

Where the site's certificate is suspended, the certification body shall immediately amend the site details on the SQFI assessment database to a "suspended" status indicating the reason for the suspension and the date of effect; and in writing:

i. inform the site of the reasons for the action taken and the date of effect;

ii. copy the SQF Compliance Manager on the notice of suspension sent to the site,

iii. request that the site provides to the certification body, within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving notice of the suspension, a detailed corrective action plan outlining the corrective action to be taken.

When the site's certificate is suspended, the certification body shall upon receipt of the detailed corrective action plan:

i. Verify that the immediate correction has been taken by the means of an on-site visit within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the corrective action plan;

ii. When corrective action has been successfully implemented, re-instate the site status on the SQFI assessment database and give written notice to the site that their certificate is no longer suspended;

iii. Not more than six (6) months after suspension, the certification body shall conduct a further unannounced site visit to verify the effective implementation of the corrective action plan and that the site's SQF System is achieving stated objectives; and

iv. Copy SQFI on the notice indicating lifting of the suspension sent to the site.

When a certification body has suspended a site's SQF certificate, for the duration of suspension, the site shall not represent itself as holding an SQF certificate.

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4.9 Withdrawing Certification

The certification body shall withdraw the certificate when the site:

i. Has been placed under suspension and fails to submit approved corrective action plans as defined by the certification body within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving notice of the suspension, or fails to take approved corrective action as determined by the certification body within the time frames specified;

ii. Has falsified its records;

iii. Fails to maintain the integrity of the SQF certificate; or

iv. Has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets or where an order is made or a resolution passed for the closure of the site (except for the purposes of amalgamation or reconstruction) or the site ceases to carry on business or becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors or makes any arrangement or composition with its creditors.

When the site's certificate is withdrawn, the certification body shall immediately amend the site's details on the SQFI assessment database to a "withdrawn" status indicating the reason for the withdrawal and the date of effect; and in writing:

i. Inform the site that the SQF certificate has been withdrawn, the reason for such action and the date of effect;

ii. Copy SQFI on the notice of withdrawal sent to the site; and

iii. Instruct the site to return the certificate within thirty (30) days of notification.

A site that has their certificate withdrawn will not be permitted to apply for certification for twelve (12) months from the date the certificate was withdrawn by the SQFI certification body. The withdrawn site will be posted on the SQFI website (sqfi.com) for twelve (12) months.

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5. Obligations of Sites and Certification Bodies

5.1 Changing the Scope of Certification

When a site wishes to add food sector categories or new products to their scope of certification, the site may request the increased scope of certification in writing to the certification body.

The certification body shall conduct a site audit of the additional process or products and shall either issue a new certificate, or advise the site in writing why the new certificate cannot be issued.

An audit for an increase in scope shall not change the re-certification date or certificate expiry date. When a new certificate is issued, the re-certification audit date and certificate expiry date shall remain as per the original certificate.

The certification body shall make the appropriate scope changes to the site record in the SQFI assessment database.

Where the scope change is a new process or a major change to an existing process, a new product line, or a significant change in personnel, raw materials, packing materials or ingredients, the certification body shall be advised in writing.

Where the request is received within thirty (30) days prior to the re-certification audit window, the certification body shall defer the scope extension to the next re-certification audit and shall advise the site. No new certificate shall be issued until after a successful re-certification audit.

5.2 Changing the Certification Body

A site can change its certification body after one certification cycle and only when there has been closure of all outstanding non-conformities, provided that the certification is not suspended or under threat of suspension or withdrawal.

Sites that require a surveillance audit are permitted to change certification bodies only after the surveillance audit is conducted or by written approval from the SQFI Compliance Manager.

When a site changes certification bodies, the certificate issued by the previous certification body remains valid until the expected expiration date.

The certification number and re-certification date are transferred with the site to the new certification body.

The new certification body shall undertake a pre-transfer review of the site's certification to:

i. Confirm the certificate is current, valid and relates to the SQF System so certified;

ii. Confirm the site's food sector category falls within the new certification body's scope of accreditation;

iii. Confirm any complaints received are actioned;

iv. Review the site's audit history (where the site can demonstrate such history to the satisfaction of the new certification body by way of copies of audit reports completed by any previous certification body) and the impact of any outstanding non-conformities;

v. Confirm the stage of the current certification cycle.

When a site changes their certification body, the site shall make the last re-certification audit report and surveillance audit report (where applicable) available to the new certification body.

5.3 Notification of Product Recalls and Regulatory Infringements

Upon identification that a certified site initiates a food safety event that requires public notification (such as Class l or Class ll recall, or the receipt of a regulatory warning letter), the site shall notify the certification body and the SQFI in writing at foodsafetycrisis@sqfi.com within twenty-four (24) hours of the event.

The site's certification body and SQFI shall be listed in the site's essential contacts lists as defined in system element 2.6.3 of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals.

The certification body shall notify the SQFI within a further forty-eight (48) hours of any action it intends to take to ensure the integrity of the certification.

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5.4 Compliance and Integrity Program

To meet the requirements of SQFI's Compliance and Integrity Program, SQFI may from time to time monitor the activities of the certification bodies and their auditors. These monitoring techniques include, but are not limited to validation audits and/or witness audits. While conducting these additional monitoring activities, sites shall be required to allow additional SQFI-authorized representatives, staff or auditors into their site during the audit or after the audit has taken place. The attendance of an SQFI representative shall not interfere with operations, or result in additional audit time or non-conformities, and will not increase the cost charged by the certification body for the audit.

5.5 Change of Ownership

When a certified site's business has been sold and the business name is retained, the new owner shall, within thirty (30) calendar days of the change of ownership, notify the certification body and apply to retain the SQF certification and the existing certification number. In cases where the ownership of a certified site changes, but the staff with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the SQF food safety System has been retained, the certification body may retain the existing audit frequency status. In making this application, the certification body shall determine that staff with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the SQF System has been retained.

If there are significant changes in site management and personnel, the certification body shall complete a certification audit and issue a new certificate and a new certification number. The audit frequency applicable to a new certification shall apply.

5.6 Relocation of Premises

When a certified site relocates their business premises, the site's certification does not transfer to the new site. A successful certification of the new premises must be conducted. Although the site's certificate number shall remain the same, an initial certification audit of the new premise shall apply, i.e. a desk audit and site audit.

5.7 Use of a Technical Expert

Technical experts may be used to assist SQF food safety auditors in audits where the auditor is SQF registered but does not possess some or any site's food sector category (ies), or for high risk products/processes where the audit would benefit from expert technical advice.

The use of a technical expert to assist an SQF food safety auditor in the performance of an SQF audit is permitted provided the site has been notified before the audit and accepts their participation. The technical expert must sign a confidentiality agreement with the certification body.

Before the audit, the certification body must submit the technical qualifications of the technical expert and the justification for use of the technical expert to the SQF Compliance Manager.

Technical experts must:

- Hold a university degree in a discipline related to the food sector category for high risk sectors, or a higher education qualification for low risk categories;
- Have received HACCP training with certificate of attainment issued; and
- Have five years' full-time experience in a technical, professional, or supervisory position related to the food sector category and specific products.

Technical experts are to be physically present during the site audit.

5.8 Language

The certification body shall ensure that the SQF food safety auditor conducting the audit can competently communicate in the oral and written language of the site being audited.

In circumstances where a translator is required, the translator shall be provided by the certification body and shall have knowledge of the technical terms used during the audit; be independent of the site being audited and have no conflict of interest. The site shall be notified of any increase in audit duration and cost associated with the use of a translator.

For the purpose of resolving a conflict, the English version of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals shall be the deciding reference.

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5.9 Conflict of Interest

The certification body shall ensure that all certification activities are separately controlled and managed (including the development of policy and practices) from any consulting activity. It shall preclude any prospective SQF food safety auditor from undertaking any audit in relation to the certification of SQF System that constitute a conflict of interest as outlined below or any other condition that could lead to a conflict of interest.

SQF food safety auditors shall not audit anywhere they have participated in a consulting role involving the site in question, or anybody related to the site, within the last two (2) years (considered to be participating in an active and creative manner in the development of the SQF System to be audited, including the development of food safety plans). Consulting includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

i. Producing or preparing food safety plans, manuals, handbooks or procedures;

ii. Participating in the decision making process regarding SQF System;

iii. Giving advice – as a consultant or otherwise – toward the design, documentation, development, validation, verification, implementation or maintenance of SQF System; and

iv. Deliver or participate in the delivery of an "in-house" food safety training service at which advice and instruction on the development and implementation of food safety plans and SQF system for eventual certification is provided.

The certification body shall ensure that an SQF food safety auditor discloses any existing, former or proposed link between themselves or their organization and the site.

The certification body shall ensure through organizational structure that no potential conflict of interest, consulting, or training occurs from auditors contracted or employed by the certification body to existing or potential sites within the SQF Program.

A site can refuse the service of an SQF food safety auditor when they consider the auditor has a conflict of interest, or for other reasons. In such circumstances, the site shall outline the reasons in writing to the certification body.

5.10 Complaints, Appeals and Disputes

The certification body shall document, and provide to the site, its procedure for handling and resolving appeals, complaints and disputes made by a site, or made by another party about a site.

When a site has cause to register a complaint about a certification body's activities, or appeals or disputes a decision made by a certification body, including the activities and decisions of its auditors, the certification body shall investigate and resolve these matters without delay and keep a record of all complaints, appeals and disputes and their resolution.

When a certification body receives a complaint about a site from other parties, the certification body is required to investigate and resolve the matter without delay and keep a record of all complaints, appeals and disputes and their resolution.

Appeals regarding decisions on the suspension and/or withdrawal of the SQF certification by a certification body shall not delay the decision to suspend or withdraw the certification.

When upon investigation of a complaint it is determined that there has been a substantiated breakdown of a site's SQF System or any other condition not in accordance with the SQF Food Safety Code for manufacturing and/or other supporting documents, the certification body shall suspend certification as outlined in Part A, 4.8.

Where a complaint is registered about the conduct or behavior of an auditor or certification body personnel, the certification body shall investigate and resolve the complaint without delay and keep a record of all complaints and their resolution.

Records of complaints made to certification bodies and their investigations shall be available to the SQFI upon request. Where a complaint, appeal or dispute cannot be satisfactorily resolved between the site and the certification body, the matter shall be referred to the SQFI complaints and appeals procedure via the SQF website (sqfi.com). Complaints and comments about the SQF Code, the SQF assessment database, SQF training centers and consultants can also be registered at this address.

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Part B: The SQF Food Safety Fundamentals

Part B is the auditable standard for the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals. It comprises the SQF System Elements for Food Safety Fundamentals, and the relevant Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) modules for the applicable food sector categories (refer Part A, 1.2).

Scope, References and Definitions

Scope

SQF System Elements for Food Safety Fundamentals: The System Elements identify the food safety system elements for SQF sites whose primary function includes primary production, food manufacturing, storage and distribution, and manufacture of food packaging (food sector categories 3, 8-22, 25-27, 31, 33).

Modules 7, 11, 12 and 13: The individual modules describe the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) requirements applicable to the various food industry sectors. The site must meet the requirements of the module or modules applicable to their food industry sector.

References

The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing refers to the current edition of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission Guidelines for the Application of the Hazard Analysis.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Code the definitions outlined in *Appendix 2: Glossary* apply.

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SQF System Elements for Food Safety Fundamentals

2.1 Management Commitment

2.1.1 Food Safety Policy (Mandatory)

2.1.1.1 Senior site management shall prepare and implement a policy statement that outlines as a minimum the:

i. The site's commitment to supply safe food;

ii. Methods used to comply with its customer and regulatory requirements, and

iii. The site's commitment to establish and review food safety objectives.

2.1.2 Management Responsibility (Mandatory)

2.1.2.1 The reporting structure describing those who have responsibility for food safety shall be identified and communicated within the site.

2.1.2.2 The senior site management shall make provision to ensure fundamental food safety practices and all applicable requirements of the SQF System are adopted and maintained.

2.1.2.3 The senior site management shall ensure adequate resources are available to achieve food safety objectives and support the development, implementation, maintenance and ongoing improvement of the SQF System.

2.1.2.4 Senior site management shall designate an SQF practitioner for each site with responsibility and authority to:

i. Lead the development and implementation of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/ Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) outlined in 2.4.2.

ii. Oversee the development, implementation, review and maintenance of the SQF System, and

iii. Take appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the SQF System.

2.1.2.5 The person responsible for implementing and maintaining the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals shall:

i. Be employed by the site as a company employee on a full-time basis;

ii. Hold a position of responsibility in relation to the management of the site's SQF System;

iii. Be competent to implement and maintain food safety fundamentals; and

iv. Have an understanding of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals and the requirements to implement and maintain SQF System relevant to the site's scope of certification.

2.1.2.6 The responsibility for establishing and implementing the training needs of the organization shall be defined and documented as outlined in 2.9.

2.1.2.7 All staff shall be informed of their responsibility to report food safety problems to personnel with authority to initiate action.

2.1.2.8 Job descriptions for those responsible for food safety shall be documented and include provision to cover for the absence of key personnel.

2.1.3 Management Review (Mandatory)

2.1.3.1 The senior site management shall be responsible for reviewing the SQF System and documenting the policy statement.

2.1.3.2 The SQF System in its entirety shall be reviewed at least annually.

2.1.3.3 Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/ Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and other aspects of the SQF system shall be reviewed and updated as needed when any potential changes implemented have an impact on the site's ability to deliver safe food.

2.1.3.4 All changes made to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/ Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and other aspects of the SQF System shall be validated or justified.

2.1.3.5 Records of all reviews, validations and changes to the SQF System shall be maintained.

2.1.4 Complaint Management

This clause does not apply.

2.1.5 Crisis Management Planning

This clause does not apply.

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2.2 Document Control and Records

2.2.1 Food Safety Management System (Mandatory)

2.2.1.1 A food safety management system shall be documented and maintained in either electronic and/or hard copy form. It shall outline the methods the organization will use to meet the requirements of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals Code, be made available to relevant staff and include:

i. The food safety policy statement and organization chart;

ii. The scope of the certification;

iii. A list of the products covered under the scope of certification;

iv. Include or reference the written procedures, pre-requisite programs and other documentation necessary to support the development and the implementation, maintenance and control of the SQF System.

2.2.2 Document Control (Mandatory)

2.2.2.1 Documents shall be safely stored and readily accessible.

2.2.2.2 A register of current SQF System documents and amendments to documents shall be maintained.

2.2.3 Records (Mandatory)

2.2.3.1 All records shall be legible and suitably authorized by those undertaking monitoring activities that demonstrate inspections, analyses and other essential activities have been completed.

2.2.3.2 Records shall be readily accessible, retrievable, securely stored to prevent damage and deterioration and shall be retained in accordance with periods specified by a customer or regulations.

2.3 Specification and Product Development

2.3.1 Product Development and Realization

This clause does not apply.

2.3.2 Raw and Packaging Materials

2.3.2.1 Specifications for raw materials and packaging materials including, but not limited to ingredients, additives, hazardous chemicals and processing aids, that impact on finished product safety shall be documented, comply with relevant legislation, and kept current.

2.3.3 Contract Service Providers

This clause does not apply.

2.3.4 Contract Manufacturers

This clause does not apply.

2.3.5 Finished Product

2.3.5.1 Finished product specifications shall be documented, current, approved by the site and their customer, accessible to relevant staff and may include:

i. Microbiological and chemical limits; and

ii. Labeling and packaging requirements.

2.4 Food Safety System

2.4.1 Food Legislation (Mandatory)

2.4.1.1 The site shall ensure that, at the time of delivery to its customer, the food supplied shall comply with the legislation that applies to the food and its production in the country of its origin and destination if known. This includes compliance with legislative requirements applicable to maximum residue limits, food safety, packaging, product description, net weights, nutritional, allergen and additive labeling, any other criteria listed under food safety legislation, and to relevant established industry codes of practice.

2.4.2 Food Safety Fundamentals (Mandatory)

2.4.2.1 The site shall ensure the practices described in the relevant subsequent modules of this Code are applied or exempted according to a risk analysis outlining the justification for exclusion or evidence of the effectiveness of alternative control measures to ensure that food safety is not compromised.

2.4.3 Food Safety Plan

This clause does not apply.

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2.4.4 Approved Supplier Program (Mandatory)

2.4.4.1 Raw materials, ingredients, packaging materials, and services that impact on finished product safety shall meet the agreed specification (2.3.2) and be supplied by an approved supplier.

2.4.4.2 Inspections and analyses shall conform to standard reference methods.

2.4.4.3 Records of inspections and analyses shall be maintained.

2.4.5 Non-conforming Product or Equipment

2.4.5.1 Non-conforming product, raw material, ingredient, work-in-progress, packaging or equipment shall be quarantined, handled, re-worked or disposed of in a manner that minimizes the risk of inadvertent use, improper use or risk to the integrity of finished product.

2.4.5.2 Records of the handling and disposal of non-conforming product shall be maintained.

2.4.6 Product Rework

2.4.6.1 Rework (recycle or regroup) activities shall be controlled and traceability ensured.

2.4.7 Product Release

This clause does not apply.

2.4.8 Environmental Monitoring

2.4.8.1 A risk-based environmental monitoring program shall be in place for all food and pet food manufacturing processes.

2.4.8.2 The responsibility and methods for the environmental monitoring program shall be documented and implemented.

2.4.8.3 An environmental sampling and testing schedule shall be prepared, detailing the applicable pathogens or indicator organisms to test for that industry, the number of samples to be taken and the frequency of sampling.

2.4.8.4 Environmental testing results shall be monitored and corrective actions (refer 2.5.3.1) implemented where unsatisfactory trends are observed.

2.4.8.5 Records of environmental monitoring shall be maintained.

2.5 SQF System Verification

2.5.1 Validation and Effectiveness (Mandatory)

2.5.1.1 The methods, responsibility and criteria for ensuring the effectiveness of all applicable elements of the SQF program shall be documented and implemented.

2.5.2 Verification Activities

2.5.2.1 A verification schedule outlining the verification activities, their frequency of completion and the person responsible for each activity shall be prepared and implemented.

2.5.2.2 Monitoring activities associated with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)/Good Distribution Practices (GDP)/ Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), and other food safety controls, and the legality of certified products, shall be documented and implemented.

2.5.3 Corrective and Preventative Action (Mandatory)

2.5.3.1 Corrective action shall be undertaken to resolve non-compliance.

2.5.3.2 Records of corrective action shall be maintained.

2.5.4 Product Sampling, Inspection and Analysis

This clause does not apply.

2.5.5 Internal Audits (Mandatory)

2.5.5.1 The methods and responsibility for scheduling and conducting internal audits to verify the effectiveness of the SQF System shall be documented and implemented. Internal audits shall be conducted at least annually. The methods applied shall ensure:

i. Correction and corrective action of deficiencies identified during the internal audits are undertaken;

ii. Records of internal audits and any corrections and corrective action taken as a result of internal audits shall be maintained.

2.6 Product Identification, Trace, Withdrawal and Recall (Mandatory)

2.6.1 Product Identification (Mandatory)

2.6.1.1 A product identification system shall be implemented to ensure:

i. Product is clearly identified during all stages of receipt, production, storage and dispatch; and

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ii. Finished product is labeled to the customer specification and/or regulatory requirements.

2.6.1.2 Product identification records shall be maintained.

2.6.1.3 Product changeover procedures during packing shall be documented and implemented to ensure that the correct product is in the correct package and that the changeover is inspected and approved by an authorized person.

2.6.2 Product Trace (Mandatory)

2.6.2.1 A product trace system shall be implemented to ensure:

i. Finished product is traceable to the customer (one up) and provides traceability through the process to the manufacturing supplier and date of receipt of raw materials, food contact packaging and materials and other inputs (one back);

ii. Traceability is maintained where product is reworked; and

iii. The effectiveness of the product trace system shall be reviewed at least annually.

2.6.2.2 Records of raw and packaging material receipt and use, and finished product dispatch and destination shall be maintained.

2.6.3 Product Withdrawal and Recall (Mandatory)

2.6.3.1 The site shall outline the methods and responsibility for notifying their customers and other essential bodies where circumstances arise that require product to be withdrawn or recalled from distribution.

2.6.3.2 SQFI and the certification body shall be notified in writing within 24 hours upon identification of a food safety event that requires public notification. SQFI shall be notified at foodsafetycrisis@sqfi.com.

2.6.3.3 Records of all product withdrawals, recalls and mock recalls shall be maintained.

2.7 Food Defense and Food Fraud

2.7.1 Food Defense Plan (Mandatory)

2.7.1.1 The methods, responsibility and criteria for preventing food adulteration caused by a deliberate act of sabotage or terrorist-like incident shall be documented, implemented and maintained.

2.7.1.2 A food defense plan shall include:

i. The name of the senior management person responsible for food defense;

ii. The methods implemented to ensure only authorized personnel have access to manufacturing and storage areas through designated access points;

iii. The methods implemented to protect sensitive processing points from intentional adulteration;

iv. The measures taken to ensure the secure receipt and storage of raw materials, packaging, equipment and hazardous chemicals;

v. The measures implemented to ensure raw materials, ingredients, packaging materials, work-in progress, process inputs and finished products are held under secure storage and transportation conditions; and

vi. The methods implemented to record and control access to the premises by employees, contractors, and visitors.

2.7.2 Food Fraud

This clause does not apply.

2.8 Allergen Management

2.8.1 Allergen Management for Food Fundamentals (Mandatory)

2.8.1.1 The responsibility and methods used to control allergens and to prevent sources of allergens from contaminating product shall be documented and implemented. The allergen management program shall include:

i. A risk analysis of those raw materials, ingredients and processing aids, including food grade lubricants, that contain food allergens;

ii. An assessment of workplace-related food allergens from locker rooms, vending machines, lunch rooms, visitors;

iii. A register of allergens which is applicable in the country of manufacture and the country(ies) of destination if known;

iv. A list of allergens which is accessible by relevant staff.

v. The hazards associated with allergens and their control incorporated into the food safety plan.

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vi. A management plan for control of identified allergens.

2.8.1.2 Instructions shall be provided to all relevant staff involved in the receipt or handling of raw materials, work-in progress, rework or finished product on how to identify, handle, store and segregate raw materials containing allergens.

2.8.1.3 Provision shall be made to clearly identify and segregate foods that contain allergens. Segregation procedures shall be implemented and continually monitored.

2.8.1.4 Where allergenic material may be intentionally or unintentionally present, cleaning and sanitation of product contact surfaces between line changeovers shall be effective, appropriate to the risk and legal requirements, and sufficient to remove all potential target allergens from product contact surfaces, including aerosols as appropriate, to prevent cross contact. Separate handling and production equipment shall be provided where satisfactory line hygiene and clean-up or segregation is not possible

2.8.1.5 Based on risk assessment, procedures for validation and verification of the effectiveness of the cleaning and sanitation of areas and equipment in which allergens are used shall be effectively implemented.

2.8.1.6 Where allergenic material may be present, product changeover procedures shall be documented and implemented to eliminate the risk of cross-contact.

2.8.1.7 The product identification system shall make provision for clear identification and labeling in accordance with regulatory requirements of those products produced on production lines and equipment on which foods containing allergens were manufactured.

2.8.1.8 The site shall document and implement methods to control the accuracy of finished product labels (or consumer information where applicable) and assure work in progress and finished product is true to label with regard to allergens. Such measures may include label approvals at receipt, label reconciliations during production, destruction of obsolete labels and verification of labels on finished product as appropriate and product change over procedures.

2.8.1.9 The product trace system shall take into consideration the conditions under which allergen containing foods are manufactured and ensure full trace back of all ingredients and processing aids used.

2.8.1.10 Re-working of product containing food allergen shall be conducted under conditions that ensure product safety and integrity is maintained. Re-worked product containing allergens shall be clearly identified and traceable.

2.8.1.11 Sites that do not handle allergenic materials or produce allergenic products shall document, implement and maintain an allergen management program addressing at a minimum the mitigation of introducing unintended allergens through supplier, contract manufacturer, employee and visitor activities.

