

SQF Quality Code

EDITION 8



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First Printed May 1995

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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.

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 Quality Code

SQF is a food safety and quality 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.

1. Preparing for SQF Quality Certification

Figure 1: Preparing for SQF Quality Certification



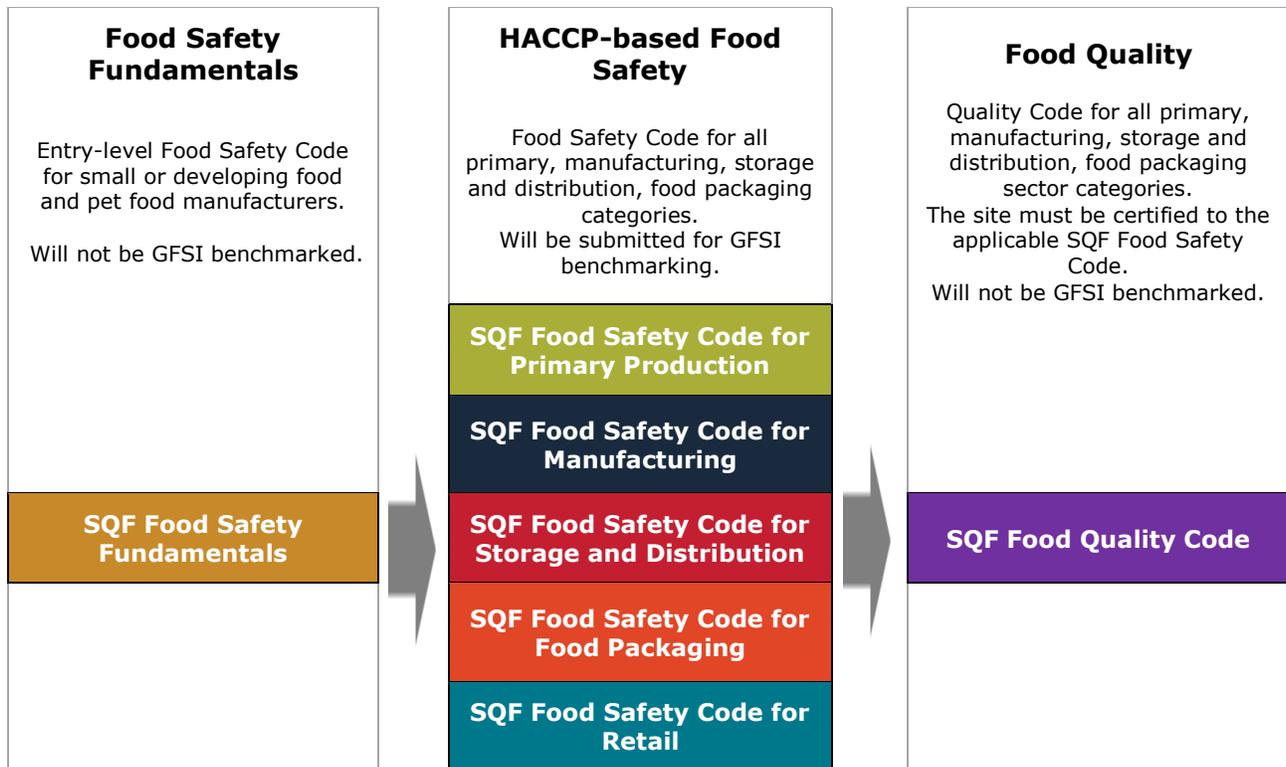
1.1 Achieve SQF Food Safety Certification

The SQF Quality Code builds on the system elements defined in the various SQF Food Safety Codes. Sites seeking to attain certification to the SQF Quality Code, or retain what was previously SQF Level 3 certification in edition 7, shall first be certified to the applicable SQF Food Safety Code for their industry sector.

The SQF Food Safety Codes for all sectors of the supply chain can be found in the following documents:

- 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 Quality Code does not apply to sites certified to the SQF Food Safety Code for Retail.



The SQF Quality Code applies to the following food sector categories:

Fsc	Category	Applicable SQF Food Safety Code
1	Production, Capture and Harvesting of Livestock and Game Animals	The SQF Food Safety Code for Primary Production
3	Growing and Production of Fresh Produce and Nuts:	The SQF Food Safety Code for Primary Production
5	Extensive Broad Acre Agriculture Operations	The SQF Food Safety Code for Primary Production
6	Harvest and Intensive Farming of Seafood	The SQF Food Safety Code for Primary Production
4	Fresh Produce and Nuts Pack-house Operations	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
7	Slaughterhouse, Boning and Butchery Operations	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
8	Processing of Manufactured Meats and Poultry	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
9	Seafood Processing	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
10	Dairy Food Processing	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
11	Apiculture and Honey Processing	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
12	Egg Processing	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
13	Bakery and Snack Food Processing	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing

FSC	Category	Applicable SQF Food Safety Code
14	Fruit, Vegetable and Nut Processing, and Fruit Juices	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
15	Canning, UHT and Aseptic Operations	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
16	Ice, Drink and Beverage Processing	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
17	Confectionery Manufacturing	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
18	Preserved Foods Manufacture	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
19	Food Ingredient Manufacture	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
20	Recipe Meals Manufacture	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
21	Oils, Fats, and the Manufacture of oil or fat-based spreads	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
22	Processing of Cereal Grains	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
25	Repackaging of products not manufactured on site.	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
26	Food Storage and Distribution	The SQF Food Safety Code for Storage and Distribution
27	Manufacture of Food Packaging	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacture of Food Packaging
31	Manufacture of Dietary Supplements	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
32	Manufacture of Pet Food	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
33	Manufacture of Food Processing Aides	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing
34	Manufacture of Animal Feed	The SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing

1.2 Learn about the SQF Quality Code

There are several ways to learn how to implement the SQF Quality Code. They are

- Attend a training course "SQF Quality Systems for Manufacturing" (refer Part A, 1.5) through a licensed SQF Training Center (recommended);
- Take the online training course "SQF Quality Systems for Manufacturing" (refer Part A, 1.5) available from the SQFI website (sqfi.com); or
- Train yourself by downloading the SQF Quality Code from the SQFI website (sqfi.com) free of charge, and read how to apply it to your site.

1.3 Register in the SQFI Assessment Database

To be considered for certification to the SQF Quality Code, sites are required to register in the SQFI assessment database, and remain registered.

1.4 Designate an SQF Quality Practitioner

Whether or not an SQF consultant is used, the SQF Quality Code requires that every site has a suitably qualified SQF quality practitioner to oversee the development, implementation, review and maintenance of the SQF Quality

System, including the food quality plans. The requirements for an SQF practitioner are described in the SQF Quality Code system elements, 2.1.2.4 and 2.1.2.5.

