

TUV Staff Highlight



Ralf Thomsen joined TUV USA, Inc. as Managing Director in 2015. He previously served as Managing Director of TUV UK Ltd and was responsible for overseeing the merger and acquisition activities of TUV NORD Systems GmbH & CO.KG.

Ralf has an MBA with a focus on international management and market development. He is a Chartered Engineer (CEng) registered in the UK and has a wealth of experience in various leadership roles, which oversee services in technical surveillance, health and safety, training, and product certification.

BRC Voluntary Modules: Looking Ahead in 2017

By Ralf Thomsen and Lori Carlson

Certification to the voluntary modules increases efficiency in audit management by reducing audit redundancy, ensuring competent assessment through highly trained and qualified BRC auditors, and streamlined reporting through the BRC Directory to meet customer and regulatory requirements. Increased efficiency in audit management allows the site to focus on what matters most—producing safe food and protecting public health.

2016 saw the release of a variety of Voluntary Modules to supplement the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety. These include:

- Culture Excellence
- FSMA Preventive Controls Preparedness
- AOECs Gluten –Free Foods
- Meat Supply Chain Assurance

Voluntary modules annexed to the Food Safety Standard largely bring forward strength in developing a food safety culture, supply chain management and regulatory compliance within the EU, UK and US.

The Culture Excellence module is a pathway for companies to evaluate and improve their attitudes, behaviors and commitment to food safety. It is proven that consistent implementation and improvement of safe food practices is highly dependent upon a positive attitude, which values food safety. Certification to the Culture Excellence module can help companies close this gap.

The FSMA Preventive Controls Preparedness module is a tool to support BRC certified sites in regulatory compliance with the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). This module is applicable to BRC certified within the U.S. and those who export to the U.S. It is important to note that the exclusion of products within the scope of the module is not permitted.

The Gluten-Free and Meat Supply Chain Assurance modules were developed to strengthen supply chain management and improve transparency to ensure the safety, legality and authenticity of products included within the scope of certification. The Gluten-Free module was developed in partnership with the Association of European Coeliac Societies (AOECS) to enable compliance with AOECS' standard and EU regulation for the labeling of gluten-free foods. The Meat Supply Chain Assurance module was developed by the BRC to improve supply chain transparency and visibility within the meat industry for assurance in the origin of species for meat products.

So, what can we expect from the BRC Global Standards in 2017?

The BRC Global Standards team is continuing to pursue partnerships with retailers, industry associations and food service organizations for the development of private and public modules to streamline and improve supply chain management across industries.

This includes publication of the Foundation for Strategic Sourcing (F4SS) modules to align with the Food Safety and Packaging standards following completion of the pilot. These modules are the result of a partnership with F4SS under the AuditOne Initiative supported by CPG companies including Unilever, Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson.

BRC will continue to align its standards with new U.S. food regulation through the development and launch of a FSMA module to supplement the Agents and Brokers standard. This is expected to draw from the Foreign Supplier Verification Program (FSVP), Food Defense, Sanitary Transportation, and Preventive Controls rules.

And finally, the Gluten-Free module will undergo revision to accommodate global labeling and verification regulation of gluten-free foods while the Culture Excellence module will see expansion to all BRC Global Standards.

About TUV USA, Inc.

TUV USA, Inc. certifies against all BRC Global Standards, which includes: Food Safety, Packaging and Packaging Materials, Storage and Distribution, Agents and Brokers, and Consumer Products as well as an approved certification body under the F4SS AuditOne Initiative. Click [here](#) for more information about our food safety services. Click [here](#) to subscribe to our monthly newsletter.

About the Author

Lori Carlson is an independent technical writer, trainer and consultant for the food and beverage industry with a background in food safety management systems, GFSI benchmarked schemes and regulatory compliance.