2.9 Training

2.9.1 Training Requirements (Mandatory)

2.9.1.1 Appropriate training shall be provided for personnel carrying out the tasks essential to the effective implementation of the SQF System and the maintenance of food safety and regulatory requirements.

2.9.2 Training Program (Mandatory)

2.9.2.1 An employee training program shall be documented and implemented. It shall outline the necessary competencies for specific duties and the training methods to be applied for those staff carrying out tasks associated with:

i. Developing and applying Good Agricultural Practices, Good Manufacturing Practices or Good Distribution Practices (as appropriate).

ii. Applying food regulatory requirements.

2.9.3 Instructions

2.9.3.1 Instructions shall be available in the languages relevant to the staff, explaining how all tasks critical to meeting regulatory compliance, the maintenance of food safety and process efficiency are to be performed.

2.9.4 HACCP Training Requirements

This clause does not apply.

2.9.5 Language

2.9.5.1 Training materials and the delivery of training shall be provided in language understood by staff.

2.9.6 Refresher Training

2.9.6.1 The training program shall include provision for identifying and implementing the refresher training needs of the organization.

2.9.7 Training Skills Register

2.9.7.1 A training skills register describing who has been trained in relevant skills shall be maintained.

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Module 7: Good Agriculture Practices for Farming of Plant Products (GFSI BI)

This module covers the Good Agriculture Practices requirements for the growing and harvesting of fruits and vegetables and nuts.

Sites implementing this module must also meet the requirements of the SQF System Elements for Primary Production.

Applicable food sector categories (FSCs) are:

FSC 3: Growing and production of fresh produce and nuts

All applicable elements of Module 7 shall be implemented. Where an element is not applicable a request for exemption must be appropriately justified and submitted to the certification body in writing before the audit.

7.1 Site Requirements

7.1.1 Property Location

7.1.1.1 The farm and facilities shall be such that adjacent and adjoining buildings, operations and land use do not interfere with the safe and hygienic operations on the property.

7.1.1.2 Production and growing sites shall have a risk assessment conducted to evaluate and document the risk to crops due to prior land use, adjacent land use, and other environmental factors including structures and equipment. Consideration shall be given to the following:

i. History of land use;

ii. Topography;

iii. Adjacent land use; and

iv. Other factors that may impact on the ability to supply safe product.

7.1.1.3 The analysis shall be re-evaluated in the event of any circumstance or change that may impact on the production of safe product.

7.1.1.4 Where risks are identified, control measures shall be implemented to reduce the identified hazards to an acceptable level.

7.2 Product Handling, Storage and Equipment

7.2.1 Field and Storage Buildings

7.2.1.1 All buildings used to store equipment, field chemicals, field packaging materials or field product shall be designed and constructed so as to permit compliance to good hygiene practices and avoid product contamination.

7.2.1.2 Buildings designated to store field product or field product packaging materials shall be of durable construction. Internal surfaces shall be smooth and impervious with a light colored finish and shall be kept clean.

7.2.2 Greenhouses, Hydroponics and Mushrooms

7.2.2.1 Sites that grow produce indoors shall be designed so that there is no food safety risk to the product.

7.2.2.2 A procedure for handling of glass or hard plastic breakages in greenhouses shall be documented and implemented (refer to 7.8.2).

7.2.3 Controlled Temperature and Atmosphere Storage

7.2.3.1 The producer shall ensure any chilling, cold storage and controlled atmosphere facility is of suitable size, construction and design and is capable of effective operational performance.

7.2.3.2 Floors shall be constructed of smooth, dense impact resistant material that is impervious to liquid and easily cleaned. Floors shall be effectively graded, to allow the effective removal of all overflow or waste water under normal conditions.

7.2.3.3 Wall, ceilings, doors, frames and hatches shall be of a solid construction. Internal surfaces shall be smooth and impervious with a light colored finish.

7.2.3.4 Lighting shall be shatter-proof or provided with protective covers.

7.2.3.5 Sufficient refrigeration and controlled atmosphere capacity shall be available to chill or store the maximum anticipated throughput of product with allowance for periodic cleaning of storage rooms.

7.2.3.6 Discharge from defrost and condensate lines shall be controlled and discharged to the drainage system.

7.2.3.7 Chilling, cold storage and controlled atmosphere facilities shall be fitted with temperature monitoring equipment or suitable temperature monitoring device that is located so as to monitor the warmest part of the room and is fitted with a temperature gauge that is easily readable and accessible.

7.2.3.8 Chill, cold storage and controlled atmosphere loading dock areas shall be appropriately sealed, drained and graded.

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7.2.4 Storage of Dry Ingredient, Packaging and Utensils

7.2.4.1 Storage rooms shall be designed and constructed to allow for the separate, hygienic storage of harvesting and packing utensils away from farm machinery and hazardous chemicals and toxic substances.

7.2.5 Farm Machinery, Conveyors, Harvesting Rigs Construction and Storage

7.2.5.1 Product contact surfaces on conveyors and harvesting rigs shall be designed and constructed to allow for the efficient handling of product and those surfaces in direct contact with product shall be constructed of materials that will not contribute a food or feed safety risk.

7.2.5.2 Food handling equipment including knives, totes, trays, conveyors, containers and other equipment shall be constructed of materials that are non-toxic, smooth, impervious and easily cleaned.

7.2.5.3 Provision shall be made for the washing and storage of harvesting rigs, equipment, conveyors, totes, trays containers and utensils.

7.2.5.4 Provision shall be made to store farm machinery separate from food conveyors, harvesting and processing rigs.

7.2.6 Vehicles, Equipment and Utensils

7.2.6.1 Equipment, vehicles, tools, utensils and other items or materials used in farming operations that may contact produce are identified and are in good repair, kept clean and sanitized, and stored in such a way as to avoid contamination.

7.2.6.2 Water tanks shall be cleaned at a sufficient frequency so as not be a source of contamination.

7.2.6.3 Food contact harvest containers and pallets shall be inspected prior to and during harvesting. A documented and implemented procedure shall include the type and construction of harvest and packing containers.

7.2.6.4 The use of harvest containers for non-harvest purposes will be clearly identified and not returned to use for harvest.

7.2.6.5 Vehicles used for the transport of produce shall be adequate for its purpose and shall not be used to carry waste materials, manure, chemicals or other hazardous substances that could cause produce contamination without thorough cleaning and inspection.

7.2.6.6 Tractors, harvesters, field packing equipment and machinery driven over ground crops shall be fitted with drip trays to prevent contamination of the crop by lubricants and oils.

7.2.7 Maintenance

7.2.7.1 The maintenance of equipment and buildings shall be planned, scheduled and carried out in a manner that prevents any risk of contamination of product or equipment.

7.2.8 Calibration of Equipment

7.2.8.1 The calibration and re-calibration of chemical application, measuring, test and inspection equipment used in the growing and harvesting process shall be documented and implemented.

7.2.8.2 Equipment shall be calibrated against manufacturer, national or international reference standards, methods and schedules. In cases where such standards are not available the producer shall indicate and provide evidence to support the calibration reference method applied.

7.2.8.3 Calibration records shall be maintained.

7.2.9 Pest Prevention

7.2.9.1 The property adjacent to buildings, storage facilities, machinery and equipment shall be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin. Harvested products and food contact packaging materials shall be free of evidence of pest and vermin infestation.

7.2.9.2 The pest prevention program shall:

i. Describe the methods and responsibility for the development, implementation and maintenance of the pest prevention program;

ii. Record pest sightings and trend the frequency of pest activity to target pesticide applications;

iii. Outline the methods used to prevent pest problems;

iv. Outline the methods used to eliminate pests when found;

v. Outline the frequency with which pest status is to be checked;

vi. Include on a site map the identification, location, number and type of bait stations set;

vii. List the chemicals used (they are required to be approved by the relevant authority and their Safety Data Sheets (SDS) made available);

viii. Outline the methods used to make employees aware of the bait control program and the measures to take when they come into contact with a bait station; and

ix. Outline the requirements for employee awareness and training in the use of pest and vermin control chemicals and baits**.**

7.2.9.3 Records of pest inspections and pest applications shall be maintained.

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7.2.10 Animal Control

7.2.10.1 The operation shall have a written risk assessment on animal activity in and around the production of produce that has been implemented and monitored.

7.2.10.2 Measures shall be in place that control domestic and wild animals in the growing fields and does not allow the presence of domestic or wild animals in greenhouses and all storage and product handling areas.

7.2.11 Cleaning and Sanitation

7.2.11.1 The cleaning of product contact surfaces, field harvesting equipment and sanitary facilities shall be documented and implemented. Consideration shall be given to:

i. What is to be cleaned;
ii. How it is to be cleaned;
iii. When it is to be cleaned;
iv. Who is responsible for the cleaning, and
v. Who is responsible for the evaluation of cleaning activities.

7.2.11.2 A schedule shall be prepared indicating the frequency of verifying the effectiveness of the cleaning of product contact surfaces, field harvesting equipment and sanitary facilities and indicating who is responsible for completing verification activities.

7.2.11.3 A record of cleaning and sanitation activities shall be maintained.

7.3 Personal Hygiene

7.3.1 Personnel Practices

7.3.1.1 Personnel engaged in the handling of product shall observe appropriate personal practices. Corrective actions shall be implemented for personnel who violate food safety practices.

7.3.1.2 Personnel suffering from, or are carriers of, an infectious disease, which can be carried with food as a vehicle, shall not engage in growing, product handling or field harvesting operations.

7.3.1.3 A medical screening procedure shall be in place for all employees who handle product or food contact materials, and will also be applicable to all visitors and contractors.

7.3.1.4 Personnel with exposed cuts, sores or lesions shall not be engaged in handling product or food contact materials. Minor cuts or abrasions on exposed parts of the body shall be covered with a suitable waterproof dressing.

7.3.1.5 A written policy shall be in place that specifies the procedures for handling product or product contact surfaces that have been in contact with blood or other bodily fluids.

7.3.1.6 Smoking, chewing, eating, drinking (except for water) or spitting is not permitted in any growing areas including on field harvesting rigs and during harvesting and packing operations.

7.3.2 Sanitary Facilities and Hand Washing

7.3.2.1 Toilet facilities shall be provided and designed, constructed and located in a manner that minimizes the potential risk for product contamination.

i. Toilets shall cater for the maximum number of employees and be constructed so that they can be easily cleaned and maintained;
ii. Hand wash basins with clean, potable water, hand soap, disposable towels or effective hand drying device, waste bins and a tank that captures used hand wash water for disposal (if not connect to drains) shall be provided inside or adjacent to toilet facilities;
iii. Signage in appropriate languages shall be provided adjacent to hand wash basins instructing people to wash their hands after each toilet visit;
iv. Racks for protective clothing used by farm employees shall be provided;
v. Toilets shall be located so as to provide easy access for farm workers;
vi. Toilet and wash stations shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

7.3.2.2 Personnel shall have clean hands and hands shall be washed by all personnel:

i. Before handling product;
ii Before putting on gloves;
iii After each visit to a toilet;
iii After using a handkerchief, handling dirty or contaminated material; and
iv After smoking, eating or drinking.

7.3.3 Protective Clothing

7.3.3.1 Protective clothing shall be effectively maintained, stored, laundered and worn so as to protect product from risk of contamination.

7.3.3.2 Where applicable, clothing, including footwear, shall be effectively maintained, cleaned and sanitized, and worn so as to protect product from risk of contamination.

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7.3.3.3 If rubber or disposable gloves are used, the operation shall have a glove use policy and personnel shall adhere to the hand washing practices outlined above.

7.3.4 Jewelry and Personal Effects

7.3.4.1 Jewelry and other loose objects that pose a threat to the safety of the product shall not be worn or taken onto any growing, product handling or storage operations.

7.3.5 Visitors

7.3.5.1 All visitors (including management and maintenance employees) shall be required to remove jewelry and other loose objects and wear suitable protective clothing around product growing, harvesting, or storage areas.

7.3.5.2 Visitors exhibiting visible signs of illness shall be prevented from entering any growing or product handling or field harvesting operation.

7.3.5.3 Visitors must follow all personnel practices as designated by the site for employees within various areas of fields, sheds, packing facilities or storage locations.

7.3.5.4 Unsupervised children shall not be permitted to enter any harvesting, packing, or food storage areas.

7.3.6 Amenities

7.3.6.1 Provision shall be made to store employee personal belongings away from crops, harvesting, field and packing operations, and harvesting equipment.

7.3.6.2 Areas for meal breaks shall be designated and located away from a food contact/handling zones and harvesting equipment.

7.3.6.3 Drinking water shall be available to all field employees.

7.4 Harvesting, Field Packaging and Product Handling Practices

7.4.1 Pre-Harvest Assessment

7.4.1.1 A pre-harvest risk assessment procedure shall be documented and implemented and describes when the assessment is performed and identifies those conditions that may be reasonably likely to result in physical, chemical, or biological contamination.

7.4.1.2 Knives and cutting instruments used in harvesting operations shall be controlled, and kept clean and well maintained.

7.4.1.3 A written procedure shall be documented and implemented that describes the use and storage of harvesting containers.

7.4.2 Foreign Matter and Glass Procedures

7.4.2.1 A written procedure shall be documented and implemented that describes the prevention of foreign matter and glass contamination.

7.4.2.2 Containers, equipment and other utensils made of glass, porcelain, ceramics, brittle plastic or other like material shall not be permitted where exposed product is handled unless an effective foreign material and glass protocol is documented and implemented.

7.4.2.3 Regular inspections shall be conducted to ensure food handling/contact zones areas are free of glass and brittle plastic and employees are to be made aware of their responsibility to adhere to the organization's foreign matter and glass protocol.

7.4.2.4 Glass covered instrument dial covers, where required, shall be checked at the end of each shift to ensure their covers have not been damaged.

7.4.3 Field Packing Personal Practices

7.4.3.1 Appropriate personnel practices shall be employed by field packing employees which include:

i. Fingernail polish, artificial nails, and long nails, shall not be permitted where product is handled with bare hands;
ii. False eyelashes and eyelash extensions shall not be permitted
iii. Aprons and gloves shall be kept clean;
iv. Aprons and gloves shall not be left on product, work surfaces, equipment or packaging material but hung on apron and glove racks provided;
v. All product and packaging material shall be kept off the ground and the floor of the transport vehicle;
vi. Waste shall be contained in the bins identified for this purpose. Waste shall not come in contact with produce and be removed on a regular basis and not left to accumulate.

7.4.3.2 A written policy regarding the handling and field packaging of produce, specific to the commodity, shall be implemented and maintained. The policy shall assure that:

i. Damaged or decayed produce is not harvested or culled;
ii. Product that contacts the ground shall not be harvested (unless that product typically contacts the ground);
iii. Measures to inspect for physical hazards and procedures to remove physical hazards are in place; and
iv. iii. Cloths, towels, or other cleaning materials that pose a risk of cross-contamination shall not be used to wipe produce.

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7.4.3.3 Packaging materials shall be appropriate for their intended used and stored in a manner that prevents contamination. A written policy shall be in place that identifies how packing materials are permitted in direct contact with soil.

7.4.3.4 Materials that come in contact with the produce shall be clean and in good repair.

7.5 Water Management

7.5.1 Water Systems

7.5.1.1 A water description plan shall be prepared that describes the water sources and the production blocks they serve, and shall include one or more of the following: maps, photographs, drawings, or other means to communicate the location of the water sources, permanent fixtures and the flow of the water system. The plan shall be kept current and revised when changes occur.

7.5.1.2 Agricultural water shall be sourced from a location and in a manner that is compliant with prevailing regulations.

7.5.1.3 Water system intended to convey untreated human or animal waste shall be separated from conveyances utilized to deliver agricultural water.

7.5.2 Irrigation Water

7.5.2.1 Agricultural water shall be drawn from a known clean source or treated to make it suitable for use. The producer shall conduct an analysis of the hazards to the irrigation water supply from source through to application, establish acceptance criteria for the monitoring of water and validate and verify the integrity of the water used to ensure it is fit for the purpose.

7.5.3 Treatment of Irrigation Water

7.5.3.1 In circumstances where irrigation water is treated to render it acceptable, the water, after treatment shall conform to the microbiological standards as outlined in element 7.5.5.

7.5.4 Water System Risk Assessment

7.5.4.1 An initial risk assessment shall be performed and documented that takes into consideration the historical testing results of the water source, water system control and protection, the characteristics of the crop, the stage of the crop, and the method of application.

7.5.5 Water Management Plan

7.5.5.1 Water used for washing and treating product, cleaning food contact surfaces, mixing sanitizer solutions and washing hands shall comply with potable water microbiological and chemical standards in the country of production and destination. Separate criteria will be established for irrigation water, frost control, humidifying, pesticide application, etc. as applicable, based on the hazard analysis, best practices within country of production and any applicable legislation.

The water management plan shall include the following:

i. Preventive controls;

ii. Monitoring and verification procedures;

iii. Corrective actions; and

iv. Documentation.

Water testing shall be part of the water management plan, as directed by the water risk assessment and current industry standards or regulations for the commodity being grown.

7.5.5.2 Water quality shall be monitored to verify it complies with the established water microbiological and chemical standard or criteria established. A verification schedule shall be prepared indicating the location and frequency of monitoring, which shall be decided by the risk assessment, best practices within country of production, or applicable legislation. Water analysis shall be undertaken by an approved laboratory accredited to ISO 17025 or equivalent.

7.5.5.3 Water used for hydroponics culture shall be frequently changed and procedures shall be implemented that minimizes microbial or chemical contamination. Delivery systems shall be designed so they can be maintained and cleaned.

7.5.6 Corrective Actions

7.5.6.1 A corrective action plan shall be developed when monitoring shows that water does not meet established criteria or standards. The plan can include additional treatment for water, additional sources for water, product identification and disposition or other alternative actions to adequately control the identified hazards.

7.5.7 Ice

7.5.7.1 The producer shall verify that any ice used is made from water that meets the microbiological and quality standards as specified in element 7.5.5.

7.5.8 Harvest Assessment Water/Ice

7.5.8.1 Written procedures shall be developed for all uses of water during harvesting of food or feed products. The procedures shall address:

i. The microbial quality of water or ice that directly contacts the harvested crop, is used on food contact surfaces or used to deliver agricultural chemicals;

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ii. The treatment of re-circulated water, if used;

iii. The condition and maintenance of water-delivery system; and

iv. The control of wash water temperature.

7.5.8.2 A written procedure that includes water-change schedules shall be developed for all uses of water during harvesting.

7.6 Storage and Transport

7.6.1 Storage of Hazardous Chemicals, Toxic Substances, and Petroleum Products

7.6.1.1 Hazardous chemicals, toxic substances, and petroleum products shall be stored so as not to present a hazard to employees, product, product handling equipment or areas in which product is handled, stored or transported.

7.6.1.2 Product contact chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides; rodenticides, fumigants and insecticides; sanitizers and detergents shall be stored separately and in their original containers.

7.6.1.3 Chemical storage sheds shall:

i. Be compliant with national and local legislation and designed such that there is no cross-contamination between chemicals;

ii. Be ventilated to the exterior;

iii. Be provided with appropriate signage indicating the area is a hazardous storage area;

iv. Be secure and lockable to restrict access only to those personnel with formal training in the handling and use of chemicals;

v. Have instructions on the safe handling of hazardous chemicals readily accessible to employees;

vi. Be equipped with a detailed and up-to-date inventory of all chemicals contained in the storage facility;

vii. Have suitable first aid equipment and protective clothing available in the storage area;

viii. Have emergency shower and/or wash facilities available in the event of an accidental spill;

ix. Be designed such that spillage and drainage from the area is contained in the event of a hazardous spill; and

x. Be equipped with spillage kits and cleaning equipment.

7.6.1.4 Petroleum fuels, oils, grease and other lubricants shall be stored separate from other storage areas.

7.6.1.5 The storage of hazardous chemicals, toxic substances and petroleum products in areas (separate lockable or otherwise contained) shall not occur inside food handling areas, product and packaging storage rooms.

7.6.2 Transport

7.6.2.1 The loading, transport and unloading of crops shall ensure that product integrity is maintained. Documented and implemented practices include:

i. Verification of cleanliness and functionality of shipping units;

ii. Appropriate storage conditions during transportation to final destination;

iii. Prevention of cross contamination with other hazards and spoilage; and

iv. Appropriate stock rotation practices.

7.6.2.2 Employees involved in loading, transport and unloading events shall be appropriately trained.

7.7 Soil Management

7.7.1 Fertilizer Management

7.7.1.1 Inorganic (chemical) and organic (manure) soil amendments shall be isolated and stored separately so as not to pose a food safety risk.

7.7.1.2 Provision shall be made for the storage of concentrated and diluted liquid soil amendments in tanks designed to retain at least 110% of total volume or as per local regulations.

7.7.1.3 Soil amendments shall be stored separate from crop, field or irrigation water sources such that contamination from run off is avoided either by locating of the soil amendment a suitable distance from the crop or by the utilization of other physical barriers.

7.7.1.4 A current inventory of all organic and inorganic soil amendment storage and use shall be maintained.

7.7.2 Soil Amendments

7.7.2.1 A soil amendment policy shall be documented, implemented and designed to prevent contamination of product. The policy shall outline the methods used to treat manure and other untreated organic fertilizers ensuring:

i. The treatment methods applied inactivate pathogens in organic soil amendments;

ii. No raw untreated manure is used;

iii. A hazard analysis of organic soil amendments treatment methods is conducted before use;

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iv. Treatments and application methods are validated and treatment of organic soil amendments are verified as being in compliance with the approved or recommended methods applied;
v. Records of the validation and approvals and verification of organic soil amendment treatments are maintained.

7.7.2.2 Soil amendment protocols shall outline the methods to ensure organic soil amendment applications are timed to pose minimum risk to product safety and human health including:

i. All applications of soil amendments are in accordance with national or local guidelines best practices and codes of Good Agriculture Practice;
ii. Equipment used for soil amendment application is maintained in good condition and calibrated to ensure accurate application;
iii. Records of all equipment maintenance and calibration are maintained;
iv. Signage complies with national and local codes of practice; and
v. Sufficient data is recorded to provide a detailed record of soil amendment applications.

7.7.3 Purchasing Chemicals

7.7.3.1 Only chemicals approved for use in the country of production and the country of destination shall be purchased. Purchased chemicals shall be labeled with the active ingredient(s), applicable dosage rates, and application instructions. Where no regulations or partial regulations govern the use of chemicals, the supplier shall have a documented risk assessment on the justification for use of non-regulated chemicals.

7.7.3.2 Chemicals that are specifically banned for use in the country of production or the country of destination shall not be purchased or stored.

7.7.3.3 A current inventory of all chemicals purchased and used shall be maintained.

7.7.4 Agricultural Chemicals

7.7.4.1 A spray or crop protection program indicating the applications used for a target pest or disease and the threshold levels that initiate application shall be prepared and implemented.

7.7.4.2 The person making decisions on chemical application shall:

i. Demonstrate knowledge of, and access to, information regarding chemical applications and the maximum residue limits allowable in destination markets;
ii. Use only chemicals approved for cultivation of the specified products, and approved for use in the intended market;
iii. Demonstrate competence and knowledge of chemical application and crop withholding periods;

7.7.4.3 Records of all chemical applications shall be maintained and include:

i. A current chemical register of all chemical use;
ii. The chemical used;
iii. The crop sprayed;
iv. The concentration;
v. The date, method and frequency of application; and
vi. Evidence that the timing between chemical application and harvest complies with the approved harvest interval for the chemical application.

7.7.4.4 Biological controls that are approved for the cultivation of the specified products shall be used, and in accordance with instructions or as per expert recommendations.

7.7.4.5 The site shall dispose of chemical waste and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements and ensure that:

i. Empty chemical containers are not re-used;
ii. Empty containers are labeled or rendered unusable, isolated and securely stored while awaiting collection;
iii. Unused and obsolete chemicals are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.

7.8 Waste Disposal

7.8.1 Dry, Liquid and Unsanitary Waste Disposal

7.8.1.1 Waste shall be regularly removed from the farm, field, packing facility and the surrounds so as not to pose a food safety risk to finished product or growing, harvesting and packing operations.