1.5 'SQF Quality Systems for Manufacturing' Training

An "SQF Quality Systems for Manufacturing" 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 Quality Code are encouraged to participate in a training course. Details about the training centers are available at sqfi.com. The dates and locations of the courses can be obtained by contacting the training centers.

The "SQF Quality Systems for Manufacturing" training course is not mandatory for SQF Quality practitioners, but is strongly recommended.

The SQFI also has an "SQF Quality Systems for Manufacturing" 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 quality systems training in their own time and at their own pace.

1.6 Document and Implement the SQF Quality Code

To achieve certification to the SQF Quality Code, the site must document and implement the SQF Quality Code in addition to the SQF Food Safety Code requirements.

Document the SQF System – prepare policies, procedures, work instructions and specifications that meet the SQF Quality Code. 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 Quality Code. 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.

1.7 Select a Certification Body

All licensed SQF certification bodies are able to certify the SQF Quality Code (refer Part A, 2.1). SQFI recommends that the same certification body that provided certification to the SQF Food Safety Code is also contracted to certify the SQF Quality Code. The site shall ensure that their agreement with their certification body includes:

- i. The expected time to conduct and finalize the audit to the SQF Quality Code and the reporting requirements;
- ii. The certification body's fee structure for completing the certification to the SQF Quality Code; and
- iii. The conditions under which the certificate is issued, withdrawn or suspended.

1.8 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 Quality System. A pre-assessment audit can assist in identifying gaps in the site's SQF Quality 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, an SQF consultant, or an SQF quality auditor.

Corrective action can occur before engaging the selected certification body for a full certification audit. It can be conducted using internal resources, an SQF consultant, or an SQF quality auditor.

1.9 Multi-site Programs

The SQF Quality Code is only available to central sites that participate in an SQF multi-site program. It is not available for sub-sites.

2. The Initial Quality Certification

2.1 Selection of the SQF Auditor (s)

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

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

2.2 Identifying the Scope of Certification

The scope of certification, in terms of site and products, shall be the same as the site's certification to the SQF Food Safety Code. Any agreed exemptions from the food safety certification shall also be exempted from the quality certification and the scope of quality certification shall not be extended or changed from the food safety certification.

The scope of certification cannot be changed during or immediately following a certification audit to the SQF Quality Code.

Exempted parts of the site shall not be promoted as being covered by the certification to the SQF Quality Code. 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 certificate.

2.3 The Initial Certification Audit to the SQF Quality Code

The certification audit can be:

- Either an extension of an existing certification or re-certification audit to the SQF Food Safety Code. In this instance, certification to the SQF Quality Code shall only be granted on successful certification or re-certification to the SQF Food Safety Code; or
- A stand-alone audit conducted at any time during the currency of the site's certification to the SQF Food Safety Code.

When the food quality audit is conducted independent of the food safety audit and the auditor identifies a significant food safety issue, the auditor shall report the food safety finding in the audit report under 'auditor recommendation' and notify the certification body for potential follow up action.

The certification audit shall, in all cases, be a combined desk and facility audit, and shall ensure that:

- i. An appropriately qualified SQF quality practitioner is designated;
- ii. The food quality plan and the associated critical quality point (CQP) determinations, validations and verifications are appropriately documented;
- iii. The effectiveness of the SQF Quality System in its entirety;
- iv. Quality threats are effectively identified and controlled;
- v. Manufacturing processes are capable and controlled;
- vi. There is effective interaction between all elements of the SQF Quality System, and between the food safety and Quality Systems; and
- vii. There is a level of commitment demonstrated by the site to maintaining an effective SQF Quality System and to meeting their corporate quality and customer requirements.

2.4 Audit Duration Guide

The audit duration shall vary depending on the certification audit option selected, (i.e. an extension of the food safety audit, or a separate, stand-alone audit (refer Part A, 2.3).

The certification body shall determine the audit duration and shall advise the site in writing with an estimate of the time it will take to complete the certification audit.

As a guide, SQFI expects a certification audit to the SQF Quality Code, combined with a certification audit to the SQF Food Safety Code to add a minimum of half a day, while a stand-alone quality certification audit will be a minimum of one day.

2.5 Corporate Audits

Where a site is part of a larger corporation and some food quality 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 SQF Quality 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 site and communicated to sites managed by the corporate office.

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

The SQF quality 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 applicable elements of the SQF Quality 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).

2.6 System Elements

All applicable SQF Quality Code elements shall be assessed as part of the Quality System audit. Where an element is not applicable and appropriately justified, it shall be stated as "not applicable" (N/A) by the SQF quality auditor in the audit report.

2.7 Quality Deviations

Where the SQF quality auditor finds deviations from the requirements of the SQF Quality Code, the SQF quality auditor shall advise the site of the number, description, and extent of the deviations.

Deviations against the SQF Quality Code shall be 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 an SQF Quality Code audit.

Timelines for the resolution of corrective actions are addressed in Part A, 3.2.

2.8 Audit Evidence Record and Audit Report

The SQFI provides the certification body with the electronic audit checklist to be used by the SQF quality auditors when conducting SQF quality audits. The SQF quality audit checklist is available from the SQFI assessment database. The SQF checklist is designed to ensure the uniform application of SQF quality audit requirements. It is used by SQF quality auditors to record their findings and determine the extent to which site operations comply with stated requirements.

The auditor shall leave a summary of deviations with the site before concluding the facility audit, and 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 quality audit. A final audit report, with completed and approved corrective actions shall be made available to the site when the final certification decision is made within forty-five (45) calendar days from the last day of the facility audit (refer Part A, 3.4).

The SQF quality audit report shall remain the property of the site and shall not be distributed to other parties without the permission of the site.

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 quality auditors are thorough, that all requirements are fulfilled, and the audit report is complete. The audit report is in draft form 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-compliance (deviation) recommended by the SQF quality auditor during the SQF Quality Systems 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 quality auditor.

3.2 Site Audit Corrective Actions

All deviations and their resolution shall be documented by the SQF quality auditor.

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

3.3 Audit Score and Rating

There is no score or rating issued for SQF Quality System audits. The score and ratings that apply to SQF Food Safety certification audits do not extend to the SQF Quality Code certification audit, even if the quality System audit is conducted as an extension of the food safety audit.

3.4 Granting Certification

Sites are deemed to have successfully implemented the SQF Quality Code if:

- The site achieves and maintains SQF Food Safety certification;
- The site closes out all quality deviations within thirty (30) days.

The certification decision shall be made within forty-five (45) calendar days of the last day of the Quality System audit. The site's unique certification number shall apply to their quality certification.