7.8.1.2 A written procedure shall be documented and implemented that describes the effective and efficient disposal of all solid waste, including inedible material, unusable packaging, including trademarked material, and liquid and unsanitary waste.

7.8.1.3 Inedible waste designated for animal feed shall be stored and handled so as to not cause a risk to the animal or further processing for human consumption.

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Module 11: Good Manufacturing Practices for Processing of Food Products (GFSI El, Ell, Elll, ElV and L)

This module covers the Good Manufacturing Practices requirements for the processing of perishable animal products, perishable plant products, processing of animal and plant perishable products, processing of ambient stable products, and production of bio-chemicals.

Sites implementing this module must also meet the requirements of the SQF System Elements for Food Manufacturing.

Applicable food sector categories (FSCs) are:

FSC 8: Processing of manufactured meats and poultry
FSC 9: Seafood processing
FSC 10: Dairy food processing
FSC 11: Apiculture and honey processing
FSC 12: Egg processing
FSC 13: Bakery and snack food processing
FSC 14: Fruit, vegetable, and nut processing, and fruit juices
FSC 15: Canning, UHT and aseptic operations
FSC 16: Ice, drink, and beverage processing
FSC 17: Confectionery manufacturing
FSC 18: Preserved foods manufacture
FSC 19: Food ingredient manufacture
FSC 20: Recipe meals manufacture
FSC 21: Oils, fats and the manufacture of oil or fat-based spreads
FSC 22: Processing of cereals, grains, and nuts
FSC 25: Repackaging of products not manufactured on site
FSC 31: Manufacture of dietary supplements
FSC 33: Manufacture of food processing aides

All applicable elements of Module 11 shall be implemented. Where an element is not applicable a request for exemption must be appropriately justified, and submitted to the certification body in writing before the audit.

11.1 Site Location and Construction

11.1.1 Premises Location and Approval

11.1.1.1 The location of the premises shall be such that adjacent and adjoining buildings, operations and land use do not interfere with safe and hygienic operations.

11.1.1.2 The construction and ongoing operation of the premises on the site shall be approved by the relevant authority.

11.2 Construction of Premises and Equipment

11.2.1 Materials and Surfaces

11.2.1.1 Product contact surfaces and those surfaces not in direct contact with food in food handling areas, raw material storage, packaging material storage, and cold storage areas shall be constructed of materials that will not contribute a food safety risk.

11.2.2 Floors, Drains and Waste Traps

11.2.2.1 Floors shall be constructed of smooth, dense impact resistant material that can be effectively graded, drained, impervious to liquid and easily cleaned.

11.2.2.2 Floors shall be sloped to floor drains at gradients suitable to allow the effective removal of all overflow or waste water under normal working conditions.

11.2.2.3 Drains shall be constructed and located so they can be easily cleaned and not present a hazard.

11.2.2.4 Waste trap system shall be located away from any food handling area or entrance to the premises.

11.2.3 Walls, Partitions, Doors and Ceilings

11.2.3.1 Walls, partitions, ceilings and doors shall be of durable construction. Internal surfaces shall be smooth and impervious with a light-colored finish, and shall be kept clean (refer to 11.2.13.1).

11.2.3.2 Wall to wall and wall to floor junctions shall be designed to be easily cleaned and sealed to prevent the accumulation of food debris.

11.2.3.3 Ducting, conduit and pipes that convey services such as steam or water shall be designed and constructed to prevent the contamination of food, ingredients and food contact surfaces and allow ease of cleaning.

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11.2.3.4 Pipes carrying sanitary waste or waste water that are located directly over product lines or storage areas shall be designed and constructed to prevent the contamination of food, materials, ingredients and food contact surfaces, and shall allow ease of cleaning.

11.2.3.5 Doors, hatches and windows and their frames in food processing, handing or storage areas shall be of a material and construction which meets the same functional requirements as for internal walls and partitions. Doors and hatches shall be of solid construction and windows shall be made of shatterproof glass or similar material.

11.2.3.6 Product shall be processed and handled in areas that are fitted with a ceiling or other acceptable structure that is constructed and maintained to prevent the contamination of products.

11.2.3.7 Drop ceilings shall be constructed to enable monitoring for pest activity, facilitate cleaning and provide access to utilities.

11.2.4 Stairs, Catwalks and Platforms

11.2.4.1 Stairs, catwalks and platforms in food processing and handling areas shall be designed and constructed so as not to present a product contamination risk, and with no open grates directly above exposed food product surfaces. They shall be kept clean (refer to 11.2.13.1).

11.2.5 Lightings and Light Fittings

11.2.5.1 Lighting in food processing and handling areas and at inspection stations shall be of appropriate intensity to enable the staff to carry out their tasks efficiently and effectively.

11.2.5.2 Light fittings in processing areas, inspection stations, ingredient and packaging storage areas, and all areas where the product is exposed shall be shatterproof, manufactured with a shatterproof covering or fitted with protective covers and recessed into or fitted flush with the ceiling. Where fittings cannot be recessed, structures must be protected from accidental breakage, manufactured from cleanable materials and addressed in the cleaning and sanitation program.

11.2.5.3 Light fittings in warehouses and other areas where the product is protected shall be designed such as to prevent breakage and product contamination.

11.2.6 Inspection/Quality Control Area

11.2.6.1 A suitable area shall be provided for the inspection of the product if required.

11.2.6.2 The inspection/quality control area shall be provided with facilities that are suitable for examination and testing of the type of product being handled/processed. The inspection area shall:

i. Have easy access to hand washing facilities;
ii. Have appropriate waste handling and removal; and
iii. Be kept clean to prevent product contamination.

11.2.7 Dust, Insect and Pest Proofing

11.2.7.1 All external windows, ventilation openings, doors and other openings shall be effectively sealed when closed and proofed against dust, vermin and other pests.

11.2.7.2 External personnel access doors shall be provided. They shall be effectively insect-proofed and fitted with a self-closing device and proper seals to protect against ingress of dust, vermin and other pests.

11.2.7.3 External doors, including overhead dock doors in food handling areas used for product, pedestrian or truck access shall be insect-proofed by at least one or a combination of the following methods:

i. A self-closing device;
ii. An effective air curtain;
iii. An insect-proof screen;
iv. An insect-proof annex.
v. Adequate sealing around trucks in docking areas

11.2.7.4 Electric insect control devices, pheromone or other traps and baits shall be located so as not to present a contamination risk to the product, packaging, containers or processing equipment. Poison rodenticide bait shall not be used inside ingredient or product storage areas or processing areas.

11.2.8 Ventilation

11.2.8.1 Adequate ventilation shall be provided in enclosed processing and food handling areas.

11.2.8.2 All ventilation equipment and devices in product storage and handling areas shall be adequately cleaned as per 11.2.12, to prevent unsanitary conditions.

11.2.8.3 Extractor fans and canopies shall be provided in areas where cooking operations are carried out or a large amount of steam is generated and shall have the following features:

i. Capture velocities shall be sufficient to prevent condensation build up and to evacuate all heat, fumes and other aerosols to the exterior via an exhaust hood positioned over the cooker(s);
ii. Fans and exhaust vents shall be insect-proofed and located so as not to pose a contamination risk; and
iii. Where appropriate, positive air-pressure system shall be installed to prevent airborne contamination.

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11.2.9 Equipment, Utensils and Protective Clothing

11.2.9.1 Specifications for equipment, utensils and protective clothing, and procedures for purchasing equipment shall be documented and implemented.

11.2.9.2 Equipment and utensils shall be designed, constructed, installed, operated and maintained to meet any applicable regulatory requirements and not to pose a contamination threat to products.

11.2.9.3 Benches, tables, conveyors, mixers, mincers, graders and other mechanical processing equipment shall be hygienically designed and located for appropriate cleaning. Equipment surfaces shall be smooth, impervious and free from cracks or crevices.

11.2.9.4 Product containers, tubs, bins for edible and inedible material shall be constructed of materials that are non-toxic, smooth, impervious and readily cleaned as per 11.2.13. Bins used for inedible material shall be clearly identified.

11.2.9.5 Waste and overflow water from tubs, tanks and other equipment shall be discharged direct to the floor drainage system, and to meet local regulatory requirements.

11.2.9.6 Protective clothing shall be manufactured from material that will not contaminate food and is easily cleaned.

11.2.9.7 Racks shall be provided for the temporary storage of protective clothing when staff leaves the processing area and shall be provided in close proximity or adjacent to the personnel access doorways and hand washing facilities.

11.2.9.8 All equipment, utensils and protective clothing shall be cleaned after use or at a frequency to control contamination, and stored in a clean and serviceable condition to prevent microbiological or cross-contact allergen contamination.

11.2.10 Premises and Equipment Maintenance

11.2.10.1 The methods and responsibility for the maintenance and repair of plant, equipment and buildings shall be documented, planned and implemented in a manner that minimizes the risk of product, packaging or equipment contamination.

11.2.10.2 Routine maintenance of plant and equipment in any food processing, handling or storage area shall be performed according to a maintenance-control schedule and recorded.

The maintenance schedule shall be prepared to cover building, equipment and other areas of the premises critical to the maintenance of product safety and quality.

11.2.10.3 Failures of plant and equipment in any food processing, handling or storage area shall be documented, reviewed and their repair incorporated into the maintenance control schedule.

11.2.10.4 Maintenance staff and contractors shall comply with the site's personnel and process hygiene requirements (refer to 11.3.1, 11.3.2, 11.3.3, 11.3.4).

11.2.10.5 All maintenance and other engineering contractors required to work on site shall be trained in the site's food safety and hygiene procedures, or shall be escorted at all times, until their work is completed.

11.2.10.6 Site supervisors shall be notified when maintenance or repairs are to be undertaken in any processing, handling or storage area.

11.2.10.7 The maintenance supervisor and the site supervisor shall be informed if any repairs or maintenance pose a potential threat to product safety (i.e. pieces of electrical wire, damaged light fittings, and loose overhead fittings). When possible, maintenance is to be conducted outside processing times.

11.2.10.8 Temporary repairs, where required shall not pose a food safety risk and shall be included in the cleaning program. There shall be a plan in place to address completion of temporary repairs to ensure they do not become permanent solutions.

11.2.10.9 Maintenance staff and contractors shall remove all tools and debris from any maintenance activity once it has been completed and inform the area supervisor and maintenance supervisor so appropriate hygiene and sanitation can be completed and a pre-operational inspection conducted prior to the commencement of site operations.

11.2.10.10 Equipment located over product or product conveyors shall be lubricated with food grade lubricants and their use controlled to minimize the contamination of the product.

11.2.10.11 Paint used in a food handling or contact zone shall be suitable for use and in good condition and shall not be used on any product contact surface.

11.2.11 Calibration

11.2.11.1 The methods and responsibility for the calibration and re-calibration of measuring, test and inspection equipment used for monitoring activities outlined in pre-requisite program, food safety plans and food quality plans and other process controls, or to demonstrate compliance with customer specifications shall be documented and implemented. Software used for such activities shall be validated as appropriate.

11.2.11.2 Procedures shall be documented and implemented to address the disposition of potentially affected products should measuring, test and inspection equipment be found to be out of calibration state.

11.2.11.3 Calibrated measuring, test and inspected equipment shall be protected from damage and unauthorized adjustment.

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11.2.11.4 Equipment shall be calibrated against national or international reference standards and methods or to accuracy appropriate to its use. In cases where standards are not available, the site shall provide evidence to support the calibration reference method applied.

11.2.11.5 Calibration shall be performed according to regulatory requirements and/or to the equipment manufacturers recommended schedule.

11.2.11.6 Calibration records shall be maintained.

11.2.12 Pest Prevention

11.2.12.1 The methods and responsibility for pest prevention shall be documented and effectively implemented. The premises, its surrounding areas, storage facilities, machinery and equipment shall be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin.

11.2.12.2 Identified pest activity shall not present a risk of contamination to food products, raw materials or packaging.

11.2.12.3 Food products, raw materials or packaging that are found to be contaminated by pest activity shall be effectively disposed of, and the source of pest infestation investigated and resolved. Records shall be kept of the disposal, investigation, and resolution.

11.2.12.4 The pest prevention program shall:

i. Describe the methods and responsibility for the development, implementation and maintenance of the pest prevention program;
ii. Record pest sightings and trend the frequency of pest activity to target pesticide applications;
iii. Outline the methods used to prevent pest problems;
iv. Outline the pest elimination methods;
v. Outline the frequency with which pest status is to be checked;
vi. Include on a site map the identification, location, number and type of bait stations set;
vii. List the chemicals used (they are required to be approved by the relevant authority and their Safety Data Sheets (SDS) made available);
viii. Outline the methods used to make staff aware of the bait control program and the measures to take when they come into contact with a bait station;
ix. Outline the requirements for staff awareness and training in the use of pest and vermin control chemicals and baits; and
x. Measure the effectiveness of the program to verify the elimination of applicable pests.

11.2.12.5 Inspections for pest activity shall be undertaken on a regular basis by trained personnel and the appropriate action taken if pests are present.

11.2.12.6 Records of all pest control applications shall be maintained.

11.2.12.7 Pesticides and other toxic chemicals shall be clearly labeled and stored as described in element 11.6.5 and handled and applied by properly trained personnel. They shall be used by or under the direct supervision of trained personnel with a thorough understanding of the hazards involved, including the potential for the contamination of food and food contact surfaces.

11.2.12.8 Pest contractors shall be:

i. Licensed and approved by the local relevant authority;
ii. Use only trained and qualified operators who comply with regulatory requirements;
iii. Use only approved chemicals;
iv. Provide a pest prevention plan (refer to 2.3.3) which will include and maintain a site map indicating the location of bait stations traps and other applicable pest control/monitoring devices;
v. Report to a responsible authorized person on entering the premises and after the completion of inspections or treatments; and
vi. Provide a written report of their findings and the inspections and treatments applied.

11.2.12.9 The site shall dispose of unused pest control chemicals and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements and ensure that:

i. Empty chemical containers are not reused;
ii. Empty containers are labeled, isolated and securely stored while awaiting collection; and
iii. Unused and obsolete chemicals are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.

11.2.13 Cleaning and Sanitation

11.2.13.1 The methods and responsibility for the cleaning of the food handling and processing equipment and environment, storage areas, staff amenities and toilet facilities shall be documented and implemented. Consideration shall be given to:

i. What is to be cleaned;

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ii. How it is to be cleaned;
iii. When it is to be cleaned;
iv. Who is responsible for the cleaning;
v. Methods used to confirm the correct concentrations of detergents and sanitizers, and
vi. The responsibility and methods used to verify the effectiveness of the cleaning and sanitation program.

11.2.13.2 Provision shall be made for the effective cleaning of processing equipment, utensils and protective clothing.

11.2.13.3 Suitably equipped areas shall be designated for cleaning product containers, knives, cutting boards and other utensils and for cleaning of protective clothing used by staff. These cleaning operations shall be controlled so as not to interfere with manufacturing operations, equipment or product. Racks and containers for storing cleaned utensils shall be provided as required.

11.2.13.4 Cleaning in place (CIP) systems where used shall not pose a chemical contamination risk to raw materials, ingredients or product. CIP parameters critical to assuring effective cleaning shall be defined, monitored and recorded (e.g., chemical and concentration used, contact time and temperature). CIP equipment including spray balls shall be maintained and modifications to CIP equipment shall be validated. Personnel engaged in CIP activities shall be effectively trained.

11.2.13.5 Pre-operational inspections shall be conducted following cleaning and sanitation operations to ensure food processing areas, product contact surfaces, equipment, staff amenities and sanitary facilities and other essential areas are clean before the commencement of production. Pre-operational inspections shall be conducted by qualified personnel.

11.2.13.6 Staff amenities, sanitary facilities and other essential areas shall be inspected by qualified personnel to ensure the areas are clean, at a defined frequency.

11.2.13.7 The responsibility and methods used to verify the effectiveness of the cleaning procedures shall be documented and implemented. A verification schedule shall be prepared.

11.2.13.8 Detergents and sanitizers shall be suitable for use in a food manufacturing environment, labelled according to regulatory requirements, and purchased in accordance with applicable legislation. The organization shall ensure:

i. The site maintains a list of chemicals approved for use;
ii. An inventory of all chemicals purchased and used shall be maintained;
iii. Detergents and sanitizers are stored as outlined in element 11.6.4;
iv. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are provided for all detergents and sanitizers purchased; and
v. Only trained staff handles sanitizers and detergents.

11.2.13.9 Detergents and sanitizers that have been mixed for use shall be correctly mixed according to manufacturers' instructions, stored in containers that are suitable for use, and clearly identified. Mix concentrations shall be verified and records maintained.

11.2.13.10 The site shall dispose of unused detergents and sanitizers and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements and ensure that:

i. Empty detergent and sanitizer containers are appropriately cleaned, treated and labeled before use;
ii. Empty detergent and sanitizer containers are labeled, isolated and securely stored while awaiting collection; and
iii. Unused and obsolete detergents and sanitizers are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.

11.2.13.11 A record of pre-operational hygiene inspections, cleaning and sanitation activities, and verification activities shall be maintained.

11.3 Personnel Hygiene and Welfare

11.3.1 Personnel

11.3.1.1 Personnel who are known to have been known to be carriers, or are carriers, of infectious diseases that present a health risk to others through the packing or storage processes shall not engage in the processing or packing of food, or enter storage areas where food is exposed.

11.3.1.2 The site shall have measures in place to prevent contact of materials, ingredients, food packaging, food, or food contact surfaces from any bodily fluids from open wounds, coughing, sneezing, spitting, or any other means.

In the event of an injury which causes spillage of bodily fluid, properly trained employee shall ensure that all affected areas including handling and processing areas have been adequately cleaned and that all materials and products have been quarantined and disposed of.

11.3.1.3 Personnel with exposed cuts, sores or lesions shall not be engaged in handling or processing products or handling primary packaging materials or food contact surfaces. Minor cuts or abrasions on exposed parts of the body shall be covered with a colored bandage containing a metal strip or an alternative suitable waterproof and colored dressing.

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11.3.1.4 Smoking, chewing, eating, or spitting is not permitted in areas where product is produced, stored, or otherwise exposed. Drinking of water is permissible only under conditions that prevent contamination or other food safety risks from occurring.

Drinking water containers in production and storage areas shall be stored in clear, covered containers, and in designated areas away from raw materials, packaging or equipment.

11.3.2 Hand Washing

11.3.2.1 Hand wash basins shall be provided adjacent to all personnel access points and in accessible locations throughout food handling and processing areas as required.

11.3.2.2 Hand wash basins shall be constructed of stainless steel or similar non-corrosive material and as a minimum supplied with:

i. A potable water supply at an appropriate temperature;
ii. Liquid soap contained within a fixed dispenser;
iii. Paper towels in a hands free cleanable dispenser; and
iv. A means of containing used paper towels.

11.3.2.3 The following additional facilities shall be provided in high risk areas:

i. Hands free operated taps; and
ii. Hand sanitizers.

11.3.2.4 A sign instructing people to wash their hands, and in appropriate languages, shall be provided in a prominent position.

11.3.2.5 Personnel shall have clean hands and hands shall be washed by all personnel, including staff, contractors and visitors:

i. On entering food handling or processing areas;
ii. After each visit to a toilet;
iii. After using a handkerchief;
iv. After smoking, eating or drinking; and
v. After handling wash down hoses, dropped product or contaminated material.

11.3.2.6 When gloves are used, personnel shall maintain the hand washing practices outlined above.

11.3.3 Clothing

11.3.3.1 The site shall undertake a risk analysis to ensure that the clothing and hair policy protects materials, food and food contact surfaces from unintentional microbiological or physical contamination.

11.3.3.2 Clothing worn by staff engaged in handling food shall be maintained, stored, laundered and worn so as not to present a contamination risk to products.

11.3.3.3 Clothing including shoes, shall be clean at the commencement of each shift and maintained in a serviceable condition.

11.3.3.4 Excessively soiled uniforms shall be changed or replaced where they present a product contamination risk.

11.3.3.5 Disposable gloves and aprons shall be changed after each break, upon re-entry into the processing area and when damaged.

Non-disposable aprons and gloves shall be cleaned and sanitized as required and when not in use stored on racks provided in the processing area or designated sealed containers in personnel lockers and not on packaging, ingredients, product or equipment.

11.3.4 Jewelry and Personal Effects

11.3.4.1 Jewelry and other loose objects shall not be worn or taken into a food handling or processing operation or any area where food is exposed. The wearing of plain bands with no stones and prescribed medical alert bracelets can be permitted, however the site will need to consider their customer requirements and the applicable food legislation.

11.3.5 Visitors

11.3.5.1 All visitors, including management and maintenance staff, shall wear suitable clothing and footwear when entering any food processing or handling area.

11.3.5.2 All visitors shall be required to remove jewelry and other loose objects.

11.3.5.3 Visitors exhibiting visible signs of illness shall be prevented from entering areas in which food is handled or processed.

11.3.5.4 Visitors shall enter and exit food handling areas through the proper staff entrance points and comply with all hand washing and personnel practice requirements.

11.3.5.5 All visitors shall be trained in the site's food safety and hygiene procedures before entering any food processing or handling areas, or shall be escorted at all times in food processing, handling and storage areas.

11.3.6 Staff Amenities

11.3.6.1 Staff amenities supplied with appropriate lighting and ventilation shall be made available for the use of all persons engaged in the handling and processing of product.

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11.3.7 Change Rooms

11.3.7.1 Facilities shall be provided to enable staff and visitors to change into and out of protective clothing as required.

11.3.7.2 Change rooms shall be provided for staff engaged in the processing of high risk foods or processing operations in which clothing can be soiled.

11.3.7.3 Provision shall be made for staff to store their street clothing and personal items separate from food contact zones and food and packaging storage areas.

11.3.7.4 Where required, a sufficient number of showers shall be provided for use by staff.

11.3.8 Laundry

11.3.8.1 Provision shall be made for the laundering and storage of clothing worn by staff engaged in high risk processes and for staff engaged in processing operations in which clothing can be heavily soiled.

11.3.9 Sanitary Facilities

11.3.9.1 Toilet rooms shall be:

i. Designed and constructed so that they are accessible to staff and separate from any processing and food handling operations;
ii. Accessed from the processing area via an airlock vented to the exterior or through an adjoining room;
iii. Sufficient in number for the maximum number of staff;
iv. Constructed so that they can be easily cleaned and maintained;
v. Include an area inside or nearby, for storing protective clothing, outer garments and other items while using the facilities; and
vi. Kept clean and tidy.

11.3.9.2 Sanitary drainage shall not be connected to any other drains within the premises and shall be directed to a septic tank or a sewerage system in accordance in regulations.

11.3.9.3 Hand wash basins shall be provided immediately outside or inside the toilet room and designed as outlined in 11.3.2.2.

11.3.10 Lunch Rooms

11.3.10.1 Separate lunch room facilities shall be provided away from a food contact/handling zone.

11.3.10.2 Lunch room facilities shall be:

i. Ventilated and well lit;
ii. Provided with adequate tables and seating to cater for the maximum number of staff at one sitting;
iii. Equipped with a sink serviced with hot and cold potable water for washing utensils;
iv. Equipped with refrigeration and heating facilities enabling them to store or heat food and to prepare non-alcoholic beverages if required; and
v. Kept clean and free from waste materials and pests.

11.3.10.3 Where outside eating areas are provided, they should be kept clean and free from waste materials and maintained in a manner that minimizes the potential for introduction of contamination including pests to the site.

11.3.10.4 Signage in appropriate languages instructing people to wash their hands before entering the food processing areas shall be provided in a prominent position in lunch rooms and at lunch room exits, and in outside eating areas, if applicable.

11.4 Personnel Processing Practices

11.4.1 Staff Engaged in Food Handling and Processing Operations

11.4.1.1 All personnel engaged in any food handling, preparation or processing operations shall ensure that products and materials are handled and stored in such a way as to prevent damage or product contamination. They shall comply with the following processing practices:

i. Personnel entry to processing areas shall be through the personnel access doors only;
ii. All doors are to be kept closed. Doors shall not be left open for extended periods when access for waste removal or receiving of product/ingredient/packaging is required;
iii. Packaging material, product, and ingredients shall be kept in appropriate containers as required and off the floor;
iv. Waste shall be contained in the bins identified for this purpose and removed from the processing area on a regular basis and not left to accumulate;
v. Staff shall not eat or taste any product being processed in the food handling/contact zone, except as noted in element 11.4.1.2;
vi. The wearing of false fingernails, false eyelashes, eyelash extensions, long nails or fingernail polish is not permitted when handling exposed food;
vii. Hair restraints are used where product is exposed.

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11.4.1.2 In circumstances where it is necessary to undertake sensory evaluations in a food handling/contact zone the site shall implement proper controls and procedures to ensure:

i. Food safety is not compromised;
ii. Sensory evaluations are conducted by authorized personnel only;
iii. A high standard of personal hygiene is practiced by personnel conducting sensory evaluations;
iv. Sensory evaluations are conducted in areas equipped for the purpose; and
v. Equipment used for sensory evaluations is sanitized, maintained and stored separate from processing equipment.

11.4.1.3 All wash down hoses shall be stored on hose racks after use and not left on the floor.

11.5 Water, Ice and Air Supply

11.5.1 Water Supply

11.5.1.1 Adequate supplies of potable water drawn from a known clean source shall be provided for use during processing operations, as an ingredient and for cleaning the premises and equipment.

11.5.1.2 Supplies of hot and cold water shall be provided as required to enable the effective cleaning of the premises and equipment.

11.5.1.3 The delivery of water within the premises shall ensure potable water is not contaminated.

11.5.1.4 The use of non-potable water shall be controlled such that:

i. There is no cross contamination between potable and non-potable water lines;
ii. Non-potable water piping and outlets are clearly identified.
iii. Hoses, taps, or other similar sources of possible contamination are designed to prevent back flow or back siphonage

11.5.1.5 Where water is stored on site, storage facilities shall be adequately designed, constructed and maintained to prevent contamination.

11.5.2 Water Treatment

11.5.2.1 Water treatment methods, equipment and materials, if required, shall be designed, installed and operated to ensure water receives an effective treatment.

11.5.2.2 Water treatment equipment shall be monitored regularly to ensure it remains serviceable.

11.5.2.3 Treated water shall be regularly monitored to ensure it meets the indicators specified.

11.5.2.4 Water used in as an ingredient in processing, or in cleaning and sanitizing equipment, shall be tested, and if required, treated to maintain potability (refer to 11.5.2.1).

11.5.3 Ice Supply

11.5.3.1 Ice provided for use during processing operations or as a processing aid or an ingredient shall comply with 11.5.4.1.

11.5.3.2 Ice rooms and receptacles shall be constructed of materials as outlined in elements 11.2.1, 11.2.2 and 11.2.3 and designed to minimize contamination of the ice during storage and distribution.

11.5.4 Monitoring Water Microbiology Quality

11.5.4.1 Water shall comply with local, national or internationally recognized potable water microbiological and quality standards as required when used for

i. washing, thawing and treating food;
ii. handwashing
iii. to convey food;
iv. as an ingredient or food processing aid;
v. cleaning food contact surfaces and equipment;
vi. the manufacture of ice; or
vii. the manufacture of steam that will come into contact with food or used to heat water that will come in contact with food.

11.5.4.2 Microbiological analysis of the water and ice supply shall be conducted to verify the cleanliness of the supply, the monitoring activities and the effectiveness of the treatment measures implemented. Samples for analysis shall be taken at sources supplying water for the process or cleaning, or from within the site. The frequency of analysis shall be risk-based, and at a minimum annually.

11.5.4.3 Water and ice shall be analyzed using reference standards and methods.

11.5.5 The Quality of Air and Other Gases

11.5.5.1 Compressed air or other gasses (e.g. nitrogen, carbon dioxide) that contacts food or food contact surfaces shall be clean and present no risk to food safety.

11.5.5.2 Compressed air systems, and systems used to store or dispense other gasses used in the manufacturing process that come into contact with food or food contact surfaces shall be maintained and regularly monitored for quality and applicable food safety hazards.

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11.6 Storage and Transport

11.6.1 Storage and Handling of Goods

11.6.1.1 The site shall document and implement an effective storage plan that allows for the safe, hygienic storage of raw materials (i.e. frozen, chilled, and ambient), ingredients, packaging materials, equipment, and chemicals.

11.6.1.2 The responsibility and methods for ensuring effective stock rotation principles are applied shall be documented and implemented.

11.6.1.3 Procedures shall be in place to ensure that all ingredients, materials, work-in-progress, rework, and finished product are utilized within their designated shelf-life.

11.6.1.4 Equipment storage rooms shall be designed and constructed to allow for the hygienic and efficient storage of equipment and containers.

11.6.1.5 Where goods described in 11.6.2 to 11.6.4 are held under temporary or overflow conditions that are not designed for the safe storage of goods, a risk analysis shall be undertaken to ensure there is no risk to the integrity of those goods or contamination or adverse effect on food safety.

11.6.1.6 Records shall be available to validate alternate or temporary control measures for the storage of raw materials, ingredients, packaging materials, equipment, chemicals, or finished products.

11.6.2 Cold Storage, Freezing and Chilling of Foods

11.6.2.1 The site shall provide confirmation of the effective operational performance of freezing, chilling and cold storage facilities. Chillers, blast freezers and cold storage rooms shall be designed and constructed to allow for the hygienic and efficient refrigeration of food and easily accessible for inspection and cleaning.

11.6.2.2 Sufficient refrigeration capacity shall be available to chill, freeze, store chilled or store frozen the maximum anticipated throughput of product with allowance for periodic cleaning of refrigerated areas.

11.6.2.3 Discharge from defrost and condensate lines shall be controlled and discharged to the drainage system.

11.6.2.4 Freezing, chilling and cold storage rooms shall be fitted with temperature monitoring equipment and located to monitor the warmest part of the room and be fitted with a temperature measurement device that is easily readable and accessible.

11.6.2.5 Loading and unloading docks shall be designed to protect the product during loading and unloading.

11.6.3 Storage of Dry Ingredients, Packaging, and Shelf Stable Packaged Goods

11.6.3.1 Rooms used for the storage of product ingredients, packaging, and other dry goods shall be located away from wet areas and constructed to protect the product from contamination and deterioration.

11.6.3.2 Racks provided for the storage of packaging shall be constructed of impervious materials and designed to enable cleaning of the floors and the storage room. Storage areas shall be constructed to prevent packaging from becoming a harborage for pests or vermin.

11.6.3.3 Vehicles used in food contact, handling or processing zones or in cold storage rooms shall be designed and operated so as not to present a food safety hazard.

11.6.4 Storage of Hazardous Chemicals and Toxic Substances

11.6.4.1 Hazardous chemicals and toxic substances with the potential for food contamination shall be stored so as not to present a hazard to staff, product, packaging, product handling equipment or areas in which the product is handled, stored or transported.

11.6.4.2 Processing utensils and packaging shall not be stored in areas used to store hazardous chemicals and toxic substances.

11.6.4.3 Daily supplies of chemicals used for continuous sanitizing of water or as a processing aid, or for emergency cleaning of food processing equipment or surfaces in food contact zones, may be stored within or in close proximity to a processing area provided access to the chemical storage facility is restricted to authorized personnel.

11.6.4.4 Pesticides, rodenticides, fumigants and insecticides shall be stored separate from sanitizers and detergents. All chemicals shall be stored in their original containers, or in clearly labelled and suitable secondary containers if allowed by applicable legislation.

11.6.4.5 Hazardous chemical and toxic substance storage facilities shall:

i. Be compliant with national and local legislation and designed such that there is no cross-contamination between chemicals;
ii. Be adequately ventilated;
iii. Be provided with appropriate signage indicating the area is a hazardous storage area;
iv. Be secure and lockable to restrict access only to those personnel with formal training in the handling and use of hazardous chemicals and toxic substances;
v. Have instructions on the safe handling of hazardous chemicals and toxic substances readily accessible to staff;
vi. Be equipped with a detailed and up-to-date inventory of all chemicals contained in the storage facility;
vii. Have suitable first aid equipment and protective clothing available close to the storage area;

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viii. In the event of a hazardous spill, be designed such that spillage and drainage from the area is contained; and

ix. Be equipped with spillage kits and cleaning equipment.

11.6.5 Loading, Transport and Unloading Practices

11.6.5.1 The practices applied during loading, transport and unloading of food shall be documented, implemented and designed to maintain appropriate storage conditions and product integrity. Foods shall be loaded, transported and unloaded under conditions suitable to prevent cross contamination.

11.6.6 Loading

11.6.6.1 Vehicles (e.g. trucks/vans/containers) used for transporting food shall be inspected prior to loading to ensure they are clean, in good repair, suitable for the purpose and free from odors or other conditions that may impact negatively on the product.

11.6.6.2 Loading practices shall be designed to minimize unnecessary exposure of the product to conditions detrimental to maintaining the product and package integrity during loading and transport.

11.6.6.3 Vehicles (e.g. trucks/vans/containers) shall be secured from tampering using a seal or other agreed upon, acceptable device or system.

11.6.7 Transport

11.6.7.1 Refrigerated units shall maintain the food at required temperatures and the unit's temperature settings shall be set, checked and recorded before loading and product temperatures recorded at regular intervals during loading as appropriate.

11.6.7.2 The refrigeration unit shall be operational at all times and checks completed of the unit's operation, the door seals and the storage temperature checked at regular intervals during transit.

11.6.8 Unloading

11.6.8.1 Prior to opening the doors, the refrigeration unit's storage temperature settings and operating temperature shall be checked and recorded. Unloading shall be completed efficiently and product temperatures shall be recorded at the commencement of unloading and at regular intervals during unloading.

11.6.8.2 Unloading practices shall be designed to minimize unnecessary exposure of the product to conditions detrimental to maintaining the product and package integrity.

11.7 Separation of Functions

11.7.1 Process Flow

11.7.1.1 The process flow shall be designed to prevent cross contamination and organized so there is a continuous flow of product through the process. The flow of personnel shall be managed such that the potential for contamination is minimized.

11.7.2 Receipt of Raw and Packaging Materials and Ingredients

11.7.2.1 Dry ingredients and packaging shall be received and stored separately from frozen and chilled raw materials to ensure there is no cross contamination. Unprocessed raw materials shall be received and segregated to ensure there is no cross contamination.

11.7.3 Thawing of Food

11.7.3.1 Thawing of food shall be undertaken in equipment and rooms appropriate for the purpose.

11.7.3.2 Equipment for water thawing shall be continuous flow to ensure the water exchange rate and temperature does not contribute to product deterioration or contamination. Water overflow shall be directed into the floor drainage system and not onto the floor.

11.7.3.3 Air thawing facilities shall be designed to thaw food under controlled conditions at a rate and temperature that does not contribute to product deterioration or contamination.

11.7.3.4 Provision is to be made for the containment and regular disposal of used cartons and packaging from thawed product so that there is no risk to the product.

11.7.4 High Risk Processes

11.7.4.1 The processing of high risk food shall be conducted under controlled conditions such that sensitive areas in which high risk food has undergone a "kill" step, a "food safety intervention" or is subject to post process handling, are protected/segregated from other processes, raw materials or staff who handle raw materials to ensure cross contamination is minimized.

11.7.4.2 Areas in which high risk processes are conducted shall only be serviced by staff dedicated to that function.

11.7.4.3 Staff access points shall be located, designed and equipped to enable staff to don distinctive protective clothing and to practice a high standard of personal hygiene to prevent product contamination.

11.7.4.4 Staff engaged in high risk areas shall change into clean clothing or temporary protective outerwear when entering high risk areas.

11.7.4.5 Product transfer points shall be located and designed so as not to compromise high risk segregation and to minimize the risk of cross contamination.

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11.7.5 Control of Foreign Matter Contamination

11.7.5.1 The responsibility and methods used to prevent foreign matter contamination of the product shall be documented, implemented and communicated to all staff.

11.7.5.2 Inspections shall be performed to ensure plant and equipment remains in good condition, equipment has not become detached or deteriorated and is free from potential contaminants.

11.7.5.3 All glass objects or similar material in food handling/contact zones shall be listed in a glass register including details of their location.

11.7.5.4 Containers, equipment and other utensils made of glass, porcelain, ceramics, laboratory glassware or other like material (except where the product is contained in packaging made from these materials, or measurement instruments with glass dial covers or MIG thermometers required under regulation) shall not be permitted in food processing /contact zones.

11.7.5.5 Regular inspections of food handling/contact zones shall be conducted to ensure they are free of glass or other like material and to establish changes to the condition of the objects listed in the glass register.

11.7.5.6 Glass instrument dial covers on processing equipment and MIG thermometers shall be inspected at the start of each shift to confirm they have not been damaged.

11.7.5.7 Wooden pallets and other wooden utensils used in food handling/contact zones shall be dedicated for that purpose, clean, maintained in good order. Their condition shall be subject to regular inspection.

11.7.5.8 Loose metal objects on equipment, equipment covers and overhead structures shall be removed or tightly fixed so as not to present a hazard.

11.7.5.9 Knives and cutting instruments used in processing and packaging operations shall be controlled, and kept clean and well maintained. Snap-off blades shall not be used in manufacturing or storage areas.

11.7.6 Detection of Foreign Objects

11.7.6.1 The responsibility, methods and frequency for monitoring, maintaining, calibrating and using screens, sieves, filters or other technologies to remove or detect foreign matter shall be documented and implemented.

11.7.6.2 Metal detectors or other physical contaminant detection technologies shall be routinely monitored, validated and verified for operational effectiveness. The equipment shall be designed to isolate defective product and indicate when it is rejected.

11.7.6.3 Records shall be maintained of the inspection of foreign object detection devices and of any products rejected or removed by them. Records shall include any corrective actions resulting from the inspections.

11.7.7 Managing Foreign Matter Contamination Incidents

11.7.7.1 In all cases of foreign matter contamination the affected batch or item shall be isolated, inspected, reworked or disposed of.

11.7.7.2 In circumstances where glass or similar material breakage occurs, the affected area is to be isolated, cleaned and thoroughly inspected (including cleaning equipment and footwear) and cleared by a suitably responsible person prior to the commencement of operations.

11.8 On-Site Laboratories

11.8.1 Location

11.8.1.1 On site laboratories conducting chemical and microbiological analysis that may pose a risk to product safety, shall be located separate from any food processing or handling activity and designed to limit access only to authorized personnel.

11.8.1.2 Provisions shall be made to isolate and contain all laboratory waste held on the premises and manage it separately from food waste. Laboratory waste water outlet shall as a minimum be down stream of drains that service food processing and handling areas.

11.8.1.3 Signage shall be displayed identifying the laboratory area as a restricted area accessible only by authorized personnel.

11.9 Waste Disposal

11.9.1 Dry and Liquid Waste Disposal

11.9.1.1 The responsibility and methods used to collect and handle dry, wet and liquid waste and store prior to removal from the premises shall be documented and implemented.

11.9.1.2 Waste shall be removed on a regular basis and not build up in food handling or processing areas. Designated waste accumulation areas shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition until external waste collection is undertaken.

11.9.1.3 Trolleys, vehicles waste disposal equipment, collection bins and storage areas shall be maintained in a serviceable condition and cleaned and sanitized regularly so as not to attract pests and other vermin.

11.9.1.4 Adequate provision shall be made for the disposal of all solid processing waste including trimmings, inedible material and used packaging.

11.9.1.5 Where applicable, a documented procedure shall be in place for the controlled disposal of trademarked materials. Where a contracted disposal service is used, the disposal process shall be reviewed regularly to confirm compliance.

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11.9.1.6 Inedible waste designated for animal feed shall be stored and handled so as to not cause a risk to the animal or to further processing.

11.9.1.7 Waste held on site prior to disposal shall be stored in a separate storage facility and suitably insect proofed and contained so as not to present a hazard.

11.9.1.8 Adequate provision shall be made for the disposal of all liquid waste from processing and food handling areas. Liquid waste shall be either removed from the processing environment continuously or held in a designated storage area in lidded containers prior to disposal so as not to present a hazard.

11.9.1.9 Reviews of the effectiveness of waste management will form part of daily hygiene inspections and the results of these inspections shall be included in the relevant hygiene reports.

11.10 Exterior

11.10.1 Grounds and Roadways

11.10.1.1 Measures shall be established to maintain a suitable external environment, and the effectiveness of the established measures shall be monitored and periodically reviewed.

11.10.1.2 The grounds and area surrounding the premises shall be maintained to minimize dust and kept free of waste, accumulated debris or standing water so as not to attract pests and vermin.

11.10.1.3 Paths, roadways and loading and unloading areas shall be maintained so as not to present a hazard to the food safety operation of the premises.

11.10.1.4 Paths, roadways, loading and unloading areas shall be adequately drained to prevent ponding of water. Drains shall be separate from the site drainage system and regularly cleared of debris.

11.10.1.5 Surroundings shall be kept neat and tidy and not present a hazard to the hygienic and sanitary operation of the premises.

11.10.1.6 Paths from amenities leading to site entrances are required to be effectively sealed.

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Module 12: Food Safety Fundamentals – Good Distribution Practices for Storage and Distribution of Food Products (GFSI JI, and JII)

This module covers the Good Distribution Practices (GDP) requirements for the receipt, storage, display, consolidation and distribution of perishable fresh produce and general food lines.

Sites implementing this module must also meet the requirements of the SQF System Elements for Storage and Distribution. The applicable food sector category (FSC) is:

FSC 26: Food storage and distribution

All applicable elements of Module 12 shall be implemented. Where an element is not applicable a request for exemption must be appropriately justified, and submitted to the certification body in writing before the audit.

12.1 Site Location and Construction

12.1.1 Premises Location and Approval

12.1.1.1 The location of the premises shall be such that adjacent and adjoining buildings, operations and land use do not interfere with safe and hygienic operations.

12.1.2.1 The construction and ongoing operation of the premises on the site shall be approved by the relevant authority.

12.2 Construction of Premises and Equipment

12.2.1 Materials and Surfaces

12.2.1.1 In warehouses where food products are recouped or exposed, product contact surfaces shall be constructed of materials that will not contribute a food safety risk.

12.2.2 Floors, Drains and Waste Traps

12.2.2.1 Floors shall be constructed of smooth, dense impact resistant material that can be effectively graded, drained, impervious to liquid and easily cleaned.

12.2.2.2 Drains shall be constructed and located so they can be easily cleaned and not present a hazards. Drains if located in storage and handling areas, shall be maintained in a clean manner.

12.2.2.3 Waste trap system shall be located away from any food handling or storage area or entrance to the premises.

12.2.3 Walls, Partitions, Doors and Ceilings

12.2.3.1 Walls, partitions, ceilings and doors shall be of durable construction. Internal surfaces shall be smooth and impervious, and shall be kept clean (refer to 12.2.11.1)

12.2.3.2 Wall to wall and wall to floor junctions shall be designed to be easily cleaned and sealed to prevent the accumulation of food debris.

12.2.3.3 Doors shall be of solid construction; and windows shall be made of shatterproof glass or similar material.

12.2.3.4 Drop ceilings shall be additionally constructed to enable monitoring for pest activity, facilitate cleaning and provide access to utilities.

12.2.4 Lighting and Light Fittings

12.2.4.1 Lighting in warehouses where food product is recouped or exposed shall be of appropriate intensity to enable the staff to carry out their tasks efficiently and effectively.

12.2.4.2 Light fittings in areas where food product is recouped or exposed shall be shatterproof, manufactured with a shatterproof covering or fitted with protective covers and recessed into or fitted flush with the ceiling.

12.2.4.3 Light fittings in other areas where product is protected shall be designed such as to prevent breakage and product contamination.

12.2.5 Dust, Insect and Pest Proofing

12.2.5.1 All external windows, ventilation openings, doors and other openings shall be effectively sealed when closed and proofed against dust, vermin and other pests.

12.2.5.2 Personnel access doors shall be provided. They shall be effectively insect-proofed and fitted with a self-closing device and proper seals to protect against ingress of dust, vermin and other pests.

12.2.5.3 Inspections for pest activity shall be undertaken on a regular basis by trained personnel and the appropriate action taken if pests are present.

12.2.5.4 Electric insect control devices, pheromone or other traps and baits shall be located so as not to present a contamination risk to product, packaging, containers or equipment. Poison rodenticide bait shall not be used inside food storage areas.

12.2.6 Ventilation

12.2.6.1 Adequate ventilation shall be provided in enclosed storage and food handling areas.

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12.2.7 Equipment, Utensils and Protective Clothing

12.2.7.1 Equipment and utensils shall be designed, constructed, installed, operated and maintained so as not to pose a contamination threat to products.

12.2.7.2 Protective clothing in areas where food product is recouped or exposed shall be manufactured from material that is not liable to contaminate food and easily cleaned.

12.2.7.3 In areas where food product is recouped or exposed, racks shall be provided for the temporary storage of protective clothing when staff leaves the processing area and shall be provided in close proximity or adjacent to the personnel access doorways and hand washing facilities.

12.2.8 Premises and Equipment Maintenance

12.2.8.1 The methods and responsibility for the maintenance and repair of plant, equipment and buildings shall be documented, planned and implemented in a manner that minimizes the risk of product, packaging or equipment contamination.

12.2.8.2 Routine maintenance of site and equipment in any food storage area shall be performed according to a maintenance-control schedule and recorded.

The maintenance schedule shall be prepared to cover building, equipment and other areas of the premises critical to the maintenance of product safety.

12.2.8.3 Failures of site and equipment in any storage area shall be documented, reviewed and their repair incorporated into the maintenance control schedule.

12.2.8.4 Maintenance staff and contractors shall comply with the site's personnel and process hygiene requirements (refer to 12.3.1, 12.3.2, 12.3.3, 12.3.4).

12.2.8.5 All maintenance and other engineering contractors required to work on site shall be trained in the site's food safety and hygiene procedures and shall be assessed in their understanding before entering into any food storage areas.

12.2.8.6 Facility supervisors shall be notified when maintenance or repairs are to be undertaken in any food processing, handling or storage area.

12.2.8.7 The maintenance supervisor and the facility supervisor shall be informed if any repairs or maintenance pose a potential threat to product safety (i.e. pieces of electrical wire, damaged light fittings, and loose overhead fittings). When possible, maintenance is to be conducted outside operating times.

12.2.8.8 Temporary repairs, where required shall not pose a food safety risk. They shall exclude the use of fasteners such are wire or tape, are clearly identified and dated and included on cleaning programs. There shall be a plan in place to address final completion of temporary repairs in order to ensure temporary repairs do not become permanent solutions.

12.2.8.9 Maintenance staff and contractors shall remove all tools and debris from any maintenance activity once it has been completed and inform the area supervisor and maintenance supervisor so appropriate hygiene and sanitation can be completed prior to the commencement of site operations.

12.2.8.10 Paint used in a food handling or contact zone shall be suitable for use and in good condition and shall not be used on any product contact surface

12.2.9 Calibration

12.2.9.1 The methods and responsibility for the calibration and re-calibration of measuring, test and inspection equipment used for monitoring activities outlined in pre-requisite program, food safety plans and other process controls, or to demonstrate compliance with customer specifications shall be documented and implemented. Software used for such activities shall be validated as appropriate.

12.2.9.2 Procedures shall be documented and implemented to address the disposition of potentially affected products should measuring, test and inspection equipment be found to be out of calibration state.

12.2.9.3 Calibrated measuring, test and inspected equipment shall be protected from damage and unauthorized adjustment.

12.2.9.4 Equipment shall be calibrated against national or international reference standards and methods or to accuracy appropriate to its use. In cases where standards are not available, the supplier shall provide evidence to support the calibration reference method applied.

12.2.9.5 Calibration shall be performed according to regulatory requirements and/or to the equipment manufacturers recommended schedule.

12.2.9.6 Calibration records shall be maintained.

12.2.10 Pest Prevention

12.2.10.1 The methods and responsibility for pest prevention shall be documented and effectively implemented. The premises, its surrounding areas, storage facilities, machinery and equipment shall be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin.