Within ten (10) calendar days of granting quality certification, the certification body shall provide an electronic and/or hard copy of the site's quality certificate. The quality 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 Quality Code, edition 8;"
- v. The food sector categories and products included in the scope of registration;
- vi. Dates of audit (last day), date of next re-certification audit, date of certification decision, and date of certificate expiry;
- vii. The SQF logo, and SQF quality shield; and
- viii. Signatures of the authorized officer and issuing officer.

The SQF quality shield will appear on the certified site's quality certificate. Certified sites may also choose to apply the SQF quality shield to packaging of certified products or to marketing materials. The certification body shall provide an electronic copy of the SQF quality shield containing the certification body name and site certification number to the certified site on request. The SQF quality shield shall only be used in accordance with the SQF Quality Shield Rules of Use (refer Appendix 5).

Certified sites information shall be posted to the SQFI website.

3.5 Failure to Comply

Where a site fails to close out quality deviations within the required timeframe, the site is considered to have failed the SQF quality certification audit. The site must then re-apply for another facility audit.

When the site's re-application occurs within six (6) months of the last audit date, and with the same certification body, a facility 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 facility audit are required.

4 Re-certification

4.1 Maintaining Quality Certification

To maintain SQF quality certification, the site is required to maintain certification to the SQF Food Safety Code, ensure that quality surveillance and/or quality re-certification audits occur within the required timeframe, and ensure that all quality deviations are corrected within the time frame specified.

4.2 Quality Surveillance Audit

The quality surveillance audit is conducted when the site has two (2) or more major deviations and/or ten (10) or more minor deviations raised at a certification or re-certification audit. (Note that all deviations must be closed out within 30 days to achieve or maintain certification. Refer Part A, 3.4).

The quality 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.

The quality surveillance audit is intended to:

- i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous quality audits;
- ii. Verify that the SQF Quality 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 Quality System;
- iv. Confirm continued compliance with the requirements of the SQF Quality Code;
- v. Verify all critical process and quality steps remain under control; and
- vi. Contribute to continued improvement of the site's SQF Quality System and business operation.

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

The site's quality certificate shall be suspended by the certification body if:

- i. The site fails to permit the quality surveillance audit within the required timeframe; or
- ii. The site fails to close out quality deviations, raised at the surveillance audit within the agreed timeframe.

4.3 Quality Re-certification Audit

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

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

SQF certified sites that were Level 3 under edition 7 may select any appropriate date for their first re-certification audit under the Quality Code, edition 8, depending on whether they wish their quality audit to be conducted as an extension of their food safety re-certification audit, or a stand-alone quality audit.

The purpose of the quality re-certification audit is to:

- i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous audits;
- ii. Verify that corrective and preventative actions have been taken on all quality deviations;
- 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 Quality System;
- iv. Verify all critical quality steps remain under control and the effective inter-action between all elements of the SQF Quality System;
- v. Verify the overall effectiveness of the SQF Quality System in its entirety in the light of changes in operations;
- vi. Verify that the site continues to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of the SQF Quality System and to meeting corporate and customer requirements; and
- vii. Contribute to continued improvement of the site's SQF Quality System and business operation.

4.4 Unannounced Re-certification Audit

There is no specific requirement for an unannounced audit for the Quality Code. However, where a site selects to incorporate their quality audit with their food safety audit, the quality audit shall be unannounced when aligned with an unannounced food safety audit.

4.5 Suspending Quality Certification

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

- i. fails to permit their quality re-certification or surveillance audit,
- ii. fails to take corrective action within the timeframe specified for all quality deviations, or
- iii. where in the opinion of the certification body, the site fails to maintain the requirements of the SQF Quality Code.

In instances where the site's food safety certificate is suspended, the quality certification shall also be suspended until the food safety suspension is lifted.

Where the site's quality certificate is suspended, the certification body shall immediately amend the site details on the SQFI 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 Compliance Manager of SQFI on the notice of suspension sent to the site, and
- 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 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 Quality 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 quality certificate, for the duration of suspension, the site shall not represent itself as holding an SQF quality certificate and shall discontinue use of the SQF quality shield where applicable.

4.6 Withdrawing Quality Certification

The certification body shall withdraw the quality certificate when the site:

- i. Has been placed under suspension for its quality certification 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 quality certificate;
- iv. Uses the SQF quality shield incorrectly or while under suspension of their quality certificate; or
- v. 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 quality 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 quality certificate has been withdrawn, the reason for such action and the date of effect; and
- ii. Copy SQFI on the notice of withdrawal sent to the site,
- iii. Instruct the site to return the certificate within thirty (30) days of notification.

A site that has their quality certificate withdrawn must re-apply for certification.

In instances where the site's food safety certificate is withdrawn, the quality certification shall also be withdrawn, and the site must re-apply for both food safety and quality certification.

A site that has their quality certificate withdrawn will not be permitted to apply for certification to the SQF Quality Code 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 for twelve (12) months.

5 Obligations of Sites and Certification Bodies

5.1 Changing the Scope of Quality Certification

When a site changes the scope of its food safety certification, the scope of its quality certification also changes (refer Part A, 2.2).

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

A quality 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 quality certificate.

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

5.2 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 quality 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 SQF authorized representatives, staff or auditors into their facility during the audit or after their audit has taken place.

The attendance of an SQFI representative shall not interfere with operations, or result in additional audit time or non-conformances, and will not increase the cost charged by the certification body for the audit.

5.3 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 quality certification. In cases where the ownership of a certified site changes but the staff with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the SQF Quality 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 Quality System has been retained.

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

5.4 Relocation of Premises

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

5.5 Language

The certification body shall ensure that the SQF quality 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 Quality Code shall be the deciding reference.

5.6 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 quality auditor from undertaking any audit in relation to the certification of SQF Quality System that constitute a conflict of interest as outlined below or any other condition that could lead to a conflict of interest.

SQF quality auditors shall not audit anywhere they have participated in a quality 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 quality plans). Consulting includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- i. producing or preparing quality plans, manuals, handbooks or procedures;
- ii. participating in the decision-making process regarding SQF Quality Systems;
- iii. giving advice – as a consultant or otherwise – toward the design, documentation, development, validation, verification, implementation or maintenance of SQF Quality System; or
- iv. delivering or participating in the delivery of an “in-house” quality systems training service at which advice and instruction on the development and implementation of food quality plans and SQF Quality System for eventual certification is provided.

The certification body shall ensure that an SQF quality 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 site within the SQF program.

A site can refuse the service of an SQF quality 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.

5.7 Complaints, Appeals and Disputes

The certification body shall document 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 Quality Code and/or other supporting documents, the certification body shall suspend certification as outlined in Part A, 4.4.

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.

Part B: The SQF Quality Code

Scope, References and Definitions

Scope

Part B is the auditable standard for the SQF Quality Code. It identifies the Quality System Elements for sites that have already documented and implemented the SQF Food Safety Code and are seeking additional certification to the SQF Quality Code. All mandatory and applicable elements of the SQF Food Safety Code shall be met, plus the SQF Quality Code elements.