12.2.10.2 Any identified pest activity shall not present a risk of contamination to food products or packaging.

12.2.10.3 Food products or packaging that is found to be contaminated by pest activity shall be effectively disposed of, and the source of pest infestation investigated and resolved.

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12.2.10.4 The pest prevention program shall:

i. Describe the methods and responsibility for the development, implementation and maintenance of the pest prevention program;
ii. Record pest sightings and trend the frequency of pest activity to target pesticide applications;
iii. Outline the methods used to prevent pest problems;
iv. Outline the pest elimination methods;
v. Outline the frequency with which pest status is to be checked;
vi. Include on a site map the identification, location, number and type of bait stations set;
vii. List the chemicals used (they are required to be approved by the relevant authority and their Safety Data Sheets (SDS) made available);
viii. Outline the methods used to make staff aware of the bait control program and the measures to take when they come into contact with a bait station;
ix. Outline the requirements for staff awareness and training in the use of pest and vermin control chemicals and baits; and
x. Measure the effectiveness of the program to verify the elimination of applicable pests.

12.2.10.5 Inspections for pest activity shall be undertaken on a regular basis by trained personnel and the appropriate action taken if pests are present.

12.2.10.6 Records of all pest control applications shall be maintained.

12.2.10.7 Pesticides and other toxic chemicals shall be clearly labeled and stored as described in element 12.6.5 and handled and applied by properly trained personnel. They shall be used by or under the direct supervision of trained personnel with a thorough understanding of the hazards involved, including the potential for the contamination of food and food contact surfaces.

12.2.10.8 Pest control contractors shall be:

i. Licensed and approved by the local relevant authority;
ii. Use only trained and qualified operators who comply with regulatory requirements;
iii. Use only approved chemicals;
iv. Provide a pest control management plan (refer to 2.3.3) which will include and maintain a site map indicating the location of bait stations and traps and other applicable pest control/monitoring devices;
v. Report to a responsible authorized person on entering the premises and after the completion of inspections or treatments; and
vi. Provide a written report of their findings and the inspections and treatments applied.

12.2.10.9 The site shall dispose of unused pest control chemicals and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements and ensure that:

i. Empty chemical containers are not reused;
ii. Empty containers are labeled, isolated and securely stored while awaiting collection; and
iii. Unused and obsolete chemicals are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.

12.2.11 Cleaning and Sanitation

12.2.11.1 The methods and responsibility for the cleaning of the food handling and storage areas, staff amenities and toilet facilities shall be documented and implemented. Consideration shall be given to:

i. What is to be cleaned;
ii. How it is to be cleaned;
iii. When it is to be cleaned;
iv. Who is responsible for the cleaning; and
v. The responsibility and methods used to verify the effectiveness of the cleaning and sanitation program.

12.2.11.2 Provision shall be made for the effective cleaning of processing equipment, utensils and protective clothing.

12.2.11.3 The responsibility and methods used to verify the effectiveness of the cleaning procedures shall be documented and implemented. A verification schedule shall be prepared.

12.2.11.4 Detergents and sanitizers that are used to clean, sanitize and maintain the facility shall be purchased in accordance with applicable legislation. The organization shall ensure:

i. The site maintains a list of chemicals approved for use within the site;
ii. An inventory of all chemicals purchased and used for cleaning and sanitation purposes shall be maintained;
iii. Detergents and chemicals are stored as outlined in 12.6.5;

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iv. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are provided for all detergents and sanitizers purchased;

v. Only trained staff handles sanitizers and detergents;

12.2.11.5 Detergents and sanitizers that have been mixed for use shall be correctly mixed according to manufacturers' instructions, stored in containers that are suitable for use, and clearly identified. Mix concentrations shall be verified and records maintained.

12.2.11.6 The site shall dispose of unused detergents and sanitizers and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements and ensure that:

i. Empty detergent and sanitizer containers are appropriately cleaned, treated and labeled before use;

ii. Empty detergent and sanitizer containers are labeled, isolated and securely stored while awaiting collection; and

iii. Unused and obsolete detergents and sanitizers are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.

12.2.11.7 A record of hygiene inspections, cleaning and sanitation activities, and verification activities shall be maintained.

12.3 Personnel Hygiene and Welfare

12.3.1 Personnel

12.3.1.1 Personnel suffering from infectious diseases or are carriers of, any infectious disease are not permitted to work in the distribution center or in the transportation of food, and shall not engage in food handling operations, or be permitted access to storage areas where the product is exposed.

12.3.1.2 The site shall have measures in place to prevent contact of materials, ingredients, food packaging, food, or food contact surfaces from any bodily fluids from open wounds, coughing, sneezing, spitting, or any other means.

In the event of an injury which causes spillage of bodily fluid, properly trained employee shall ensure that all affected areas including handling and processing areas have been adequately cleaned and that all materials and products have been quarantined and disposed of.

12.3.1.3 Personnel with exposed cuts, sores or lesions shall not be engaged in handling exposed product or food contact surfaces. Minor cuts or abrasions on exposed parts of the body shall be covered with protective bandage, or an alternative suitable dressing.

12.3.1.4 Smoking, chewing, eating, or spitting is not permitted in any food handling or storage areas where the product is exposed. Drinking is permissible under conditions that prevent contamination or other food safety risks from occurring.

12.3.2 Hand Washing

12.3.2.1 Hand wash basins shall be available and accessible as required.

12.3.2.2 Hand wash basins shall be constructed of stainless steel or similar non-corrosive material and as a minimum supplied with a potable water supply at an appropriate temperature, supplied with liquid soap contained within a fixed dispenser, with paper towels with a means of containing used paper towels. An effective hand dryer may be used in instances where there is no direct hand contact of food or food contact surfaces.

12.3.2.3 A sign instructing people to wash their hands, and in appropriate languages, shall be provided in a prominent position.

12.3.2.4 When gloves are used, personnel shall maintain the hand washing practices outlined above.

12.3.3 Clothing

12.3.3.1 Clothing worn by staff shall be maintained, stored, laundered and worn so as not to present a contamination risk to product.

12.3.3.2 Clothing worn by staff engaged in handling food shall be maintained, stored, laundered and worn so as not to present a contamination risk to products.

12.3.4 Jewelry and Personal Effects

12.3.4.1 Jewelry and other loose objects shall not be worn or taken into any area where exposed food is recouped. The wearing of wedding rings and medical alert bracelets (plain bands with no stones) that cannot be removed can be permitted, however the site will need to consider their customer requirements and the applicable food legislation.

12.3.5 Visitors

12.3.5.1 All visitors, including management and maintenance staff, shall wear suitable clothing and footwear when entering any food handling area.

12.3.5.2 All visitors shall be required to follow the GDPs outlined by the site.

12.3.5.3 Visitors exhibiting visible signs of illness shall be prevented from entering areas in which food is handled or exposed.

12.3.5.4 Visitors shall enter and exit food handling areas through the proper staff entrance points and comply with all hand washing and personal practice requirements.

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12.3.5.5 Facility shall have a policy for how drivers are managed and designated driver areas are maintained to prevent contamination or other food safety risks.

12.3.6 Staff Amenities

12.3.6.1 Staff amenities supplied with appropriate lighting and ventilation shall be made available for the use of all persons engaged in the handling of product.

12.3.7 Change Rooms

12.3.7.1 Facilities shall be provided to enable staff and visitors to change into and out of protective clothing as required.

12.3.7.2 Provisions shall be made for staff to store their personal items separate from food contact zones and food and packaging storage areas.

12.3.8 Sanitary Facilities

12.3.8.1 Toilet rooms shall be:

i. Designed and constructed so that they are accessible to staff and separate from any food handling operations;
ii. Accessed from the warehouse or product handling area via an airlock vented to the exterior or through an adjoining room;
iii. Sufficient in number for the maximum number of staff;
iv. Constructed so that they can be easily cleaned and maintained; and
v. Kept clean and tidy.

12.3.8.2 Sanitary drainage shall not be connected to any other drains within the premises and shall be directed to a septic tank or a sewerage system. Procedure shall be documented and implemented to properly manage sewage back-ups in order to minimize the potential for contamination.

12.3.8.3 Hand wash basins shall be provided immediately outside or inside the toilet room and designed as outlined in 12.3.2.2.

12.3.9 Lunch Rooms

12.3.9.1 Separate lunch room facilities shall be provided away from a food handling or storage areas. Lunch rooms shall be kept clean and tidy and free from waste materials and pests.

12.3.9.2 Signage in appropriate languages advising people to wash their hands before entering the food storage areas shall be provided in a prominent position in lunch rooms and at lunch room exits.

12.4 Personnel Processing Practices

12.4.1 Staff Engaged in Food Handling and Repack/Recoup Operations

12.4.1.1 All personnel engaged in the direct handling of exposed food shall comply with the following practices:

i. Personnel entry to food handling areas shall be through the personnel access doors only;
ii. All doors are to be kept closed. Doors shall not be left open for extended periods when access for waste removal or stock transfer;
iii. The wearing of false fingernails or fingernail polish is not permitted when handling food;
iv. Packaging material, product, and ingredients shall be kept in appropriate containers as required and off the floor;
v. Waste shall be contained in the bins identified for this purpose and removed from the processing area on a regular basis and not left to accumulate;
vi. Staff shall not eat or taste any product in the food storage or handling area.

12.4.1.2 All personnel engaged in storage, transport and handling of packaged products and materials shall ensure that products and materials are handled and stored in such a way as to prevent damage or product contamination.

12.5 Water, Ice and Air Supply

12.5.1 Water Supply

12.5.1.1 Adequate supplies of water drawn from a known clean source shall be provided for use during holding or storage and for cleaning the premises and equipment.

12.5.1.2 Supply of hot and cold water shall be provided as required to enable the effective cleaning of the premises and equipment.

12.5.2 Monitoring Water Microbiology and Quality

12.5.2.1 Microbiological analysis of the water and ice supply that is in contact with food or food contact surfaces shall be conducted to verify the cleanliness of the supply, the monitoring activities and the effectiveness of the treatment measures implemented.

12.5.2.2 Water and ice, that is contact with food or food contact surfaces, shall be analyzed using reference standards and methods.

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12.5.3 Water Delivery

12.5.3.1 The delivery of water within the premises shall ensure potable water is not contaminated.

12.5.3.2 The use of non-potable water shall be controlled such that:

i. There is no cross contamination between potable and non-potable water lines;

ii. Non-potable water piping and outlets are clearly identified.

12.5.4 Ice Supply

12.5.4.1 Ice rooms and receptacles shall be constructed of materials as outlined in elements 12.2.1, 12.2.2 and 12.2.3 and designed to minimize contamination of the ice during storage and distribution.

12.5.5 Analysis

12.5.5.1 Microbiological analysis of the water and ice supply that is in contact with food or food contact surfaces shall be conducted to verify the cleanliness of the supply, the monitoring activities and the effectiveness of the treatment measures implemented.

12.5.5.2 Water and ice, that is contact with food or food contact surfaces, shall be analyzed using reference standards and methods.

12.5.6 The Quality of Air and Other Gases

12.5.6.1 Compressed air or other gasses (e.g. nitrogen, carbon dioxide) that contacts food or food contact surfaces shall be clean and present no risk to food safety.

12.5.6.2 Compressed air systems, and systems used to store or dispense other gasses used in the storage and distribution process shall be maintained and regularly monitored for quality and microbiological purity.

12.6 Storage and Transport

12.6.1 Storage and Handling of Goods

12.6.1.1 The site shall implement an effective storage plan that allows for the safe, hygienic storage of ice, food products (frozen, chilled, and ambient), packaging materials, equipment, and chemicals.

12.6.1.2 The responsibility and methods for ensuring effective stock rotation principles are applied shall be documented and implemented.

12.6.1.3 Procedures are in place to ensure that all food products, and recouped product, are utilized within their designated shelf-life.

12.6.2 Cold Storage, Freezing and Chilling of Foods

12.6.2.1 The site shall provide confirmation of the effective operational performance of freezing, chilling and cold storage facilities. Chillers, blast freezers and cold storage rooms shall be designed and constructed to allow for the hygienic and efficient cold/frozen storage of food, easily accessible for inspection and cleaning.

12.6.2.2 Sufficient refrigeration capacity shall be available to store chilled or frozen food at the maximum anticipated throughput of product with allowance for periodic cleaning of refrigerated areas.

12.6.2.3 Discharge from defrost and condensate lines shall be controlled and discharged to the drainage system.

12.6.2.4 Cold and chilled storage rooms shall be fitted with temperature monitoring equipment and located so as to monitor the warmest part of the room and be fitted with a temperature measurement device that is easily readable and accessible.

12.6.2.5 Loading and unloading docks shall be designed to protect product during loading and unloading.

12.6.3 Storage of Shelf Stable Packaged Goods

12.6.3.1 Rooms used for the storage of dry goods shall be located away from wet areas and constructed to protect the product from contamination and deterioration.

12.6.3.2 Racks provided for the storage of food Products shall be constructed of impervious materials and designed to enable cleaning of the floors and the storage room. Storage areas shall be constructed to prevent food products becoming a harborage for pests or vermin.

12.6.3.3 Vehicles used in storage rooms shall be designed and operated so as not to present a food safety hazard.

12.6.4 Storage of Equipment and Containers

12.6.4.1 Storage rooms shall be designed and constructed to allow for the hygienic and efficient storage of equipment and containers.

12.6.5 Storage of Hazardous Chemicals and Toxic Substances

12.6.5.1 Hazardous chemicals and toxic substances that are for use in the site with the potential for food contamination shall be stored separate from the distribution storage area so as not to present a hazard to staff, product, packaging, product handling equipment. Hazardous chemicals shall be stored in their original containers, or in clearly labelled secondary containers if allowed by applicable legislation.

12.6.6 Alternative Storage and Handling of Goods

12.6.6.1 Where goods described in 12.6.1 to 12.6.4 are held under temporary or overflow conditions that are not designed for the safe storage of goods, a risk analysis shall be undertaken to ensure there is no risk to the integrity of those goods or contamination or adverse effect on food safety and quality.

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12.6.7 Loading, Transport and Receiving Practices

12.6.7.1 The practices applied during loading, transport and unloading of food shall be documented, implemented and designed to maintain appropriate storage conditions and product integrity.

12.6.7.2 Trailers shall be washed in a segregated area away from the distribution site in a manner so as to not pose a risk to the products.

12.6.7.3 Practices shall be in place for loading, transport and unloading receiving to protect against the contamination from biological, chemical and physical risks.

12.6.7.4 Records of compliance activities shall be accessible.

12.6.7.5 Sites shall have a procedure in place that Is documented and implemented to ensure trailers are inspected prior to receiving shipments or loading to ensure that the trailer is in good repair, clean, secured and at required environmental conditions and temperatures.

12.6.8 Staging and Loading

12.6.8.1 Vehicles (e.g. trucks/vans/containers) used for transporting food shall be inspected prior to loading to ensure they are clean, in good repair, suitable for the purpose and free from odors or other conditions that may impact negatively on the product.

12.6.8.2 Staging and loading practices shall be designed to minimize unnecessary exposure of the product to conditions detrimental to maintaining product integrity.

12.6.8.3 Food transport vehicle's refrigerated unit shall maintain the food at required temperatures and the unit's temperature settings shall be set, checked and recorded before loading and product temperatures monitored at regular intervals during loading as appropriate.

12.6.9 Transport

12.6.9.1 The refrigeration unit shall be operational at all times and checks completed of the unit's operation, the door seals and the storage temperature checked at regular intervals during transit.

12.6.10 Receiving

12.6.10.1 Prior to opening the doors the food transport vehicle's refrigerated unit storage temperature settings and operating temperature shall be checked and recorded. Receiving shall be completed efficiently and product temperatures shall be recorded at the commencement of unloading and at regular intervals during unloading.

12.6.10.2 Receiving practices shall be designed to minimize unnecessary exposure of the product to conditions detrimental to maintaining product and package integrity.

12.7 Control of Foreign Matter Contamination

12.7.1 Control of Foreign Matter

12.7.1.1 The responsibility and methods used to prevent foreign matter contamination of food product shall be documented, implemented and communicated to all staff.

12.7.1.2 Inspections shall be performed to ensure plant and equipment remains in good condition and potential contaminants have not detached or become damaged or deteriorated.

12.7.1.3 The following preventative measures shall be implemented where applicable to prevent glass contamination:

i. All glass objects or similar material used by the site in storage and handling areas shall be listed in a glass register including details of their location.

ii. Containers, equipment and other utensils made of glass, porcelain, ceramics, laboratory glassware or other like material (except where product is contained in packaging made from these materials, or measurement instruments with glass dial covers or MIG thermometers required under regulation) shall not be permitted in food processing/contact zones.

iii. Product that is in glass or similar material that is for distribution purposes shall be stored in a manner that prevents contamination.

iv. Conduct regular inspections of storage and handling areas to ensure they are free of glass or other like material and to establish no changes to the condition of the objects listed in the glass register

v. Glass instrument dial covers on equipment and MIG thermometers shall inspected at regular intervals.

12.7.1.4 Wooden pallets used in food storage shall be dedicated for that purpose, clean, maintained in good order and their condition subject to regular inspection.

12.7.1.5 Loose metal objects on equipment, equipment covers and overhead structures shall be removed or tightly fixed so as not to present a hazard.

12.7.2 Managing Foreign Matter Contamination Incidents

12.7.2.1 In all cases of foreign matter contamination the affected food product shall be isolated, inspected, reworked or disposed of.

12.7.2.2 In circumstances where glass or similar material breakage occurs the affected area is to be isolated, cleaned and thoroughly inspected (including cleaning equipment and footwear) and cleared by a suitably responsible person.

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12.8 Waste Disposal

12.8.1 Dry and Liquid Waste Disposal

12.8.1.1 The responsibility and methods used to collect and handle dry, wet and liquid waste and store prior to removal from the premises shall be documented and implemented.

12.8.1.2 Waste shall be removed on a regular basis and not build up in food handling or storage areas. Designated waste accumulation areas shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition until such time as external waste collection is undertaken.

12.8.1.3 Trolleys, vehicles waste disposal equipment, collection bins and storage areas shall be maintained in a serviceable condition and cleaned and sanitized regularly so as not to attract pests and other vermin.

12.8.1.4 Reviews of the effectiveness of waste management will form part of regular hygiene inspections and the results of these inspections shall be included in the relevant hygiene reports.

12.8.1.5 Inedible waste designated for animal feed shall be stored and handled so as to not cause a risk to the animal or risk to other food designated for further processing for human consumption.

12.9 Exterior

12.9.1 Grounds and Roadways

12.9.1.1 The grounds and area surrounding the premises shall be maintained to minimize dust and be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin.

12.9.1.2 Paths, roadways and loading and unloading areas shall be maintained so as not to present a hazard to the food safety operation of the premises.

12.9.1.3 Surroundings shall be kept neat and tidy and not present a hazard to the hygienic and sanitary operation of the premises, or harborage for pests.

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Module 13: Food Safety Fundamentals – Good Manufacturing Practices for Production of Food Packaging (GFSI Scope M)

This module covers the Good Manufacturing Practices requirements for the manufacture of food packaging.
Sites implementing this module must also meet the requirements of SQF System Elements for the Manufacture of Food Packaging.
Applicable food sector categories (FSCs) are:

FSC 27: Manufacture of Food Packaging

All applicable elements of Module 13 shall be implemented. Where an element is not applicable a request for exemption must be appropriately justified, and submitted to the certification body in writing before the audit.

13.1 Site Location and Construction

13.1.1 Premises Location and Approval

13.1.1.1 The location of the premises shall be such that adjacent and adjoining buildings, operations and land use do not interfere with safe and hygienic operations.

13.1.1.2 The construction and ongoing operation of the premises on the site shall be approved by the relevant authority.

13.2 Construction of Premises and Equipment

13.2.1 Materials and Surfaces

13.2.1.1 In facilities where food contact packaging is manufactured, product contact surfaces shall be constructed of materials that will not contribute to a food safety risk to the manufacture of packaging material.

13.2.2 Floors, Drains and Waste Traps

13.2.2.1 Floors shall be constructed of smooth, dense impact resistant material that can be effectively graded, drained, impervious to liquid and easily cleaned and fit for purpose.

13.2.2.2 Drains shall be constructed and located so they can be easily cleaned and not present a hazard.

13.2.2.3 Waste trap system shall be located sufficiently far away from any food packaging handling area or entrance to the premises so as to prevent contamination.

13.2.3 Walls, Windows, Doors and Ceilings

13.2.3.1 Walls, partitions, ceilings and doors shall be of durable construction and fit for purpose.

13.2.3.2 In product manufacturing and storage areas wall to wall and wall to floor junctions shall be designed to be easily cleaned and sealed to prevent the accumulation of debris.

13.2.3.3 In product manufacturing and storage areas doors shall be of solid construction and windows shall be of shatterproof glass or similar material.

13.2.4 Lighting and Light Fittings

13.2.4.1 Lighting in premises where food contact packaging is manufactured shall be of appropriate intensity to enable the staff to carry out their tasks efficiently and effectively.

13.2.4.2 Light fittings in such areas shall be shatterproof, manufactured with a shatterproof covering or fitted with protective covers and recessed into or fitted flush with the ceiling.

13.2.4.3 Light fittings in other areas where the product is stored shall be designed such as to prevent product contamination.

13.2.5 Dust, Insect and Pest Proofing

13.2.5.1 All external windows, ventilation openings, doors and other openings shall be effectively sealed when closed and proofed against dust, vermin and other pests.

13.2.5.2 Methods shall be in place to adequately control dust produced by the manufacturing process.

13.2.5.3 Personnel access doors shall be provided. They shall be effectively insect-proofed and fitted with a self-closing device to protect against ingress of dust, vermin and other pests.

13.2.5.4 External personnel access doors shall be provided. They shall be effectively insect-proofed and fitted with a self-closing device and proper seals to protect against ingress of dust, vermin and other pests.

13.2.5.5 Electric insect control devices, pheromone or other traps and baits shall be located so as not to present a contamination risk to packaging, or manufacturing equipment. Poison rodenticide bait shall not be used inside storage areas or manufacturing areas.

13.2.6 Ventilation

13.2.6.1 Adequate ventilation shall be provided in enclosed packaging manufacture and handling areas.

13.2.7 Equipment, Utensils and Protective Clothing

13.2.7.1 Specifications for new equipment and protective clothing, and procedures for purchasing equipment shall be documented and implemented.

13.2.7.2 Equipment and utensils shall be designed, constructed, installed, operated and maintained so as not to pose a contamination threat to the product, and to allow for cleaning beneath and behind it.

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13.2.7.3 Where required, protective clothing shall be manufactured from material that is not liable to contaminate food packaging and easily cleaned.

13.2.7.4 When protective clothing is used, hooks racks or other forms of off the floor storage shall be provided for the temporary storage of protective clothing when staff leaves the manufacturing area and shall be provided in close proximity or adjacent to the personnel access doorways and hand washing facilities.

13.2.8 Premises and Equipment Maintenance

13.2.8.1 The methods and responsibility for the maintenance and repair of plant, equipment and buildings shall be documented, planned and carried out implemented in a manner that minimizes the risk of contamination of packaging material or equipment.

13.2.8.2 Routine maintenance of plant and equipment in any packaging material manufacturing, handling or storage area shall be performed according to a maintenance-control schedule and recorded.

The maintenance schedule shall be prepared to cover building, equipment and other areas of the premises critical to the maintenance of packaging material safety and quality.

13.2.8.3 Failures of plant and equipment shall be documented, reviewed and their repair incorporated into the maintenance control schedule;

13.2.8.4 Maintenance staff and contractors shall comply with the personnel and process hygiene requirements (refer to 13.3.1, 13.3.2, 13.3.3, 13.3.4).

13.2.8.5 Site supervisors shall be notified when maintenance or repairs are to be undertaken in any packaging manufacturing area.

13.2.8.6 The maintenance supervisor and the site supervisor shall be informed if any repairs or maintenance pose a potential threat to packaging material safety (i.e. pieces of electrical wire, damaged light fittings, and loose overhead fittings). When possible, maintenance is to be conducted outside manufacturing times.

13.2.8.7 Maintenance staff and contractors shall remove all tools, spare parts, and debris from any maintenance activity once it has been completed and inform the area supervisor and maintenance supervisor so appropriate hygiene and sanitation can be completed prior to the commencement of manufacturing operations.

13.2.8.8 Temporary repairs, where required shall not pose a packaging safety risk and shall be included in the cleaning program. There shall be a plan in place to address final completion of temporary repairs in order to ensure they do not become permanent solutions.

13.2.8.9 Equipment located over raw materials, finished food packaging or product conveyors shall be lubricated with food grade lubricants and their use controlled so as to minimize the contamination of the product. Machinery lubricant controls shall be in place to prevent contamination of food packaging from gear box oils, bearing lubricants, hydraulics or any other source.

13.2.8.10 Paint used in a manufacturing area shall not be peeling or flaking and shall not be used on any product contact surface.

13.2.9 Calibration

13.2.9.1 The methods and responsibility for the calibration and re-calibration of measuring, test and inspection equipment used for monitoring activities outlined in pre-requisite program, packaging safety plans and quality plans and other process controls, or to demonstrate compliance with packaging product specifications shall be documented and implemented. Electronic equipment being used on a daily basis shall be calibrated daily by the users.

13.2.9.2 Procedures shall be documented and implemented to address the disposition of potentially affected food packaging should measuring, test and inspection equipment be found to be out of calibration state.

13.2.9.3 Calibrated measuring, test and inspected equipment shall be protected from damage and unauthorized adjustment.

13.2.9.4 Equipment shall be calibrated against national or international reference standards and methods or to accuracy appropriate to its use. In cases where standards are not available, the site shall provide evidence to support the calibration reference method applied.

13.2.9.5 Calibration shall be performed according to regulatory requirements and/or to the equipment manufacturers recommended schedule.

13.2.9.6 Calibration records shall be maintained.

13.2.10 Pest Prevention

13.2.10.1 The methods and responsibility for pest prevention shall be documented and effectively implemented. The premises, its surrounding areas, storage facilities, machinery and equipment shall be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin.

13.2.10.2 Any identified pest activity shall not present a risk of contamination to raw materials, work-in process, or finished food packaging.

13.2.10.3 Raw materials, work-in-progress or food packaging that is found to be contaminated by pest activity shall be effectively disposed of, and the source of pest infestation investigated and resolved.

13.2.10.4 The pest prevention program shall:

i. Describe the methods and responsibility for the development, implementation and maintenance of the pest prevention program;

ii. Record pest sightings and trend the frequency of pest activity to target pesticide applications;

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iii. Outline the methods used to prevent pest problems;
iv. Outline the pest elimination methods;
v. Outline the frequency with which pest status is to be checked;
vi. Include on a site map the identification, location, number and type of bait stations set;
vii. List the chemicals used (they are required to be approved by the relevant authority and their Safety Data Sheets (SDS) made available);
viii. Outline the methods used to make staff aware of the bait control program and the measures to take when they come into contact with a bait station;
ix. Outline the requirements for staff awareness and training in the use of pest and vermin control chemicals and baits; and
x. Measure the effectiveness of the program to verify the elimination of applicable pests.

13.2.10.5 Inspections for pest activity shall be undertaken on a regular basis by trained personnel and the appropriate action taken if pests are present.

13.2.10.6 Records of all pest control applications shall be maintained.

13.2.10.7 Pesticides and other toxic chemicals shall be clearly labeled and stored as described in element 13.6.3 and handled and applied by properly trained personnel. They shall be used by or under the direct supervision of trained personnel with a thorough understanding of the hazards involved, including the potential for the contamination of food contact packaging.

13.2.10.8 Pest prevention contractors or licensed users shall be:

i. Licensed and approved by the local relevant authority;
ii. Use only trained and qualified operators who comply with regulatory requirements;
iii. Use only approved chemicals;
iv. Provide a pest control management plan (refer to 2.3.3) which will include a site map indicating the location of bait stations and traps;
v. Report to a responsible senior management person on entering the premises and after the completion of inspections or treatments;
vi. Provide a written report of their findings and the inspections and treatments applied and;
vii. Where applicable, unused and obsolete chemicals are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.

13.2.11 Cleaning and Sanitation

13.2.11.1 The methods and responsibility for the cleaning of manufacturing and storage areas, staff amenities and toilet facilities shall be documented and implemented.

13.2.11.2 Provision shall be made for the effective cleaning of processing equipment.

13.2.11.3 Adjacent production equipment shall be covered or shut down and raw materials and finished goods shall be moved from the vicinity if using compressed air hoses to clean.

13.2.11.4 Pre-operational inspections shall be conducted following cleaning and sanitation operations to ensure packaging material manufacturing areas, product contact surfaces, equipment, staff amenities and sanitary facilities and other essential areas are clean before the commencement of production. Pre-operational inspections shall be conducted by qualified personnel.

13.2.11.5 Staff amenities, sanitary facilities and other essential areas shall be inspected by qualified personnel to ensure the areas are clean, at a defined frequency.

13.2.11.6 The responsibility and methods used to verify the effectiveness of the cleaning procedures shall be documented and implemented. A verification schedule shall be prepared.

13.2.11.7 Appropriate cleaning agents shall be purchased in accordance to applicable legislation. The site shall ensure:

i. An inventory of all cleaning agents purchased and used shall be maintained;
ii. Cleaning agents are stored as outlined in element 13.6.3;
iii. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are provided for all detergents and sanitizers purchased; and
iv. Only trained staff handles cleaning agents.

13.2.11.8 The site shall dispose of unused cleaning agents and empty containers in accordance with regulatory requirements, where applicable, and ensure that:

i. Empty cleaning agent containers are appropriately cleaned, treated and labeled before use;
ii. Empty cleaning agent containers are labeled, isolated and securely stored while awaiting collection; and
iii. Unused and obsolete cleaning agents are stored under secure conditions while waiting authorized disposal by an approved vendor.

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13.3 Personnel Hygiene and Welfare

13.3.1 Personnel

13.3.1.1 Personnel who are known to have or who are known to be carriers of infectious diseases that present a health risk to others through the manufacturing or storage processes shall not engage in the manufacture of food contact packaging, or enter storage areas where food contact packaging is exposed.

13.3.1.2 The site shall have measures in place to prevent contact of materials, food packaging or food packaging contact surfaces from any bodily fluids from open wounds, coughing, sneezing, spitting, or any other means.

In the event of an injury which causes spillage of bodily fluid, a properly trained employee shall ensure that all affected areas including handling and manufacturing areas have been adequately cleaned and that all affected materials have been quarantined and disposed of.

13.3.1.3 Personnel with exposed cuts, sores or lesions shall not be engaged in handling raw materials or finished food packaging.

Minor cuts or abrasions on exposed parts of the body shall be covered with a colored bandage containing a metal strip or an alternative suitable waterproof and colored dressing.

13.3.1.4 Smoking, chewing, eating, or spitting is not permitted in areas where product is produced, stored, or otherwise exposed. Drinking of water is permissible only under conditions that prevent contamination or other food safety risks from occurring.

Drinking water containers in production and storage areas shall be stored in clear, covered containers, and in designated areas away from raw materials, food packaging or equipment.

13.3.2 Hand Washing

13.3.2.1 Hand wash basins shall be provided in appropriate areas.

13.3.2.2 Hand wash basins shall be constructed of stainless steel or similar non-corrosive material and as a minimum supplied with:

i. A potable water supply at an appropriate temperature;
ii. Liquid soap contained within a fixed dispenser;
iii. Paper towels or effective hand dryer; and
iv. A means of containing used paper towels.

13.3.2.3 A sign instructing people to wash their hands, and in appropriate languages, shall be provided in a prominent position.

13.3.2.4 Personnel shall have clean hands and hands shall be washed by all personnel, including staff, contractors and visitors:

i. On entering production areas;
ii. After each visit to a toilet;
iii. After using a handkerchief;
iv. After smoking, eating or drinking; and
v. After handling waste or chemicals.

13.3.2.5 When gloves are used, personnel shall maintain the hand washing practices outlined above.

13.3.3 Clothing

13.3.3.1 The site shall undertake a risk analysis to ensure that the clothing and hair policy protects food contact packaging from unintentional contamination.

13.3.3.2 Clothing worn by staff engaged in handling food contact packaging shall be maintained, stored, laundered and worn so as not to present a contamination risk to products.

13.3.3.3 Clothing and shoes shall be clean at the commencement of each shift and maintained in a serviceable condition, and changed where they present a product contamination risk.

13.3.3.4 Gloves used when contacting finished packaging material shall be clean and maintained and replaced when needed.

13.3.4 Jewelry and Personal Effects

13.3.4.1 Jewelry and other loose objects shall not be worn or taken into a product handling or any area where packaging material is exposed.

13.3.4.2 The wearing of plain bands with no stones and medical alert bracelets that cannot be removed can be permitted, however the site will need to consider their customer requirements and the applicable food legislation.

13.3.5 Visitors

13.3.5.1 All visitors, including management and maintenance staff, shall wear suitable clothing and footwear when entering any manufacturing or storage areas.

13.3.5.2 Visitors shall enter and exit manufacturing or storage areas through the proper staff entrance points and comply with all personnel practice requirements.

13.3.5.3 All visitors shall be trained in the appropriate site food packaging safety and hygiene procedures before entering into any manufacturing or handling areas or shall be escorted at all times in manufacturing and storage areas.

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13.3.6 Staff Amenities

13.3.6.1 If provided, staff amenities supplied with appropriate lighting and ventilation shall be made available for the use of all persons engaged in the handling and storage of food contact packaging.

13.3.7 Change Rooms

13.3.7.1 Where applicable, facilities shall be provided to enable staff to change into and out of protective clothing as required.

13.3.7.2 Where applicable, provision shall be made for staff to store their street clothing and personal items separate from packaging handling or storage areas.

13.3.8 Sanitary Facilities

13.3.8.1 Toilet rooms shall be:

i. designed and constructed so that they are accessible to staff and separate from any food packaging handling or storage operations;
ii. accessed from the manufacturing area via an airlock vented to the exterior or through an adjoining room;
iii. sufficient in number for the maximum number of staff;
iv. constructed so that they can be easily cleaned and maintained; and
v. Kept clean and tidy.

13.3.8.2 Sanitary drainage shall not be connected to any other drains within the premises and shall be directed to a septic tank or a sewerage system in accordance with regulations. Procedure shall be documented and implemented to properly manage sewage back-ups in order to minimize the potential for contamination.

13.3.8.3 Hand wash basins shall be provided immediately outside or inside the toilet room and designed as outlined in 13.3.2.2.

13.3.9 Lunch Rooms

13.3.9.1 Separate lunch room facilities shall be provided away from packaging manufacturing, handling or storage areas. Lunch rooms shall be kept clean and tidy and free from waste materials and pests.

13.3.9.2 Signage in appropriate languages instructing people to wash their hands before returning to packaging manufacturing and storage areas shall be provided in a prominent position in lunch rooms and at lunch room exits.

13.4 Personnel Processing Practices

13.4.1 Staff Engaged in Manufacture, Handling and Storage of Food Contact Packaging

13.4.1.1 All personnel engaged in any packaging manufacture and storage operations shall comply with the following practices:

i. Personnel entry to production areas shall be through designated access doors only;
ii. All doors are to be kept closed. Doors shall not be left open for extended periods when access for waste removal or receiving of materials is required;
iii. Raw and finished packaging material shall be maintained appropriately and off the floor;
iv. Waste shall be contained in the bins identified for this purpose and removed from the manufacturing area on a regular basis and not left to accumulate.

13.4.1.2 The manufacturing process shall be controlled such that the packaging material produced is food safe and free from contamination. Procedures shall be in place to prevent cross contamination of food contact packaging from raw materials, recycled materials, cleaning agents, or chemicals.

13.4.1.3 All personnel engaged in the manufacture, storage, transport and handling of food packaging shall ensure that products and materials are handled and stored in such a way as to prevent damage or contamination.

13.5 Water and Air Supply

13.5.1 Water Supply

13.5.1.1 Adequate supplies of clean water shall be provided for use during manufacturing operations, and for cleaning the premises and equipment.

13.5.1.2 Supplies of hot and cold water shall be provided as required to enable the effective cleaning of the premises and equipment.

13.5.1.3 The delivery of water within the premises shall ensure potable water is not contaminated.

13.5.1.4 The use of non-potable water shall be controlled such that:

i. There is no cross contamination between potable and non-potable water lines;
ii. Non-potable water piping and outlets are clearly identified;
iii. Hoses, taps, or other similar sources of possible contamination shall comply with local, national or international regulatory requirements to prevent back flow or back siphonage.

13.5.2 Monitoring Water Microbiology and Quality

13.5.2.1 Water used for

i. The manufacture of food contact packaging;
ii. Cleaning product contact surfaces;

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iii. Hand washing; and
iv. The manufacture of steam that is in contact with food packaging material shall comply with local, national or internationally recognized potable water microbiological and quality standards as required.

13.5.3 Air Quality

13.5.3.1 Where compressed air comes into contact with food packaging or surfaces which contact the food packaging, the following requirements shall be met.

i. Air is filtered using an appropriate filter capable of removing dust, oil, moisture and microorganisms to avoid cross contamination to the packaging material;
ii. A system is in place to monitor the purity of filtered air.

13.5.3.2 Compressed air systems used in the manufacturing process shall be maintained and regularly monitored for purity and completed annually, at minimum.

13.6 Storage and Transport

13.6.1 Storage and Handling of Materials, Food Packaging, and Equipment

13.6.1.1 The site shall document and implement an effective storage plan in place that allows for the safe, hygienic storage of raw materials, food packaging, rework, equipment, and chemicals.

13.6.1.2 The responsibility and methods for ensuring effective stock rotation principles are applied shall be documented and implemented. Procedures are in place to ensure that all raw materials, work-in-progress, rework, and finished food packaging are utilized within their designated shelf-life, where applicable

13.6.1.3 Equipment storage rooms shall be designed and constructed to allow for the hygienic and efficient storage of equipment.

13.6.1.4 Where goods described in 13.6.2 and 13.6.3 are held under temporary or overflow conditions that are not designed for the safe storage of goods, a risk analysis shall be undertaken to ensure there is no risk to the integrity of those goods or contamination or adverse effect on food packaging safety and quality.

13.6.2 Storage of Food Packaging and Materials

13.6.2.1 Rooms used for the storage of raw materials, finished food packaging and other dry goods shall be constructed to protect the product from contamination and deterioration.

13.6.2.2 Equipment used for the storage of food packaging shall be constructed of impervious materials and designed and located to prevent accumulation of debris and enable cleaning beneath and behind the equipment.

13.6.2.3 Vehicles that transport product shall be maintained so as not to present a food safety hazard.

13.6.3 Use, Storage of Hazardous Chemicals and Toxic Substances

13.6.3.1 Hazardous chemicals and toxic substances, including solvents and agents, with the potential for contamination of food packaging shall be stored and used so as not to present a hazard to staff, packaging, or areas in which the product is handled, stored or transported.

13.6.3.2 The use of hazardous chemicals and toxic substances, including solvents and agents, shall be used according to manufacture recommendations and Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

13.6.4 Loading, Transport and Unloading Practices

13.6.4.1 The practices applied during loading, transport and unloading of raw materials and food contact food packaging shall be documented, implemented and designed to maintain appropriate storage conditions and product integrity. Food packaging shall be loaded, transported and unloaded under conditions suitable to prevent cross contamination.

13.6.5 Loading/Unloading

13.6.5.1 Vehicles (e.g. trucks/vans/containers) used for transporting food packaging material shall be inspected prior to loading to ensure they are clean, in good repair, suitable for the purpose and free from odors or other conditions that may impact negatively on the food packaging .

13.6.5.2 Loading practices shall be designed to minimize unnecessary exposure of the food packaging to conditions detrimental to maintaining its integrity.

13.7 Separation of Function

13.7.1 Process Flow

13.7.1.1 The process flow shall be designed to prevent cross contamination and organized so there is a continuous flow of food packaging through the process.

13.7.1.2 The flow of personnel shall be managed such that the potential for contamination is minimized.

13.7.2 Control of Foreign Matter Contamination

13.7.2.1 The responsibility and methods used to prevent foreign matter contamination of food packaging shall be documented, implemented and communicated to all staff.

13.7.2.2 Inspections shall be performed to ensure plant and equipment remains in good condition and potential contaminants have not detached or become damaged or deteriorated.

13.7.2.3 All glass objects or other brittle materials in food packaging handling/contact zones shall be listed in a glass register including details of their location.

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13.7.2.4 Containers, equipment and other utensils made of glass, porcelain, ceramics, laboratory glassware or other brittle material (except where the product is contained in packaging made from these materials, or measurement instruments with glass dial covers or MIG thermometers required under regulation) shall not be permitted in packaging material manufacturing and storage areas.

13.7.2.5 Regular inspections of packaging material manufacturing and storage areas shall be conducted to ensure they are free of glass or similar materials and to update the glass register.

13.7.2.6 Glass instrument dial covers on manufacturing equipment and MIG thermometers shall be inspected at the start of each shift to confirm they have not been damaged.

13.7.2.7 Wooden pallets and other wooded objects and other wooden objects used in packaging material manufacturing and storage areas shall be dedicated for that purpose, clean, maintained in good order. Their condition is subject to regular inspection.

13.7.2.8 Loose metal or plastic objects on equipment, equipment covers, and overhead structures shall be controlled or tightly fixed so as not to present a hazard to raw materials, work-in-progress or finished food packaging (refer to 2.4.6).

13.7.2.9 Sharps of any type (knives, cutting blades, etc.) shall be monitored and controlled so as to not present a hazard to raw materials, work-in-progress or finished food packaging. Snap-off blades shall not be used in manufacturing or storage areas.

13.7.3 Managing Foreign Matter Contamination Incidents

13.7.3.1 In all cases of foreign matter contamination the affected item shall be isolated, inspected, reworked or disposed of.

13.7.3.2 In circumstances where glass or similar brittle material breakage occurs, the affected area shall be isolated, cleaned and thoroughly inspected (including cleaning equipment and footwear) and cleared by a suitably responsible person prior to the commencement of operations.

13.8 Waste Disposal

13.8.1 Dry and Liquid Waste Disposal

13.8.1.1 The responsibility and methods used to collect and handle dry, wet and liquid waste and store prior to removal from the premises shall be documented and implemented.

13.8.1.2 Waste shall be removed on a regular basis and not build up in packaging material manufacturing, handling or storage areas. Designated waste accumulation areas shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition until such time as external waste collection is undertaken.

13.8.1.3 Trolleys, vehicles waste disposal equipment, collection bins and storage areas shall be maintained in a serviceable condition and cleaned and sanitized regularly so as not to attract pests and other vermin. Exterior collection and storage bins must be covered.

13.8.1.4 Reviews of the effectiveness of waste management will form part of daily hygiene inspections and the results of these inspections shall be included in the relevant hygiene reports.

13.9 Exterior

13.9.1 Grounds and Roadways

13.9.1.1 The grounds and area surrounding the premises shall be maintained to minimize dust and be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin.

13.9.1.2 Paths, roadways and loading and unloading areas shall be maintained so as not to present a hazard to the food packaging safety operation of the premises.

13.9.1.3 Surroundings shall be kept neat and tidy and not present a hazard to the hygienic and sanitary operation of the premises.

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Appendix 1: SQF Food Sector Categories

FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Code Modules	Description	Example of Products	Level of Risk
1	**Production, Capture and Harvesting of Livestock and Game Animals:** Free Range Animal Production Intensive Animal Production Dairy farming Game Animals Egg Production	AI: Farming of Animals	System elements Module 5: GAP for farming of animal products	Applies to the capture, transport, holding, intensive animal husbandry and free range farming of animals, but does not include seafood.	Includes: Deer, cattle, goats, sheep, pigs, poultry, ostrich, emu, etc. Cattle, veal, lamb, pigs, poultry, eggs Cattle, sheep and goats Buffalo, wild pigs, emu	Low risk
2	**Not in use**					
3	**Growing and Production of Fresh Produce and Nuts:** Fresh fruit, vegetables and nuts Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Produce and nuts	BI: Farming of Plant Products	System elements Module 7: GAP for farming of plant products	Applies to the production, harvesting, preparation, field packing, transport and controlled temperature storage of fresh whole fruit, vegetables and nuts. Includes all products grown under broad acre and intensive horticulture production system, including orchards, viticulture, and hydroponics production and nursery operations.	All fruit and vegetable and nut varieties including: Tropical and temperate tree fruits, carrots, beets, potatoes, wine grapes Table grapes, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, all forms of leafy greens, spring mix, tomatoes, peppers, herbs and spices and tomatoes, green onions, baby spinach, lettuce, melons, etc.	Generally low risk. Some products are classified as high risk
4	**Fresh Produce and Nuts Pack house Operations**	D: Pre-processing of Plant Products	System elements Module 10: GMP for pre-processing of plant products	Applies to the cleaning, shelling, packing, sorting, grading, controlled atmosphere temperature storage and transport of fresh and pre-packaged whole unprocessed fruits, vegetables and nuts for retail sale or further processing.	Includes all fruit, vegetable and nut varieties which are packed in pack houses and which may undergo controlled atmosphere storage and transport.	Low risk
5	**Extensive Broad Acre Agriculture Operations**	BII: Farming of Grains and Pulses	System elements Module 8: GAP for farming of grains and pulses	Applies to the production, harvesting, preparation, transport and storage of broad-acre crops including pulses, cereal and other grains. Also includes growing and harvesting of animal feed crops.	All grain and cereal varieties for human consumption and animal feed including but not limited to wheat, oats, pulse crops, soy, legumes, maize, corn, cotton, pasture, silage and hay.	Generally low risk, although some products and processes are classified as high risk.