Sites applying for SQF quality certification must either:

- i. Already be certified to the SQF Food Safety Code for Primary Production, Manufacturing, Storage and Distribution, or Food Packaging; or
- ii. Request a combined audit to the applicable SQF Food Safety Code and the SQF Quality Code.

The SQF Quality Code does not apply to sites certified to the SQF Food Safety Code for Retail.

References

The SQF Quality Code applies the current edition of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission Guidelines for the Application of the Hazard Analysis to the identification and control of quality threats.

Definitions

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

SQF Quality System Elements

2.1 Management Commitment

2.1.1 Quality Policy

2.1.1.1 The policy statement prepared and implemented by senior site management to communicate their commitment to food safety shall also include at a minimum:

- i. The site's commitment to establish quality objectives;
- ii. The site's commitment to comply with customers' quality requirements;
- iii. The methods used to measure the site's quality objectives, and
- iv. The site's commitment to continually improve its quality performance.

2.1.1.2 The site's vision and mission statement shall also be displayed in a prominent position and communicated to all staff. The vision and mission statement may be included in, or separate from, the organization's food safety policy.

2.1.2 Management Responsibility

2.1.2.1 The reporting structure shall identify personnel performing key process steps and responsible for achieving quality requirements.

2.1.2.2 The senior site management shall develop quality objectives and a process by which quality performance is measured.

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

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

- i. Oversee the development, implementation, review and maintenance of the SQF Quality System including quality fundamentals outlined in 2.4.2, and the quality plan outlined in 2.4.3;
- ii. Take appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the SQF Quality System;
- iii. Communicate to relevant personnel all information essential to ensure the effective implementation and maintenance of the SQF Quality System; and
- iv. Ensure that site personnel have the required competencies to carry out those functions affecting product quality.

2.1.2.5 In addition to the SQF Food Safety Code requirements, the SQF quality practitioner shall:

- i. Be competent to implement and maintain HACCP-based food quality plans;
- ii. Understand the SQF Quality Code and the requirements to implement and maintain a quality management system; and
- iii. Be competent in statistical process control (SPC) and/or other quality tools to reduce process variation and drive root cause analysis of non-conformities.

2.1.2.6 Senior site management shall ensure site personnel responsible for performing key process steps and meeting customer requirements, and corporate quality requirements where applicable, have the required competencies to carry out those functions.

2.1.2.7 Senior site management shall develop and implement a quality communication program to ensure that all staff are informed of their quality responsibilities, are aware of their role in meeting the requirements of the SQF Quality Code, and are informed of the organization's performance against quality objectives. The program shall include:

- i. the defined vision and mission statement of the site;
- ii. the site's quality objectives and the process by which quality performance is measured, and
- iii. The methods by which customer quality requirements, and corporate quality requirements where applicable, are met.

2.1.2.8 Job descriptions for personnel performing key process steps and responsible for achieving quality requirements shall be documented and include provision to cover for the absence of key personnel.

2.1.2.9 Senior site management shall establish a process to trend progress in quality performance against agreed measures. Benchmarking shall be part of this process and the performance data shall be reported at least annually to demonstrate effectiveness of the quality management System, and communicated to all staff.

2.1.2.10 Sites that are certified to the SQF Quality Code may use the SQF quality shield. Use of the SQF quality shield shall follow the requirements outlined in Appendix 5: SQF Quality Shield Rules of Use.

2.1.3 Management Review

2.1.3.1 The senior site management shall be responsible for reviewing the SQF Quality Code. Reviews shall include actions required to:

- i. Monitor specification compliance and corrective actions taken;
- ii. Reduce process and product variation;
- iii. Meet customer requirements;
- iv. Ensure sufficient resources are allocated to maintain, and improve the performance of the Quality System.

2.1.3.2 The senior site management and SQF quality practitioner shall meet to review the implementation and maintenance of the Quality System at least monthly, and the SQF Quality System in its entirety shall be reviewed at least annually.

2.1.3.3 The Quality System, including food quality plans, shall be reviewed when any changes are implemented that have an impact on the site's ability to meet customer requirements and corporate quality requirements where applicable.

2.1.3.4 Senior site management shall ensure the integrity and continued operation of the Quality System in the event of organizational or personnel changes within the company or associated facilities.

2.1.3.5 The senior site management shall document and implement a change management process that details how changes in specifications, materials, equipment or resources are evaluated for their impact on quality, communicated to customers and effectively implemented.

2.1.3.6 Records of all Quality System reviews and reasons for amending documents, and changes to the SQF Quality System shall be maintained. Records shall include decisions for actions related to improvement of the Quality System and process effectiveness.

2.1.4 Complaint Management

2.1.4.1 The complaint management process shall include a requirement to identify and resolve the cause of all quality complaints resulting from activities at the site.

2.1.4.2 Trends in quality complaints shall be included in the performance measures established for the Quality System.

2.1.4.3 Corrective action shall be implemented based on the seriousness of the incident and as outlined in 2.5.3.

2.1.4.4 Records of quality complaints, their investigation and resolution (if applicable) shall be maintained.

2.1.5 Crisis Management Planning

2.1.5.1 The crisis management plan prepared by senior management shall include the methods by which the site shall, in the event of a crisis, maintain continuity of supply that meets the customers' product and service quality requirements.

2.1.5.2 The site shall contact their customers in the event of a crisis that impacts their ability to supply quality product.

2.2 Document Control and Records

2.2.1 Quality Management System

2.2.1.1 A quality manual shall be documented and maintained in either electronic and/or hard copy form. It shall outline the methods the site uses to meet the requirements of the SQF Quality Code, be made available to staff, and include:

- i. A summary of the organization's quality policies and the methods it will apply to meet the requirements of the SQF Quality Code;
- ii. The policy statement and site organization chart;
- iii. A list of the products covered under the scope of certification;
- iv. Finished product specifications agreed with customers' or corporate quality requirements where applicable; and

- v. Statistical process control methods and other quality tools that are used to control and reduce process variation.

The quality manual may be incorporated into, or independent from the SQF food safety manual, and shall be signed by senior management.

2.2.2 Document Control

2.2.2.1 The methods and responsibility for maintenance, storage, and distribution of quality documents shall be the same as those required for SQF Food Safety System documentation.

2.2.3 Records

2.2.3.1 The methods and responsibility for authorization, accessibility, retention and storage of quality records shall be the same as those required for SQF Food Safety System records.

2.3 Specification and Product Development

2.3.1 Product Development and Realization

2.3.1.1 The methods for designing, developing and converting product concepts to commercial realization shall include a process capability analysis to ensure that processes are able to consistently supply products that meet customer specifications.