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FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Code Modules	Description	Example of Products	Level of Risk
6	**Harvest and Intensive Farming of Fish and Seafood** Wild Caught Fish Aquaculture and RTE seafood.	All: Farming of Fish and Seafood	System elements Module 6: GAP for farming of seafood	Applies to the harvest and wild capture and intensive farming of freshwater and marine fishes and shellfish, including purification, transport and storage and extends to gilling, gutting, shucking and chilling operations at sea.	All fresh and salt water fish and shellfish species including: Tuna, salmon, snapper, bass, catfish and other fish spp. Oysters, mussels, shrimp, lobster, crab, and other shellfish spp.	Generally low risk, although some products and processes are classified as high risk.
7	**Slaughterhouse, Boning and Butchery Operations:** Red Meat Poultry Meat	C: pre-process handling of animal products	System elements Module 9: GMP for pre-processing of animal products	Applies to the slaughtering, dressing, processing, transport, storage, chilling, freezing and wholesaling of all animal species and game animals for consumption and extends to all meat cuts.	Includes uncooked poultry, pork and red meat animal species prepared in retail butcher shops, boning rooms and meat wholesale markets, including ground (minced) meats. Bone in and whole muscle fillet for pork and red meat species including ground (minced) red meat. Bone in and whole muscle poultry fillet and ground (minced) poultry meat.	Low risk
8	**Processing of Manufactured Meats and Poultry**	El: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, manufacture, transport and storage operations where meat (all red meat species and poultry) is the major ingredient including all value-adding operations (i.e. cook-chill, crumbing, curing, smoking, cooking, drying, fermenting and vacuum packing) and chilling and freezing operations, but not canning of meat or poultry product.	Includes poultry, pork and red meats blends and raw heat-treated and fermented poultry, pork and red meats including salami, hot dogs, sausages, bacon, pepperoni, and meat pastes etc.	High risk product and process knowledge required
9	**Seafood Processing:** Raw seafood and seafood products Uncooked RTE seafood Cooked RTE seafood	El: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, manufacture, transport and storage of all fish and seafood species and extends to value-adding operations including dismembering, fermenting, crumbing, smoking, cooking freezing, chilling, drying and vacuum packing, but not canning of seafood product.	Includes: Whole fish, fish fillets, reformed fish cakes, coated fish portions uncooked fish product. sashimi, sushi and raw uncooked shellfish such as oyster and mussels, surimi smoked cooked fish products chilled or frozen that require no further cooking prior to consumption.	Some products are classified high risk. Uncooked RTE product is high risk and process knowledge required
10	**Dairy Food Processing**	El: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, transport and storage of food products from all species used for milk collection and extends to all value-adding operations including freezing, pasteurizing, ultra-filtration, evaporation/concentration, fermentation, clarification, culturing and spray drying of milk but not UHT operations. (refer to FSC	Includes all milk collection and includes milk and cream, butter, cottage cheese, sour cream, all forms of cheese, yogurt, ice cream and dried milk. Also includes milk substitutes such as soymilk and tofu, and infant formula.	High risk product and process knowledge required

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FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Code Modules	Description	Example of Products	Level of Risk
				15). Includes milk substitutes where the technology is essentially the same.		
11	**Apiculture and Honey Processing**	EI: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to apiculture and the processing, transport and storage of food products from all species used for honey collection including value-added operations. Includes clarifying and treatment operations.	Includes apiculture, honey, honeycomb; pollen and royal jelly.	Some high risk process knowledge required
12	**Egg Processing**	EI: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the, grading, cleaning, processing, transport and storage of food products from all species used for egg collection and processing.	Fresh shell eggs including value-added products where egg is the major ingredient.	High risk product; Generally low risk process
13	**Bakery and Snack Food Processing**	EIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, transport and storage of extruded snack foods and cake mix formulations and extends to all bakery operations.	Includes baked items such as meat pies, custard pies, bread, cookies, cakes and mixes and all varieties of snack food.	Some high risk process knowledge required
14	**Fruit, Vegetable and Nut Processing, and Fruit Juices**	EII: Processing or Perishable Plant Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, transport, storage and distribution of all processed fruit and vegetable varieties including freezing, fermenting drying, slicing, dicing, cutting, and modified atmosphere processing of all fruits and vegetables, and the roasting, drying, and cutting of nuts. Does not include canning of fruits and vegetables.	Includes frozen. fermented, dried, sliced, diced, cut, and modified atmosphere packaged (MAP) fruit, vegetable and nut products including prepared and deli salads. Includes fresh and pasteurized fruit and vegetable juices.	Some high risk process knowledge required
15	**Canning, UHT and Aseptic Operations**	EIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, of low acid canned foods, and sterilization (retorting) UHT, or other high temperature or high pressure processes (HPP) not covered elsewhere and the manufacture of the associated hermetically sealed containers.	Includes: The commercial sterilization of fish, meats, fruits and vegetables and other low acid soups and sauces in metal or glass containers or retort pouches. Does not include pasteurization of dairy, fruit or vegetable juices, but does include UHT treatment of • Pasteurized canned and chilled crab meat; • Milk or milk products; or • Egg or egg products; or • Fruit or vegetable juices. • Canned pet food	High risk product and process knowledge required
16	**Ice, Drink and Beverage Processing**	EIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of	Applies to fermentation, concentration aseptic filling or drying operations processes. Does not include powdered milk and	Includes carbonated soft drinks, carbonated and non-carbonated waters, mineral water, ice, wine, beer	Some high risk process knowledge required

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FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Code Modules	Description	Example of Products	Level of Risk
			food products	pasteurization and UHT treatment of milk or milk products or fruit and vegetable juicing operations. Does not apply to dry beverage ingredients (e.g. tea, coffee).	and other alcoholic beverages.	
17	**Confectionary Manufacturing**	EIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the preparation, transport and storage of all types of confectionary and extends to all chocolate and imitation chocolate-based processing.	Includes all confectionary products which undergo refining, conching, starch molding, compression, extrusion and vacuum cooking.	Some high risk process knowledge required
18	**Preserved Foods Manufacture**	EIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, transport and storage of all foods preserved under high temperature processes not covered elsewhere, compositionally preserved foods that are not high temperature processed or other alternative acceptable methods not covered elsewhere.	Includes dressings, mayonnaise, sauces, marinades, pickled foods, peanut butter, mustards, jams and fillings.	Some high risk process knowledge required
19	**Food Ingredient Manufacture**	L: Production of Bio-chemicals	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, blending, re-packaging transport and storage of dry food ingredients, cultures and yeast, but does not include dairy products, fermented meats or other fermented products mentioned elsewhere.	Includes starter cultures used in cheese, yogurt and wine manufacture and cultures used in the baking industry and other products such as vinegar used for the preservation of foods. Other additional products include additives, preservatives, flavorings, colorings, soup mixes, sauces, dehydrated culinary products, salt, sugar, spices and other condiments. Applies to dried tea and coffee products.	Some high risk process knowledge required
20	**Recipe Meals Manufacture**	EIII: Processing of Perishable Animal and Plant Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing, receipt, controlled temperature storage and transport of foods prepared from a range of ingredients (mixed foods) that require cooking, heating, freezing, or refrigerated storage prior to serving. Includes sandwiches, wraps, and high-risk desserts for distribution to food service (If they are made on site and RTE, then fsc 23 applies).	Includes RTE chilled meals and deserts, frozen meals, pizza, frozen pasta, soups, and meal solutions, sous vide products, and freeze-dried and dehydrated meals. Includes sandwiches, wraps, and high-risk desserts for distribution to food service.	High risk product and process knowledge required
21	**Oils, Fats, and the Manufacture of oil or fat-based spreads**	EIII: Processing of Perishable Animal and Plant Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the manufacture of all animal and vegetable oils and fats and to the manufacture of margarine. Includes clarifying and refining processes.	Includes shortening (animal and vegetable), oils (olive, peanut, corn, vegetable, sunflower, safflower, canola, nut, seed), and oil-based spreads such as margarine and oil based spreads.	Low risk
22	**Processing of**	EII: Processing or	System elements	Applies to the processing of cereals of all	Includes wheat, maize, rice, barley,	Some high risk

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FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Code Modules	Description	Example of Products	Level of Risk
	Cereal Grains	Perishable Plant Products	Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	varieties, including sorting, grading, picking, handling of bulk grains, milling, and extruding.	oats, millet, pasta, breakfast cereals.	process knowledge required
23	**Food Catering and Food Service Operations**	G: Catering	System Elements Module 15: GRP for Retail	Applies to all on-site food preparation and service activities, including transport, storage, and distribution undertaken with mixed foods that are ready-to-eat and do not require further treatment or processing by the consumer. Only applies to products prepared on site that are RTE.	Includes food service caterers, retail delicatessen/self-serve facilities, restaurants, fast food outlets, delicatessens, school cafeterias (canteens), hospital/institution meal services, childcare centers, and mobile and home delivery food services. Includes sandwiches, wraps, and high-risk desserts that are prepared on site and are RTE.	High risk product and process knowledge required
24	**Food Retailing**	H: Retail/ Wholesale	System Elements Module 15: GRP for Retail	Applies to the receipt, handling, storage and display at retail level of stable or pre-processed and packaged foods and/or food intended for further preparation by the consumer. Retailers that prepare RTE foods shall include fsc 23 as well.	Includes all foods distributed and sold through retail outlets. Does not include foods that are prepared on site and are RTE.	Low risk
25	**Repackaging of products not manufactured on site.**	EIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Assembling of whole produce and packaged products (e.g. nuts, hard candy, dried fruit, and beef jerky) that are manufactured elsewhere (e.g. gift baskets, etc.). Applies to products not covered elsewhere.	Includes gift baskets, Christmas hampers, and presentation packs.	Low risk
26	**Food Storage and Distribution**	JII: Provision of Transport and Storage Services – Ambient Stable Food and Feed	System elements Module 12: GDP for transport and distribution of food products	Applies to the receipt, storage, display, consolidation and distribution of perishable fresh produce and general food lines including chilled, frozen, dry goods, stable or pre-processed and packaged foods and/or food intended for further preparation by the consumer at wholesale level.	Includes all transportation, storage and delivery of perishable and shelf-stable foods sold through markets, retail and foodservice facilities.. Includes transportation, storage and delivery of all varieties of fresh unprocessed fruit, vegetable and nut products.	Low risk
27	**Manufacture of Food Packaging**	M: Production of Food Packaging	System elements Module 13: GMP for manufacture of food packaging	Applies to the manufacture, storage and transport of food sector packaging materials. Includes items that may be used in food manufacturing or food service facilities, including paper towel, napkins, disposable food containers, straws, stirrers.	Includes all food-grade packaging materials including flexible films, paperboard based containers, metal containers, flexible pouches, glass containers, plastic and foam containers (PET, polystyrene, etc.), and single-use foodservice products (eg paper towel, napkins, disposable food containers, straws, stirrers).	Low risk
28	**Not in use**					

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FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Code Modules	Description	Example of Products	Level of Risk
29	**Not in use**					
30	**Not in use**					
31	**Manufacture of Dietary Supplements**	L: Production of Bio-chemicals	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the manufacture, blending, transport and storage of dietary supplements.	Includes vitamins, probiotics and label supplements.	High risk product and process knowledge required
32	**Manufacture of Pet Food**	FII: Production of Compound Feed	System elements Module 4: GMP for processing of pet food products	Applies to the manufacture, of pet food intended for consumption by domestic animals and specialty pets.	Includes dry and moist pet foods and treats, semi-raw, chilled, or frozen product. Does not include canned pet food.	Some high risk process knowledge required
33	**Manufacture of Food Processing Aides**	L: Production of Bio-chemicals	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the manufacture, storage and transport of chemicals and aides used in the food processing sectors.	Includes food grade lubricants, processing aides, and chemicals for clean-in-place systems.	Low risk
34	**Manufacture of Animal Feed**	FI: Production of Single Ingredient Feed	System elements Module 3: GMP for animal feed production	Applies to the manufacture, blending, transport and storage of animal feeds.	Includes compounded and medicated feeds.	Some high risk process knowledge required
35	**Not in use**					

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Appendix 2: Glossary

Accreditation Approved by an accreditation body confirming that the management system of a certification body complies with the ISO/IEC 17065:2012 and the Criteria for SQF Certification Bodies requirements and that the certification body is suitable to be granted a license by SQFI to provide the service in the licensed territory (ies).

Airlock A space which permits the passage of people between one environment and another with two doors in series which do not open simultaneously, and thus minimizes the transfer of pests, dust, odors, or air from one area to the other.

Approved Supplier (s) Suppliers that have been assessed and approved by a site based on risk assessment as capable of meeting the sites food safety and quality requirements for goods and services supplied.

Audit A systematic and independent examination of a site's SQF food safety and/or quality System by an SQF food safety and/or quality auditor to determine whether food safety, quality systems, hygiene and management activities are undertaken in accordance with that system documentation and comply with the requirements of the SQF food safety and/or quality Code, as appropriate, and to verify whether these arrangements are implemented effectively.

Audit Checklist The list of SQF food safety and/or quality Code elements, customized for the site's audit scope, and available for use by the SQF food safety and/or quality auditor when conducting an SQF food safety and/or quality audit.

Auditor A person registered by the SQFI to audit a site's SQF food safety and/or quality System. An auditor must work on behalf of a licensed certification body. The terms "SQF auditor" and "SQF sub-contract auditor" shall have the same meaning.

Central Site An SQF certified site at which activities are planned to control and manage a network of SQF certified sub-sites within an SQF multi-site program (refer to SQFI's multi-site program requirements).

Certificate A certificate which includes a registration schedule (in a format approved by the SQFI), issued to a site by a licensed certification body following the successful completion of an SQF food safety and/or quality certification audit and/or a re-certification audit.

Certification Certification by a licensed SQF certification body of a site's SQF food safety and/or quality System as complying with the SQF food safety and/or quality Code, as appropriate, following a certification audit or re-certification audit. The terms, "certify," "certifies" and "certified" shall have a corresponding meaning under the SQF Program.

Certification Audit An audit of a site's whole SQF System, including a desk audit, where the site's SQF System:

a) has not been previously certified; or
b) has been previously certified but requires certification as the earlier certification has been revoked or voluntarily discontinued by the site.

Certification Body An entity which has entered into a license agreement with the SQFI authorizing it to certify a site's SQF System in accordance with the ISO / IEC 17065:2012 and the Criteria for SQF Certification Bodies.

Certification Cycle The annual period between a site's certification/re-certification audits.

Certification Number A unique numerical provided by the SQFI and included on the certificate, issued to a site that has successfully completed an SQF Food Safety or Quality certification audit.

Children Children are defined under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as "human beings below the age of 18 years unless majority is attained earlier under the applicable laws of a given country."

Codex Alimentarius Commission The internationally recognized entity whose purpose is to guide and promote the elaboration and establishment of definitions, standards and requirements for foods, and to assist in their harmonization and, in doing so, to facilitate international trade. The Commission Secretariat comprises staff from the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization. The Codex Alimentarius Commission adopted the principles of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)

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system in 1997.

Contract Manufacturer (or co-man, co-manufacturer)

Facilities that are contracted by the SQF certified site to produce, process, pack and /or store part of or all of one or more products included in the site's SQF scope of certification. In some cases, a product may be manufactured interchangeably at the certified site and by the contract manufacturer. In other cases, a contract manufacturer may only be used intermittently to fulfill or supplement the certified site's production. Contract manufacturers must follow the requirements outlined in the SQF Food Safety Code.

Corporate

An entity that does not manufacture or handle product but oversees and contributes to the food safety and/or quality management system at an SQF certified site.

Correction

Action to eliminate a detected non-conformity. Shall have the same meaning as "corrected."

Corrective Action

Action to eliminate the cause of a detected non-conformity or other undesirable situation. Corrective action shall include:

a) Determine / document any immediate action required / taken
    i. Determine the cause of the problem
    ii. Evaluate action needed on the identified cause
    iii. Determine if the problem exists elsewhere in the system and implement actions needed
b) Document the actions taken and the results of the action taken.
    i. Review/verify and document effectiveness of action taken with objective evidence.

Crisis Management

The process by which a site manages an event (e.g., a flood, a drought, a fire, etc.) that adversely affects the site's ability to provide continuity of supply of safe, quality food, and requires the implementation of a crisis management plan.

Customer

A buyer or person that purchases goods or services from the SQF certified site.

Desk Audit

A review of the site's SQF System documentation, forming part of and being the initial stage of the certification audit to ensure the System documentation substantially meets the requirements of the SQF Food Safety and/or Quality Code, as appropriate.

Deviation

A non-conformity raised against the SQF Quality Code. Deviations are graded as follows:

A minor quality deviation is an omission or deficiency in the quality system that produces unsatisfactory conditions that if not addressed may lead to a quality threat but not likely to cause a system element breakdown.

A major quality deviation is an omission or deficiency in the quality system producing unsatisfactory conditions that carry a significant quality threat and are likely to result in a system element breakdown. No critical deviations are raised at a quality systems audit.

Timelines for the resolution of corrective actions are addressed in Part A, 3.2.

Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP)

A program which includes pathogen or indicator swabbing as appropriate to detect risk in the sanitary conditions in the processing environment. A verification of the effectiveness of the pathogen controls that a management facility has in place for high risk foods.

Exempt

A term applied to elements of the SQF Food Safety and Quality Code that the site does not wish to be included in the SQF System audit, and has submitted a written request to the certification body to exclude, prior to commencement of any scheduled audit activity.

In the SQF Food Safety Code, mandatory elements of the system elements cannot be exempted. The certification body will confirm the reasons for exemption as part of the site audit.

The term also applies to products, processes or areas of the site that the site wishes to exclude from the audit. A request is to be submitted to the certification body in writing prior to the audit activity, and shall be listed in the site description in the SQFI assessment database.

Facility

The site's premises at its street address. The production, manufacturing, or storage area where product is produced, processed, packaged, and/or stored, and includes

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	the processes, equipment, environment, materials and personnel involved. The facility must be managed and supervised under the same operational management. The facility is the site audited during an on-site audit (refer to "site").
Feed	Any single or multiple materials, whether processed, semi-processes, or raw, which is intended to be fed directly to food-producing animals.
Feed Safety	The principles and practices applied to feed production and manufacturing to ensure that feed does not cause harm to animals or humans.
Food	Any substance, usually of animal or plant origin, intentionally consumed by humans, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed. May include water, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, materials included in a processed food product and any other substance identified by regulation (legislation) as a food.
Food Defense	As defined by the US Food and Drug administration, the efforts to prevent intentional food contamination by biological, physical, chemical or radiological hazards that are not reasonably likely to occur in the food supply.
Food Fraud	As defined by Michigan State University, a collective term used to encompass the deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, tampering, or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients, or food packaging; or false or misleading statements made about a product, for economic gain.
FMI	The Food Marketing Institute, a not-for-profit corporation, having its principal offices at 2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22202, United States of America.
Food Packaging	The finished article used to package food.
Food Quality Plan	As described in the SQF Quality Code. It shall be based on the CODEX HACCP method, include process controls at quality points in production to monitor product quality, identify deviations from control parameters and define corrections necessary to keep the process under control.
Food Safety Certification Program Owner	As defined by the Global Food Safety Initiative, a systematic plan which has been developed, implemented and maintained for the scope of food safety. It consists of a standard and food safety system in relation to specified processes or a food safety service to which the same particular plan applies. The food safety program should contain at least a standard, a clearly defined scope, and a food safety system.
Food Safety Fundamentals	An entry level Code for new and developing businesses that covers basic Good Agricultural or Aquaculture Practices (GAPs), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), or Good Distribution Practices (GDPs) and defines the essential elements that must be implemented to meet relevant legislative and customer food safety requirements. Sites that comply with the SQF Code certification requirements for the Food Safety Fundamentals Code receive an accredited certificate from an SQFI licensed certification body.
Food Safety Plan	As described in the SQF Food Safety Code. The plan shall be prepared based on the CODEX HACCP method, include process controls at control points in production to monitor product safety, identify deviations from control parameters and define corrections necessary to keep the process under control.
Food Sector Category (FSC)	A classification scheme established to assist in a uniform approach to management of the SQF Program and means those food industry, manufacturing, production, processing, storage, wholesaling, distribution, retailing and food service activities and other food sector services and auditor and consultant registration as defined by the SQFI.
General Requirements	The current edition of the document entitled "Criteria for SQF Certification Bodies: SQF Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC 17065:2012, General Requirements for Certification Bodies," published by The SQFI.
Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)	Practices on farms which define the essential elements for the development of best-practice for production, incorporating integrated crop management, integrated pest management, and integrated agricultural hygienic practices.
Good Aquaculture Practices (GAPs)	Practices on aquaculture farms and wild catch fisheries which define the essential elements for the development of best-practice for production, incorporating integrated water quality, veterinary and growth practices, and handling and hygienic practices.

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Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs)	The combination of management and manufacturing practices designed to ensure food products are consistently produced to meet relevant legislative and customer specifications.
HACCP	The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system and refers to the HACCP guidelines developed and managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization's CODEX Alimentarius Commission. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application – Annex to CAC/RCP 1 – 1969, Rev. 4-2003), – "A system, which identifies, evaluates and controls hazards which are significant for food safety."
HACCP Method	The implementation of pre-requisite programs and the application of HACCP principles in the logical sequence of the twelve steps as described in the current edition of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission Guidelines. The SQF Food Safety and Quality Codes utilize the HACCP method to control food safety hazards and quality threats in the segment of the food chain under consideration..
HACCP Plan	A document prepared in accordance with the CODEX HACCP method to ensure control of hazards which are significant for food safety or the identification of quality threats for the product under consideration.
HACCP Training	Training that meets the guidelines outlined in the Food and Agriculture Organization's CODEX Alimentarius Commission. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application – Annex to CAC/RCP 1 – 1969, Rev. 4-2003), – "A system, which identifies, evaluates and controls hazards which are significant for food safety." And this training shall be: 1. Recognized as a HACCP training course used extensively in a country. 2. Administered and delivered by an institution recognized as a food safety training center of excellence. 3. A minimum of two days (16 hours) in duration, or equivalent. 4. The acquired knowledge of the candidate shall be assessed as part of the training program.
Hazardous Chemicals and Toxic Substances	Solids, liquids or gasses that are radioactive, flammable, explosive, corrosive, oxidizing, asphyxiating, pathogenic, or allergenic, including but not restricted to detergents, sanitizers, pest control chemicals, lubricants, paints, processing aids, bio-chemical additives, which if used or handled incorrectly or in increased dosage may cause harm to the handler and/or consumer. Hazardous or toxic chemicals may be prescribed by regulation as "dangerous goods" and may carry a "poison," "Hazmat" or "Hazchem" label depending on the jurisdiction.
High Risk Area	A segregated room or area where high risk food processes are performed, and which require a higher level of hygienic practice is required to prevent contamination of high risk food by pathogenic organisms.
High Risk Food	Food or food product with known attributes for microbiological growth, physical or chemical contamination, or which due to a process type may allow for the survival of pathogenic microbial flora or other contamination which, if not controlled, may contribute to illness of the consumer. It may also apply to a food that is deemed high risk by a customer, declared high risk by the relevant food regulation or has caused a major foodborne illness outbreak.
High Risk Food Process(es)	A process that requires specific controls and/or a higher level of hygienic practice to prevent food contamination from pathogens.
Industry Code of Practice	Industry norms, rules or protocols established by industry groups which provide practical, industry specific guidelines on meeting regulations while meeting industry needs.
Inspection Area	A designated station close to the process for the purpose of monitoring food safety and/or quality attributes and parameters.
Legality	Legality refers to national federal, state and local regulations applicable to the certified product in the country of manufacture and intended markets.
Licensed Certification Body (LCB)	An entity which has entered into a license agreement with the SQFI authorizing it to manage the auditing and certification of site's SQF System.