2.3.1.2 Product formulation, manufacturing processes and the fulfillment of product quality requirements shall be validated by facility trials and product testing.

2.3.1.3 Shelf life trials shall be conducted to establish and validate a product's packaging, handling, storage and customer use requirements through to the end of its commercial life and consumer use.

2.3.1.4 A food quality plan shall be validated and verified for each new product and its associated process from conversion to commercial production and distribution, or where a change to ingredients, process, or packaging occurs that may impact food quality.

2.3.1.5 Records of all quality tests, product design, process development, and shelf life trials associated with product changes or new product development shall be maintained.

2.3.2 Raw and Packaging Materials

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

2.3.2.2 Raw and packaging materials and ingredients shall be validated to ensure product quality is not compromised and the material is fit for its intended purpose.

2.3.2.3 Product labels that are designed or specified by customers shall be approved by those customers. Records shall be maintained of customer approvals.

2.3.2.4 The register of current raw and packaging material specifications shall include those raw and packaging materials impacting product quality and customer labels.

2.3.3 Contract Service Providers

2.3.3.1 Specifications for contract services that have an impact on in-process or finished product quality shall be documented, current, include a full description of the service to be provided and detail relevant training requirements of contract personnel.

2.3.3.2 The register of contract service specifications shall include those services impacting product quality.

2.3.4 Contract Manufacturers

2.3.4.1 The methods and responsibility for ensuring all agreements relating to food safety and customer product requirements and its realization and delivery are specified and agreed shall be documented and implemented.

2.3.4.2 The site shall:

- i. Ensure that the processes in place at the contract manufacturer are capable of consistently meeting customer requirements, or corporate quality requirements where applicable;
- ii. Verify compliance with the SQF Quality Code and that all customer requirements are being met at all times;
- iii. Audit the contract manufacturer annually at a minimum to confirm compliance to the SQF Quality Code and agreed arrangements, or accept the manufacturer's certification to the SQF Quality Code or equivalent; and
- iv. Ensure changes to contractual agreements are approved by both parties, agreed with customers where necessary, and communicated to relevant personnel.

2.3.4.3 Records of all contract reviews and changes to contractual agreements and their approvals extend to quality records.

2.3.5 Finished Product Specifications

2.3.5.1 Finished product specifications shall be documented, current, approved by the site and their customer, accessible to relevant staff and shall include product quality attributes, service delivery requirements, and labelling and packaging requirements.

2.3.5.2 Customer product specifications and delivery requirements shall be communicated to appropriate departments and staff within the site.

2.4 Food Quality System

2.4.1 Customer Requirements

2.4.1.1 The requirements and expectations of customers and final consumers shall be continually reviewed to ensure the accuracy of specifications and the ability to supply to customer needs. A full review of customers' expectations for product and delivery shall occur at least annually.

2.4.1.2 The site shall have a procedure in place to notify essential customers where their ability to supply product that meets customer specifications is temporarily suspended or halted.

2.4.1.3 Where customer products, materials or equipment are used within the facility, the site shall have measures in place to safeguard customer property and ensure its correct and proper use.

2.4.2 Quality Fundamentals

2.4.2.1 The buildings and equipment shall be constructed, designed and maintained to facilitate the manufacture, handling, storage and/or delivery of food that meets customer specifications or corporate quality requirements.

2.4.2.2 The methods and responsibility for the calibration of measuring, test and inspection equipment used for quality testing of raw materials, work-in-progress, and finished product, 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.

2.4.2.3 Storage and transport of raw materials, work-in progress, and finished product shall be suitable to maintain the integrity of the product without loss, waste or damage.

2.4.3 Food Quality Plan

2.4.3.1 A food quality plan shall be developed, effectively implemented, and maintained in accordance with the Codex Alimentarius Commission HACCP method. The food quality plan may be combined with, or independent from, the food safety plan, but must separately identify quality threats and their controls, and critical quality points.

2.4.3.2 The food quality plan shall outline the means by which the site controls and assures the quality attributes of the products or product groups and their associated processes.

2.4.3.3 The food quality plan shall be developed and maintained by a multidisciplinary team that includes the SQF practitioner and those site personnel with technical, production, and marketing knowledge of the relevant products and associated processes. Where the relevant expertise is not available on site, advice may be obtained from other sources to assist the food quality team. The composition of the food quality team may be different from the food safety team.

2.4.3.4 The scope of the food quality plan shall be developed and documented including the start and end-point of the process under consideration and all relevant inputs and outputs.

2.4.3.5 Product descriptions shall be developed and documented for all products included in the scope of the food quality plan. This shall include information in the finished product specifications (refer to 2.3.5.1) plus any additional quality or service attributes established by agreement with the customers.

2.4.3.6 The intended use of each product shall be determined and documented by the food quality team. This shall include as appropriate target consumer groups, ease of use by consumers, consumer instructions, tamper evidence, and other applicable information affecting product quality.

2.4.3.7 The food quality team shall review the flow diagram developed and confirmed as part of the food safety plan, and ensure process steps, process delays, and inputs that impact product quality are included.

2.4.3.8 The food quality team shall identify and document all quality threats that can reasonably be expected to occur at each step in the processes, including raw materials and other inputs.

2.4.3.9 The food quality team shall conduct a quality threat analysis for every identified quality threat, to identify which threats are significant, i.e. their elimination or reduction to an acceptable level is necessary to ensure or maintain product quality. The methodology for determining threat significance shall be documented and used consistently to assess all potential quality threats.

2.4.3.10 The food quality team shall determine and document the control measures that must be applied to all significant quality threats. More than one control measure may be required to control an identified threat, and more than one significant threat may be controlled by a specific control measure.

2.4.3.11 Based on the results of the threat analysis (refer to 2.4.3.9), the food quality team shall identify the steps in the process where control must be applied to eliminate a significant threat or reduce it to an acceptable level. These steps shall be identified as Critical Quality Points or CQPs.

2.4.3.12 For each identified CQP, the food quality team shall identify and document the quality limits that separate acceptable from unacceptable product. The food quality team shall validate the critical quality limits to ensure the designated level of control of the identified quality threat (s); and that all critical quality limits and control measures individually or in combination effectively provide the level of control required.

2.4.3.13 The food quality team shall develop and document procedures to monitor CQPs to ensure they remain within the established limits (refer to 2.4.3.12). Monitoring procedures shall identify the personnel assigned to conduct testing, the sampling and test methods, and the test frequency.

2.4.3.14 The food quality team shall develop and document deviation procedures that identify the disposition of affected product when monitoring indicates a loss of control at a CQP. The procedures shall also prescribe actions to correct the process step to prevent recurrence of the quality failure.

2.4.3.15 The documented and approved food quality plan shall be fully implemented. The effective implementation shall be monitored by the food quality team, and a full review of the documented and implemented plans shall be conducted at least annually, or when changes to the process, equipment, specifications or inputs occur which may affect product quality.

2.4.3.16 Implemented food quality plans shall be verified as part of SQF Quality System verification (refer to 2.5).

2.4.4 Approved Supplier Program

2.4.4.1 Raw materials, ingredients, packaging materials, and services that impact on finished product quality shall be supplied by an approved supplier.

2.4.4.2 Material suppliers shall be selected and approved based on their ability to supply materials that meet quality specifications. The evaluation program shall require suppliers to:

- i. Maintain controlled and current copies of specifications;
- ii. Have processes that are capable of consistently supplying materials that meet specification and other defined quality metrics (e.g. delivery. service, adherence to specifications, etc.);
- iii. Be certified to a second or third party quality management system; and
- iv. Have a complaints and corrective action process in place.

2.4.4.3 Material suppliers shall only be accepted into the facility based on either certificates of analysis for every lot received, or inspection at receipt to ensure materials comply with specification.

All receipts shall be visually inspected for damage and product integrity.

2.4.4.4 The approved supplier program shall include an agreement with suppliers for the return or disposal of materials that fail to meet specifications or are damaged or contaminated.

2.4.5 Non-conforming Product or Equipment

2.4.5.1 Non-conforming product shall include products that fail to meet quality specifications.

2.4.5.2 Non-conforming equipment shall include equipment that is not suitable for use, and is not capable of producing products that meet quality specifications.

2.4.5.3 The site shall document and implement a procedure to accept returned product that does not meet finished product specifications. The procedure shall include handling of returned goods to prevent redistribution or contamination of other products.

2.4.6 Product Rework

2.4.6.1 Procedures shall be documented and implemented to ensure product quality or formulation is not compromised by the rework process.

2.4.7 Product Release

2.4.7.1 The site shall document and implement a positive product release procedure to ensure that, at the time of delivery to its customer, the food supplied complies with all agreed customer requirements including, but not limited to, product specifications, sensory, packaging and package integrity, labelling, delivery and service requirements.

2.4.7.2 Records of all product release shall be maintained.

2.5 Food Quality System Verification

2.5.1 Validation and Effectiveness

2.5.1.1 Validation activities shall include those necessary to authenticate critical quality limits, process controls, and other quality tests established to meet customer requirements.

2.5.1.2 Records of validation of quality criteria shall be maintained.

2.5.2 Verification Activities

2.5.2.1 The verification schedule shall include activities designed to ensure the effectiveness of process controls and quality tests.

2.5.2.2 The methods, responsibility and criteria for verifying the effectiveness of monitoring critical quality points and other process and quality controls shall be documented and implemented. The methods applied shall ensure that personnel with responsibility for verifying monitoring activities authorize each record.

2.5.2.3 Records of the verification of quality activities shall be maintained.

2.5.3 Corrective and Preventative Action

2.5.3.1 Corrective and preventative action methods shall include the identification of the root cause and resolution of non-compliance of critical quality limits and deviations from quality requirements.

2.5.3.2 Verification activities shall include a comparison of process control limits (+/- 3 σ) with specification limits to ensure alignment and appropriate process control corrections.

2.5.4 Product Sampling, Inspection and Analysis

2.5.4.1 Processing parameters or in-process measurements shall be established, validated, and verified at a determined frequency to meet all customer requirements.

2.5.4.2 On-site laboratories and inspection stations shall be equipped and resourced to enable testing of in-process and finished products to meet customer expectations and meet quality objectives.

2.5.4.3 Statistical process control methods shall be used to effectively control and optimize production processes to improve process efficiency and product quality and reduced waste. Control charts shall be in use for control of key processes and have defined upper and lower (process) control limits (+/- 3 σ).

2.5.4.4 A sensory evaluation program shall be in place to ensure alignment with agreed customer requirements. Sensory evaluation results shall be communicated with relevant staff and with customers where appropriate.

2.5.4.5 Records of all quality inspections and analyses, and statistical analyses, shall be maintained.

2.5.5 Internal Audits

2.5.5.1 Internal audit plans and methods shall include food quality plans, process controls, quality tests, and other activities implemented to meet finished product specifications and customer requirements.

2.5.5.2 Staff conducting the quality internal audits shall be trained and assessed in internal audit procedures and have knowledge and experience in the quality process and process control methods as they relate to the scope of certification.

2.6 Product Identification, Trace, Withdrawal and Recall

2.6.1 Product Identification

2.6.1.1 Finished product shall be labeled to the agreed customer, company or corporate requirements.

2.6.1.2 Product changeover procedures shall include quality attributes required to meet finished product specifications and customer requirements.

2.6.2 Product Trace

2.6.2.1 Finished product shall be traceable forward to the final customer, such as the retailer, distributor, or manufacturer.

2.6.2.2 All raw materials, ingredients, and packaging materials used in manufacturing a finished product, and processing aids associated with the product, shall be identified with the finished product lot number and traceable back to the supplier (one back).

2.6.3 Product Withdrawal and Recall

2.6.3.1 The site's recall and withdrawal procedures shall apply to product recalled or withdrawn due to failure to meet customer specifications or corporate quality requirements.

2.7 Food Fraud

2.7.1 Food Fraud Vulnerability Assessment

2.7.1.1 The food fraud vulnerability assessment shall include the site's susceptibility to ingredient or product substitution, mislabeling, dilution and counterfeiting that could adversely impact food quality.

2.7.1.2 A food fraud mitigation plan shall be developed and implemented which specifies the methods by which the identified food fraud vulnerabilities that could adversely impact food quality shall be controlled.

2.8 Identity Preserved Foods

2.8.1 General Requirements for Identity Preserved Foods

2.8.1.1 The methods and responsibility for the identification and processing of food and other products requiring the preservation of their identity preserved status (e.g. Kosher, HALAL, organic, GMO-free, regional provenance, free from, free trade etc.) shall be documented and implemented.

2.8.1.2 Identification shall include a statement of the product's identity preserved status of all ingredients, including additives, preservatives, processing aids and flavorings.

2.8.1.3 Raw material and ingredient specifications to identity preserved foods shall include requirements for their handling, transport, storage and delivery prior to use.

2.8.1.4 Assurances concerning the raw material or ingredient's identity preserved status shall be by agreement with the supplier of the material.

2.8.1.5 The process description shall allow for a product's identity preserved status to be maintained during manufacturing.

2.8.1.6 The processing of identity preserved foods shall be conducted under controlled conditions such that:

- i. Ingredients are physically separated from ingredients identified as incompatible with the identity preserved food;
- ii. Processing is completed in separate rooms; or scheduled as the first production run; or carried out after the completion of a thorough sanitation of the area and equipment; and
- iii. Finished product is stored and transported in separate units or isolated by a physical barrier from non-specialty product.