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Low Risk Food	A food containing high acid that is not known to support the growth of pathogens; a food that is subject to a full cook prior to consumption.
Mandatory Elements	System elements that must be implemented and audited for a site to achieve SQF certification; system elements that cannot be exempted during a certification/re-certification audit.
Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)	Generally set by local regulation or CODEX Alimentarius Commission, and applies to maximum allowable trace levels of agricultural and veterinary chemicals in agricultural produce, particularly produce entering the food chain.
Multi-site Certification	Multi-site certification involves the designation and certification of a central site (i.e. manufacturer, packer, warehouse) into which a network of certified sub-sites all performing the same function feed into. The central site and all sub-sites are all located in the one country and operate under the same food safety legislation (refer to SQFI's multi-site program requirements).
Multi-site Program	An SQF multi-site program is comprised of a central-SQF certified site under which activities are planned to manage and control the food safety management systems of a network of sub-sites under a legal or contractual link (refer to SQFI's multi-site program requirements).
Multi-site Sampling Program	As defined by the Global Food Safety Initiative Requirements Document, a program of sub-site audits defined by the certification program owner, but will be determined by the certification body based upon specified criteria.
Non conformity (or Non-conformance)	Refers to the following definitions: A minor non-conformity is an omission or deficiency in the SQF System that produces unsatisfactory conditions that if not addressed may lead to a risk to food safety and/or quality but not likely to cause a system element breakdown. A major non-conformity is an omission or deficiency in the SQF System producing unsatisfactory conditions that carry a food safety and/or quality risk and likely to result in a system element breakdown. A critical non-conformity is a breakdown of control (s) at a critical control point, a pre-requisite program, or other process step and judged likely to cause a significant public health risk and/or where product is contaminated. A critical non-conformity is also raised if the site fails to take effective corrective action within the timeframe agreed with the certification body, or if the certification body deems that there is systemic falsification of records relating to food safety controls and the SQF System. Critical non-conformities cannot be raised at desk audits.
N/A	Stands for "not applicable" and may be reported during the SQF food safety and/or quality audit by the food safety and/or quality auditor when an element does not apply immediately but the site is still responsible for the element. N/A may also be reported to avoid double debiting, for example where a non-conformity has been raised against a similar, but more appropriate element. In this case, the element will be reported as "N/A."
On-site Laboratories	A designated and enclosed area in the site in which chemical, microbiological and other product testing is conducted and if not controlled could lead to contamination and requires the use of good laboratory practices.
Pests	Vermin, including birds, rodents, insects, or other unwanted species that can carry disease and pose a risk to packaging, feed or food.
Pet Food	Any substance intended for consumption by domestic animals and specialty pets. It includes dry and moist pet foods and treats, semi-raw, canned, chilled, or frozen product.
Plan	As defined by ISO 9001, a document(s) used to establish the objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with customer requirements and the organization's policies. (refer to Food Safety Plan, Food Quality Plan).
Potable	Water that is safe to drink.
Pre-requisite Program	A procedural measure that when implemented reduces the likelihood of a food safety

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	hazard or a food quality threat occurring, but one that may not be directly related to activities taking place during production.
Primary Producer or Producer	A sole entity involved in the pre-farm gate production, field packing, storage and supply of food produced and/or harvested under their exclusive control.
Processing	The processing of food through one or more steps in which the nature of the food is changed. Processing includes but is not limited to repacking, over bagging and re-labeling of food, slaughtering, dismembering, sorting, grading, cleaning, treating, drying, salting, smoking, cooking, canning, purifying and the pasteurization of food.
Product	Those products that apply to a specific food sector category as defined by the SQFI.
Program	A plan(s) used to establish the objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with customer requirements and the organization's policies." Examples include allergen management program or an environmental monitoring program.
Purity	The absence of contaminants that could cause a food safety hazard.
Quality	A measure of exceeding customer or corporate expectations and a state of being free from defects, deficiencies and significant variation.
Quality Threat	See threat.
Re-certification	A re-certification by a certification body of a site's SQF food safety or quality System as a result of a re-certification audit, and re-certified shall have a corresponding meaning.
Re-certification Audit	An audit of the site's SQF food safety or quality System within thirty (30) calendar days of the anniversary of certification.
Recoup	Product that is intact and requires no further processing or handling but is repackaged for distribution. For example, mixing of partial cases to build one complete case. May also be referred to as "repack."
Registration Schedule	The portion of the certificate setting out the scope of and the nature and extent of the rights of use of the quality shield granted to the site.
Rework	Food, materials, and ingredients, including work in progress that has left the normal product flow and requires action to be taken on it before it is acceptable for release and is suitable for reuse within the process.
Rules of Use	The rules and procedures contained in SQF Logo and/or Quality Shield Rules of Use and includes the certificate schedule and any modification, variation or replacement of the SQF trademark rules of use.
Scope of Certification	The food sector categories and those products to be covered by the certificate.
Season or Seasonal	A period in which the major activity is conducted over not more than five consecutive months in a calendar year; for example, harvesting and packing during the apple season.
SQFI Select Site	Recognition stated on the SQFI certificate for sites who have undergone an annual unannounced re-certification audit.
Senior Site Management	Individuals at the highest level on site responsible for the business operation and implementation and improvement of the food safety and quality management system.
Site	Any food business involved in the production, manufacture, processing, transport, storage, distribution or sale of food, beverages, packaging, animal feed, or pet food, or providing support services to the food sector and run by a person, company, cooperative, partnership, joint venture, business or other organization who has, or agrees to have, a licensed SQF certification body carry out audits and certification of its SQF System.
Site Audit	The second part of a certification audit that reviews the site's products and processes on-site to determine the effective implementation of the site's documented SQF food safety or quality System.
SQF Auditor	The same meaning as auditor.

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SQF Consultant A person who is registered by the SQFI to assist in the development, validation, verification, implementation and maintenance of SQF System on behalf of client site in the food industry categories appropriate to their scope of registration.

SQF Logo Means the SQF logo depicted in SQF Logo Rules of Use.

SQF Practitioner An individual designated by a site to oversee the development, implementation, review and maintenance that site's own SQF System. The SQF practitioner qualification details will be verified by the SQF food safety or quality auditor during the certification/re-certification audit as meeting the following requirements:

i. Oversee the development, implementation, review and maintenance of the SQF System, including food safety fundamentals outlined in 2.4.2, and the food safety plan outlined in 2.4.3.

ii. Take appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the SQF food safety and/or quality System.

iii. Communicate to relevant personnel all information essential to ensure the effective implementation and maintenance of the SQF food safety and/or quality System.

iv. Ensure that site personnel have the required competencies to carry out those functions affecting products, legality, and safety.

The SQF quality practitioner shall also have responsibility and authority to oversee the development, implementation, review and maintenance of the SQF Quality Code, including the food quality plan.

SQF Program The SQF Food Safety and/or Quality Code and all associated System, rules, quality shield, intellectual property and documents.

SQF Quality Shield Means the SQF shield depicted in SQF Quality Shield Rules of Use.

SQF System A risk management and preventive system that includes a food safety plan or food quality plan implemented and operated by a site to assure food safety or quality. It is implemented and maintained by an SQF practitioner, audited by an SQF food safety or quality auditor and certified by a licensed certification body as meeting the requirements relevant to the SQF Food Safety or Quality Code.

SQF Trainer An individual contracted to a licensed SQF training center that has applied and met the requirements listed in the "Criteria for SQF Trainers" published by SQFI and, upon approval, is registered under the SQFI to provide consistent training on the SQF Program.

SQFI The SQF Institute, a division of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).

SQFI Assessment Database The online database used by the SQFI to manage site registration, site audits, close out of corrective actions, and site certification.

System Elements The SQF food safety management requirements applied by all sites throughout the supply chain for SQF certification.

Standard A normative document and other defined normative documents, established by consensus and approved by a body that provide, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

Sub-site An SQF certified site which operates under a contractual link to an SQF certified central site within an SQF multi-site program (refer to SQFI's multi-site program requirements).

Supplier The entity that provides a product or service to the SQF certified site.

Surveillance Audit A six (6) monthly audit (or more frequently as determined by the certification body) of part of a site's SQF System where that system has previously been certified or re-certified and whose certification is current. Multi-site certification requires surveillance audits every six (6) months at a minimum.

Technical Expert An individual engaged by a licensed SQF certification body to provide a high level of technical support to the certification audit team. The technical expert shall be

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	approved by the SQFI prior to the certification/re-certification audit, demonstrate a high degree of expertise and technical competence in the food sector category under study, a sound knowledge and understanding of the HACCP method and where possible be registered as an SQF consultant.
Threat	An identified risk that has the potential, if not controlled, to affect the quality of a product.
Trademarks	A recognizable label, logo, or mark which identifies a raw material or finished product with a particular producer, manufacturer, or retailer.
Training Center	An entity which has entered into a license agreement with the SQFI to deliver SQFI-licensed training courses, including the "Implementing SQF Systems," "Quality Systems for Manufacturing" and "Advanced SQF Practitioner" training courses.
Unannounced Audit	A re-certification audit that is conducted once at a minimum within every three (3) certification cycles and thirty (30) days on either side the initial certification anniversary date without prior notice to the SQF certified site. A site may forgo the three-year certification cycle requirement and voluntarily elect to have annual unannounced re-certification audits. Sites with annual unannounced re-certification audits shall be recognized on the SQFI certificate as an "SQFI select site."
Validation	As defined in the Food and Agriculture Organization's CODEX Alimentarius Commission. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application – Annex to CAC/RCP 1 – 1969, Rev. 4-2003), – "A system, which identifies, evaluates and controls hazards which are significant for food safety. Essentially validation as applied to control limits seeks to prove that the intended result was achieved and that it actually worked.
Verification	As defined in the Food and Agriculture Organization's CODEX Alimentarius Commission. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System and Guidelines for its Application – Annex to CAC/RCP 1 – 1969, Rev. 4-2003), – "A system, which identifies, evaluates and controls hazards which are significant for food safety. Essentially verification as applied to control measures seeks to prove that the control measure was done according to its design.
Verification Schedule	A schedule outlining the frequency and responsibility for carrying out the methods, procedures or tests additional to those used in monitoring, to determine that the HACCP study was completed correctly, that the relevant SQF System is compliant with the relevant food safety and/or food quality plan and that it continues to be effective.
Vision and Mission Statement	A statement issued by senior site management outlining the site's quality goals and objectives. It may be combined with, or separate from the site's food safety policy.
Water Treatment	The microbiological, chemical, and/or physical treatment of water for use in processing or cleaning, to ensure its potability and suitability for use.

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Appendix 3: SQF Logo Rules of Use

1 Introduction

1.1 The SQF logo is owned by SQFI.

1.2 Sites at all levels of certification will have the right to use the SQF logo upon and for the duration of certification. There will be no fee payable by sites for the right to use the SQF logo, other than fees payable to obtain and maintain certification.

1.3 Sites obtain no property in the SQF logo.

1.4 Sites may only use the SQF logo in accordance with these rules of use, which are designed to protect the integrity and enhance the value of the SQF logo.

1.5 SQFI delegates any or all of its functions described herein to a SQFI licensed certification body (CB).

1.6 These rules of use regulate the use of the SQF logo by certified sites only. These rules of use do not regulate the use of the SQF logo by SQFI, CBs or other entities licensed by SQFI to use them, unless otherwise provided for in this or another instrument.

2 Conditions for Use

2.1 A site shall, for the duration of its certification, prove to the satisfaction of SQFI and the CB that its SQF System satisfies the requirements set forth in the current edition of the SQF Food Safety and/or Quality Code or that it meets the requirements spelled out in the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals; and

2.2 A site must only use the SQF logo in accordance with its certificate and these rules of use.

3 Reproduction

3.1 If a site wishes to reproduce the SQF logo it must do so strictly in accordance with the requirements and specifications set out in Schedule 2.

4 Obligations of a Site

4.1 A site must:

a) comply fully with these rules of use;

b) direct any queries regarding their intended use of the SQF logo to the certifying CB who issued the certificate;

c) discontinue any use of the SQF logo to which SQFI or the certifying CB reasonably objects;

d) operate entirely within the scope of its certificate, including the certification schedule. Subsidiary companies and site addresses not included on the certificate of registration are not certified to use the SQF logo;

e) give SQFI, a CB and/or their agents access to examine publicity material and all other such items bearing or indicating the SQF logo for the purpose of confirming compliance with these rules of use and the certificate; and

f) pay within the specified time any fees set by SQFI.

5 Grounds for Suspending or Ceasing Use of the SQF Logo

5.1 The permission for a site to use the SQF logo will:

a) be suspended if the site's certification is suspended; all efforts must be made to suspend in the manufacturing process of the use of the SQF logo upon certificate suspension;

b) cease to be used within the operation if the site’s certification is withdrawn, relinquished or not renewed.

5.2 Conditions for suspending or ceasing a site’s permission to use the SQF logo, to be notified by the certifying CB, include (but are not necessarily limited to):

a) suspended if the site breaches or fails to comply with these rules of use;

b) suspended if the site fails to use the SQF logo in accordance with its certificate, including the certification schedule;

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c) ceased if the site uses the SQF logo in a way that, in the opinion of SQFI or the CB, is detrimental to the SQF logo or the SQF program as a whole, is misleading to the public or otherwise contrary to law; or

d) ceased if the site has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets or where an order is made or a resolution passed for the winding up of the site (except for the purpose of amalgamation or reconstruction) or the site ceases to carry on business or becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors or makes any arrangement or composition with its creditors.

6 Disclaimer

6.1 SQFI may from time to time alter these rules of use or make new rules but no such alteration or new rule shall affect the use of the SQF logo by a site until six (6) months have expired from the date the alteration or new rules of use are first published by SQFI on its website (sqfi.com) unless specified by SQFI.

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SCHEDULE 1: REPRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SQF LOGO

Introduction

Sites who achieve and maintain certification to the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals or the SQF Food Safety Code and/or the SQF Quality Code are granted permission by their certifying CB to use the SQF logo, subject to the rules of use and the conditions set out hereunder per site.

Electronic SQF logo files are to be obtained from the certifying CB.

Color Format	For Use On
Full Color Reproduction: see PMS color format set out at Schedule 2 Clause 2.	• brochures, flyers, advertisements, press releases, company website, email signature lines • internal documents and training materials
Single Color Reproduction: black and white.	• brochures, flyers, advertisements, press releases, company website, email signature lines • internal documents and training materials

Color Reproduction of the SQF Logo

Reproduction of the SQF logo is to be clear, precise and of the highest standard. The following guidelines govern full color reproduction.

PMS 3005C
CMYK: C=100, M=34, Y=0, K=2

Dimensions

To ensure readability, do not reproduce the SQF logo smaller than indicated below. Larger variation to these dimensions is permitted provided that any such variation is proportional to the dimensions given below.

Special Cases

Where it is demonstrated that alternative reproduction of the SQF logo enhances the status of the SQF logo and/or SQFI, then the alternative is permitted provided it is approved by the certifying CB. All requests must be provided in writing **per certified site** to the certifying CB and SQFI.

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Appendix 4: Requirements for SQF Multi-site Certification

1 Scope

1.1 This appendix outlines the requirements for establishing and maintaining certification of a multi-site program that is managed by an SQF certified central site that is engaged in low risk activities.

1.2 The multi-site program involves a central packinghouse, manufacturer of primary products, warehouse or distribution center and the number of sub-sites shall be a minimum of twenty (20).

2 Definitions

2.1 A SQF multi-site program is comprised of a central site under which activities are planned to manage and control the food safety and quality management systems of a network of sub-sites under a legal or contractual link.

2.2 For the purpose of this Code the definitions outlined in Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms and the following definitions apply.

2.3 The central-site is an entity certified to a SQF Food Safety Code (i.e. manufacturing/packhouse or distribution center) or eligible for such certification, has a network of primary supplier sub-sites that are eligible for certification to an appropriate SQF Food Safety Code and are all involved in similar activities as per 3.7 below. The central site and all sub-sites are all located in the one country and operate under the same food safety legislation.

3 Eligibility Criteria for the Multi-site Organization

3.1 The central site is the entity responsible for the SQF multi-site program.

3.2 Sub-sites shall be linked to the central site by a legal or contractual arrangement.

3.3 The central site and not any sub-site shall be contracted with the certification body. The central site and all sub-sites in the multi-site program shall be audited by one certification body.

3.4 Central sites shall implement an SQF System that includes management of the sub-sites and internal audit of the sub-sites. The central site and the sub-sites shall be certified to a SQF Food Safety Code. Central sites can be certified to the SQF Quality Code however, sub-sites are not eligible for certification to the SQF Quality Code.

3.5 Sub-sites shall implement an SQF System which is subject to continuous surveillance by the central site.

3.6 The central site shall have authoritative control of the food safety management system of all subsites, including implementation of corrective actions when needed in any sub-site, and shall retain all relevant documentation associated with the sub-sites. These shall be included in the agreement between the central site and the sub-sites.

3.7 The product(s) or service(s) provided by each of the sub-sites shall be substantially of the same kind and produced according to the same fundamental methods and procedures. The size and/or complexity of each of the sub-sites shall be similar.

3.8 The central site shall establish and maintain SQF certification for the duration of the SQF multi-site program.

3.9 The central site's SQF management system shall be administered under a centrally controlled plan and be subject to central management review.

3.10 The central site shall demonstrate an ability to collect and analyze data from all sites, including the central site, and have the authority and ability to initiate organizational change if required.

3.11 The central administration function and the sub-sites shall be subject to the central site's internal audit program and shall be audited in accordance with that program. Internal audits shall be conducted at sub-sites, prior to the central site certification audit, in a quantity sufficient to allow

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the certification body to access whether the site is in compliance and apply to sub-site sample selection (see 8.0 below). All sub-sites are required, within a calendar year or season, to have an internal audit as per 4.2 below.

4. Internal Audits

4.1 The central site shall document its internal audit procedure which shall include an internal audit schedule and outline the method of conducting audits of sub-sites and the central site administrative function.

4.2 An internal audit, which includes all relevant elements of a SQF Food Safety Code, and the Good Agriculture/Aquaculture Practices (GAP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) or Good Distribution Practices (GDP) module(s) applicable to the food sector category, shall be conducted at least once per year, and during periods of peak activity at all sub-sites included in the multi-site certification.

5. Internal Audit Personnel

5.1 Personnel conducting internal audits shall:

i. Successfully complete the Implementing SQF Systems training course.
ii. Successfully complete internal auditor training.
iii. Have competence in the same food sector category as the internal audit.

5.2 Personnel reviewing the internal audits of the multi-site organization and evaluating the results of those internal audits shall:

i. Be separate from personnel conducting the internal audits;
ii. Complete Internal Auditing Training; and
iii. Meet the criteria of an SQF practitioner

5.3 Where the internal audits are contracted out:

i. The contractor shall be a registered SQF Auditor or Consultant,
ii. The central site shall be accountable for the actions and effectiveness of the work completed by the contractor; and
iii. Contract arrangements shall comply with 2.3.3 of the applicable SQF Food Safety Code.

6. Auditing and Certifying the Multi-site Organization

6.1 The Audits and certification of an SQF multi-site organization shall be completed by a SQF licensed and accredited certification body. The audit includes:

i. The certification audit (including initial desk audit of the central site only and site audit);
ii. Surveillance audits; and
iii. Re-certification audits.

6.2 The initial certification audit and subsequent surveillance and re-certification audits of the multi-site organization shall be centered on the central site, it's internal audit function and a sample of the sub-sites. Record reviews for sub-sites will be completed at the sub-site site audit.

7. Audit Frequency

7.1 The certification audit of the central site and a sample (refer to 8.0) of sub-sites are conducted every twelve months.

7.2 Re-certification audits for the central site is conducted on the anniversary of the last day of the initial certification audit, plus or minus 30 calendar days. For seasonal operations timing for sub-sites should be guided by the harvesting dates, that may be weather dependent, as well as time required for the central site to adequately complete the Internal Audit Program.

7.3 Within each certification and re-certification audit cycle, the central site shall be audited before the majority of the sample of sub-sites. It is recognized that for seasonal operations harvesting dates and having product available to the central site may require some sub-sites audits being conducted prior to the central site audit.

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7.4 Surveillance audits are conducted for any site in the multi-site program that receives a 'C-Complies' rating. Surveillance audits are conducted six (6) months from the last day of the last certification audit, plus or minus thirty (30) calendar days or as per Part A 4.3 for seasonal operations. Where a sub-site is subject to a surveillance audit due to a "C - Complies" rating, the internal audit of that sub-site by the central site shall also be reviewed. If the sub-site is not in operational within the six (6) month time frame for the surveillance audit then it shall be audited within the first two (2) weeks of the subsequent harvest and automatically be included in the sub-site sampling calculation (refer to 9.0).

7.5 If the central site or any one of the sampled sub-sites is identified as having a critical non-conformity at an audit, or otherwise achieves only an "F – Fails to comply" rating, the certificates for the central site and ALL sub-sites shall be suspended until such time as a "C – Complies" rating or better is achieved at a further round of audits at the central site and a sample of sub-sites. The sub-site(s) that receives the "F – Fails to comply" rating shall be included in the sub-site selection process (refer to 8.0) for the next audit cycle.

8. Selecting the Sub-sites

8.1 The selection of the sample is the responsibility of the certification body.

8.2 The sample is partly selective based on the factors set out below and partly non-selective, and shall result in a range of different sub-sites being selected, without excluding the random element of sampling. At least twenty-five (25) percent of the sub-sites selected shall be based on random selection.

8.3 The sample of sub-sites shall be selected so that the differences among the selected sub-sites, over the period of validity of the certificate, are as large as possible.

8.4 The sub-site selection criteria shall include among others the following aspects:

i. Results of internal audits or previous certification assessments;
ii. Records of complaints and other relevant aspects of correction and corrective action;
iii. Significant variations in the size of the sub-sites;
iv. Variations in the work procedures;
v. Modifications since the last certification assessment;
vi. Geographical dispersion; and
vii. New suppliers added into the program (refer to 10.0).

8.5 The certification body shall inform the central site of the sub-sites that will comprise the sample and in a timely manner that will allow the central site adequate time to prepare for the audits.

8.6 The central site shall ensure that all sub-sites listed as being included in the sub-site audit selection process are registered with SQF (Part A, 1.3). The central site shall also ensure that the SQF database is updated to reflect any sub-sites being removed from the previous year multi-site program.

9. Determining the Size of the Sub-sites Sample

9.1 The certification body shall record the justification for applying a sample size outside that described in this clause.

9.2 The minimum number of sub-sites to be audited at a certification audit or re-certification audit is the square root of the number of sub-sites with 1.5 as a co-efficient ($y=1.5\sqrt{x}$), rounded to the higher whole number. As per 1.2 above a minimum of twenty (20) sub-sites are required.

9.3 Where a primary sub-site has 4 or more secondary sites (e.g. growing areas), the primary location shall be audited and 50% of the secondary sites. More than fifty (50) percent can be audited if there is evidence that there are grounds to justify the further audit time.

9.4 The size of sample shall be increased where the certification body's risk analysis of the activity covered by the management system subject to certification indicates special circumstances in respect of factors like:

i. Major variations in processes undertaken at each sub-site;
ii. Records of complaints and other relevant aspects of correction and corrective action;
iii. Indication of an overall breakdown of food safety controls; or

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iv. Inadequate internal audits or action arising from internal audit findings.

10. Additional Sub-sites

10.1 On the application of a new sub-site or group of sub-sites to join an already certified SQF multi-site program, each new sub-site or group of sub-sites shall be included in the audit sample for the next re-certification audit. The new sub-sites shall be added to the existing sites for determining the sample size for future re-certification audits. Sub-sites transferring from another multi-site group or from a stand-alone certification are not classified as "new" and are not subject to being included in the sub-site audit sample unless part of the random selection process or due to auditor/Certification Body discretion.

10.2 New sub-sites shall not be added to the sub-site list once the list has been verified and agreed to by the central site and the certification body during the annual sample site selection process. These sites can have their SQF systems components (SQF Food Safety system elements) managed by the central site but will certified as a stand-alone operation and subject to initial certification requirements, including desk and site audits.

11. Non-Conformities

11.1 When non-conformities are found at any individual sub-site through the central site's internal auditing, investigation by the central site shall take place to determine whether the other sub-sites may be affected. The certification body shall require evidence that the central site has taken action to rectify all non-conformities found during internal audits and that all non-conformities are reviewed to determine whether they indicate an overall system deficiency applicable to all sub-sites or not. If they are found to do so, appropriate corrective action shall be taken both at the central site and at the individual sub-sites. The central site shall demonstrate to the certification body the justification for all follow-up action.

11.2 When non-conformities are found at the central site or at any individual sub-site through auditing by the certification body, action shall be taken by the certification body as outlined in Part A, 3.2.

11.3 When non-conformities for system elements are found at the central site, the certification body shall increase its sampling frequency until it is satisfied that control has been re-established by the central site.

11.4 At the time of the initial certification and subsequent re-certification a certificate shall not be issued to the central site and sub-sites until satisfactory corrective action is taken to close out all non-conformities.

11.5 It shall not be admissible that, in order to overcome the obstacle raised by the existence of non-conformity at a single sub-site, the central site seeks to exempt from the scope of certification the "problematic" sub-site during the certification, surveillance or re-certification audit.

12. Certificate Issued for a Multi-site Organization

12.1 A certificate shall be issued to the central site and all sub-sites within the SQF multi-site program. The central site's certificate shall include an appendix listing all sub-sites participating in the multi-site program. The sub-site certification shall state within its scope of certification that it is part of a multi-site certification and shall list all primary and secondary sub-sites. Products listed on sub-site certificates may vary from the central site certificate, provided the scope of operations meets requirements of 3.7 and the certificate body has conducted an on-site audit during harvesting activities of those products not included in the Multi-site program.

12.2 The certification date for the central site and sub-sites shall be the date of the last audit conducted in that certification cycle. The certificate expiry date shall be based on the certificate decision of the last date of the sub-site audit.

12.3 The certificate for all sites in the multi-site program will be withdrawn, if the central site or any of the sub-sites do not fulfill the necessary criteria for maintaining their certificate.

12.4 The list of sub-sites shall be kept updated by the central site. The central site shall inform the certification body about the closure of any of the sub-sites or the addition of new sub-sites. Failure to provide such information will be considered by the certification body as a misuse of the certificate, and the multi-site organization's certificate shall be suspended until the matter is corrected to the satisfaction of the certification body.

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