2.8.1.7 The identity preserved status shall be declared in accordance with legal requirements.

2.8.1.8 Additional customer-specific requirements concerning identity preserved foods shall be included in the finished product specification described in 2.3.5, or label register, and implemented by the site.

2.9 Training

2.9.1 Training Requirements

2.9.1.1 Appropriate training shall be provided for personnel carrying out the tasks critical to the effective implementation of the SQF Quality System and the maintenance and improvement of quality requirements.

2.9.2 Training Program

2.9.2.1 The employee training program shall include the necessary competencies for specific duties and the training methods to be applied for those staff carrying out tasks associated with:

- i. Process control and monitoring of critical quality points (CQPs);
- ii. Steps identified as critical to effective implementation of the food quality plan and the maintenance of food quality, and
- iii. Product inspection and testing.

2.9.2.2 The employee training program shall include applicable statistical process control training for line operators, quality inspectors and supervisory staff responsible for operating and inspecting key manufacturing processes.

2.9.2.3 The training program shall include training, calibration and proficiency testing of internal laboratory personnel.

2.9.3 Quality Instructions

2.9.3.1 Instructions shall be available explaining how all tasks critical to meeting customer specifications, and quality and process efficiency are to be performed.

2.9.4 HACCP for Quality Training Requirements

2.9.4.1 Training in the application of HACCP principles for the identification and control of quality threats shall be provided to staff involved in development and maintenance of the food quality plan.

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 site personnel

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. The register shall indicate the:

- i. Participant name;
- ii. Skills description;
- iii. Description of the training provided;
- iv. Date training completed;
- v. Trainer or training provider; and
- vi. Supervisor's verification the training was completed and that the trainee is competent to complete the required tasks.

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.

6	Harvest and Intensive Farming of 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 finfish 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 15). Includes milk substitutes where the technology is essentially the same.	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

11	Apiculture and Honey Processing	El: 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	El: 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	El: Processing of 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 food products	Applies to fermentation, concentration aseptic filling or drying operations processes. Does not include powdered milk and 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).	Includes carbonated soft drinks, carbonated and non-carbonated waters, mineral water, ice, wine, beer and other alcoholic beverages.	Some high risk process knowledge required

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 Cereal Grains	EII: Processing or Perishable Plant Products	System elements Module 11: GMP for processing of food products	Applies to the processing of cereals of all varieties, including sorting, grading, picking, handling of bulk grains, milling, and extruding.	Includes wheat, maize, rice, barley, oats, millet, pasta, breakfast cereals.	Some high risk 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 delicatessens/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					
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	Applies to the manufacture, blending, transport and storage of dietary supplements.	Includes vitamins, probiotics and label supplements.	High risk product and process knowledge required

			of food products			
32	Manufacture of Pet Food	FI: 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					

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) has not been previously certified; orb) 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)

	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 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.
Good Manufacturing	The combination of management and manufacturing practices designed to ensure

Practices (GMPs)	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	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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.
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)	<p>Refers to the following definitions:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Critical non-conformities cannot be raised at desk audits.</p>
N/A	<p>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.</p> <p>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."</p>
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 hazard or a food quality threat occurring, but one that may not be directly related to activities taking place during production.
Primary Producer or	A sole entity involved in the pre-farm gate production, field packing, storage and

Producer	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.
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	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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.Take appropriate action to ensure the integrity of the SQF food safety and/or quality System.Communicate to relevant personnel all information essential to ensure the effective implementation and maintenance of the SQF food safety and/or quality System.Ensure that site personnel have the required competencies to carry out those functions affecting products, legality, and safety. <p>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.</p>
SQF Program	<p>The SQF Food Safety and/or Quality Code and all associated System, rules, quality shield, intellectual property and documents.</p>
SQF Quality Shield	<p>Means the SQF shield depicted in the SQF Quality Shield Rules of Use.</p>
SQF System	<p>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.</p>
SQF Trainer	<p>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.</p>
SQFI	<p>The SQF Institute, a division of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).</p>
SQFI Assessment Database	<p>The online database used by the SQFI to manage site registration, site audits, close out of corrective actions, and site certification.</p>
System Elements	<p>The SQF food safety management requirements applied by all sites throughout the supply chain for SQF certification.</p>
Standard	<p>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.</p>
Sub-site	<p>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).</p>
Supplier	<p>The entity that provides a product or service to the SQF certified site.</p>
Surveillance Audit	<p>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.</p>
Technical Expert	<p>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 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.</p>
Threat	<p>An identified risk that has the potential, if not controlled, to affect the quality of a product.</p>

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.

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 SQF 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;
 - 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.

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brochures, flyers, advertisements, press releases, company website, email signature lines • internal documents and training materials
Single Color Reproduction: black and white.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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 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

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, its 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.

- 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
 - 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 be 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 certification 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.

Appendix 5: Quality Shield Rules of Use

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The SQF quality shield is owned by the SQFI.
- 1.2 Sites will have the right to use the SQF quality shield upon and for the duration of certification. There will be no fee payable by sites for the right to use the SQF quality shield, other than fees payable to obtain and maintain certification.
- 1.3 Sites obtain no property rights in the SQF quality shield.
- 1.4 Sites may only use the SQF quality shield in accordance with these rules of use, which are designed to protect the integrity and enhance the value of the SQF quality shield.
- 1.5 SQFI delegates any or all of its functions described herein to a licensed certification body (CB) as stipulated in the relevant section of the applicable version of the Safe Quality Food Institute Certification Body License Agreement.
- 1.6 These rules of use regulate the use of the SQF quality shield by sites only. These rules of use do not regulate the use of the SQF quality shield by the SQFI, CBs or other entities licensed by the 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 quality certification, prove to the satisfaction of SQFI and the CB that its quality system satisfies the requirements set forth in the current edition of the SQF Quality Code.
- 2.2 A site must only use the SQF quality shield in accordance with its certificate and these rules of use.
- 2.3 A site can only use the SQF quality logo to indicate finished product that meets the SQF Quality Code requirements. Sites manufacturing food packaging materials cannot use the SQF quality shield.

3. Reproduction

- 3.1 If a site wishes to reproduce the SQF quality shield, it must do so strictly in accordance with the requirements and specifications set out in Schedule 1.

4. Obligations of a Site for Use

- 4.1 A site must:
 - a) Comply fully with the rules of use;
 - b) where it deals with both certified and uncertified goods, must ensure that the SQF quality shield is only used in respect to certified goods and that certified goods are clearly distinguished from uncertified goods. For example, if a certified market agent or retailer receives uncertified packaged apples from supplier A and certified packaged apples from supplier B, these must be clearly distinguished at the point of sale;
 - c) direct any queries regarding their intended use of the SQF quality shield to the CB that issued the certificate;
 - d) discontinue any use of the SQF quality shield to which the SQFI or certifying CB who issued the certificate reasonably objects;
 - e) operate entirely within the scope of its certificate, including the certification schedule. Subsidiary companies and site addresses not included on the certificate are not certified to use the SQF quality shield;
 - f) give the SQFI, a CB and/or their agents access to examine the goods, products, wraps, packaging, containers, stationery, publicity material and all other such items bearing or indicating the SQF quality shield for the purpose of confirming compliance with these rules of use and the certificate; and
 - g) pay within the specified time any fees set by the SQFI.

5. Suspension or Withdrawal of approval to Use the SQF Quality Shield

- 5.1 The permission for a site to use the SQF quality shield shall be:
- a) suspended if the site's certification is suspended; all use of the SQF quality shield in the manufacturing process must cease upon certificate suspension.
 - b) if the site fails to use the SQF quality shield in accordance with its certificate, including the certification schedule;
- 5.2 A site's permission to use the SQF quality shield may be withdrawn or suspended at the SQFI's sole discretion for the following reasons:
- a) if the site fails to comply with these rules of use;
 - b) if the site fails to use the SQF quality shield in accordance with its certificate, including the certification schedule;
 - c) if the site uses the SQF quality shield in a way that, in the opinion of SQFI or the certification body, is detrimental to the SQF quality shield or the SQF program as a whole, is misleading to the public or contrary to law; or
 - d) if the site ceases to carry on business or has an administrator, receiver, receiver manager or liquidator appointed over its assets for the purpose of the winding up of the site's assets.

6. Withdrawn Certification

- 6.1 A site whose certificate has been withdrawn must:
- a) submit and receive permission from the SQFI to use up product in commerce that has the SQF quality shield; and
 - b) conceal the SQF quality shield logo on remaining SQF quality shield packaging supplies, products and all other printed materials. In lieu of concealing the SQF quality shield, a withdrawn site may destroy all remaining SQF quality shield supplies.

7. Corporate Quality Shield

- 7.1 Large corporations with multiple individually SQF certified sites may opt to use a single corporate quality shield instead of individual site shields. A corporate quality shield may be issued as long as the following protocols are in place to ensure that the integrity of the shield and the SQFI brand is not diminished in any way.
- 7.2 All sites within the corporation that are eligible for SQF certification must be certified to the SQF Quality Code, and maintain that certification.
- 7.3 All SQF certified sites within the corporation must be certified by the same certification body.
- 7.4 The corporate shield shall contain the name of the certification body, and a unique identifier comprising a three-letter corporate identity issued by the SQFI (e.g. "FMI" indicating the corporate name, "Food Marketing Institute"), and the year of issue of the corporate shield (e.g. "2017").
- 7.5 Each site must maintain its SQF quality certification at all times in order to use the corporate SQF quality shield.
- 7.6 Where the corporation wishes to print the corporate shield on product packaging, each site must maintain a supply of packaging that does not include the printed shield, to be placed immediately into production in the event the site, or any of the sites, is placed under suspension. The plain packaging must remain in use until the certification body lifts the suspension and SQF quality certification is reinstated.
- 7.7 A letter from the President or senior representative of the company must be sent to all senior site management outlining these procedures and a management system must be in place prior to the use of any packaging displaying the quality shield at each site. This system shall be reviewable by the SQF auditor during the annual re-certification audit at each site.
- 7.8 If any site within the corporation has their certificate suspended or withdrawn, all certified sites within the corporation must comply with clause 5 and 6 of this quality shield appendix.

8. Quality Shield Issued for a Multi-site Organization

- 8.1 The SQF quality shield can only apply to central sites within a multi-site program that have achieved certification to the SQF Quality Code. Sub-sites within a multi-site program are not eligible for certification to the SQF Quality Code, and cannot use the quality shield.

9. Disclaimer

- 9.1 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 quality shield by a site until twelve (12) months have expired from the date the alteration or new rules of use are first published by the SQFI website sqfi.com unless specified by the SQFI.

SCHEDULE 2: REPRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SQF QUALITY SHIELD

Sites who achieve and maintain certification to the SQF Quality Code are granted permission by their certifying certification body to use the SQF quality shield, subject to these rules of use and the conditions set out hereunder per certified site.

The **certification body name** and **certificate number** must be identified in conjunction with the logo in the following form. The certification body certificate number does not need to be included on the shield when on the SQF certificate.



Electronic SQF quality shield logo files are to be obtained from the site’s certifying certification body.

Color Format	For Use On
Full Color Reproduction: see PMS color format set out at Schedule 1 Clause 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brochures, advertisements, press releases, company website and/or • stationary including business cards and letterheads, signage, flags and vehicles associated with SQF certified services such as transport and delivery. • goods or products for public display, (when product is presented for promotional or retail purposes) e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i.) as a sticker or other label affixed to the goods or product; or ii.) a product wrap. • non-recyclable packaging or containers for goods or products intended for retail display e.g. boxes, crates or the like.
Single Color Reproduction: black and white.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • goods or products for public display, (when product is presented for promotional or retail purposes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. as a sticker or other label affixed to the goods or product; or ii. a product wrap. • non-recyclable packaging or containers for goods or products intended for retail display e.g. boxes, crates or

	the like
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Color Reproduction of the SQF Quality Shield

Reproduction of the SQF quality shield is to be clear, precise and of the highest standard. The following guidelines govern full color reproduction.



PMS 7463 C
CMYK: C=40 M=13.6 Y=0 K=0.8



40% Tint of PMS 3005C
CMYK: C=100 M=43 Y=0 K=65

Font type of the SQF Quality Shield must be Chaparral Pro Semibold.

Wording In Lieu of the SQF Quality Shield

A site may use the following wording in lieu of the SQF quality shield: "(insert site name from the SQF certificate)" – a site certified to the SQF Quality Code No. (insert number issued by the CB) and certified by (insert name of certification body)." The words must appear in the dominant font color of the packaging.

Dimensions

The dimensions of the SQF quality shield are 47mm high by 35mm wide, as shown.



Variation to these dimensions is permitted provided that any such variation is proportional to the above dimensions and the letters and numerals on the logo remain clear and legible.

Certification Numbers

The individual certification number issued to sites must always be included as part of the SQF quality shield as follows:



Special Cases

Where it is demonstrated that alternative reproduction of the SQF quality shield or wording in lieu of the SQF quality shield enhances the status of the SQF quality shield and/or SQFI, then the alternative is permitted provided it is approved by the certifying certification body. All requests must be provided in writing **per certified site** to the certifying certification body and SQFI.