

WHY IMPLEMENT HACCP?

New food production and processing practices, emerging food-borne pathogens, and changing eating habits and demographics have contributed to a higher awareness of food-borne illness in recent years. Increasingly, prevention has become the focus. HACCP systems control food safety hazards through prevention, elimination and reduction.

To address food safety concerns, market forces are driving HACCP implementation throughout the food continuum, particularly the processing sector. When a food illness outbreak occurs, many points in the food continuum suffer, including the retail sector. In response, many retailers and grocers have begun to insist that their suppliers have effective food safety systems, including HACCP, implemented in their facilities. This action drives the adoption of HACCP by many processors to retain their current market and customer base or, in fact, expand it.

A. Common Benefits of HACCP

Although the adoption of HACCP systems worldwide is due primarily to the added food safety protection provided to the consumer, a number of other benefits to the food industry, including your company, can be realized by implementing a successful HACCP system.

i. Increased Focus and Ownership of Food Safety

Food safety is the responsibility of everyone in the food supply chain. Through the process of developing and implementing a HACCP system, your company's employees will become more aware of food safety and their roles in maintaining and contributing to food safety. This increased awareness leads to increased ownership and pride in the production of a safe product.

ii. Increased Buyer and Consumer Confidence

There is an increasing trend for buyers to request HACCP from their suppliers. Food processors who have implemented a HACCP system provide buyers and consumers with a greater degree of confidence that the facility is producing a safe food product.

iii. Maintaining or Increasing Market Access

Market forces continue to drive food safety awareness and HACCP implementation throughout the food processing sector. As food safety systems, particularly HACCP, become more common, market access is limited for processors who do not implement them. In many cases buyer demands require HACCP implementation to maintain market share and/or gain access to previously inaccessible markets. HACCP implementation may also permit re-entry into a market that had been lost. Considering the economic implications, HACCP implementation may be a necessary cost of business.

iv. Business Liability Protection

Implementation of a HACCP system can provide your facility with some degree of increased business liability protection and may lead to reduced insurance premiums. This will be an important factor once the Consumer Protection Bill has been passed by Parliament

v. Reduced Operational Costs

The process of developing and implementing a HACCP system requires that the entire manufacturing process be reviewed and analyzed, and written procedures developed. This process often reveals areas where operational costs can be streamlined. For example, developing a sanitation program may identify that excessive chemical concentrations are being used. Reducing chemicals to the correct concentration may decrease sanitation costs.

vi. Efficient Oversight

Similarly, HACCP implementation can provide your company with ongoing efficient oversight. It can be cost effective to implement HACCP in spite of the associated costs. Activities that are performed on a regular basis, such as product and process monitoring, employee training and review of procedures, allow your company to maintain control over the facility and product. You may find there are certain areas of the process that can be made more efficient and productive.

vii. Improved Product Quality and Consistency

The implementation of a HACCP system may indirectly enhance product quality. Procedures that minimize the presence and growth of pathogenic micro-organisms can also minimize the presence and growth of spoilage micro-organisms, leading to an increased product shelf life. In addition, the attention given to standardized procedures will improve product consistency.

viii. Reduced Wastage

The preventative nature of HACCP allows a company to control costs by minimizing the amount of product requiring rework or rejection, and focusing resources on areas that have been identified as critical in the manufacture of a safe food product. You will find that many problems are addressed before they escalate and before products are dispatched from your facility; you will not simply be waiting for the results of end-product testing. With the regular monitoring inherent in a HACCP system, you will become aware of problems earlier, and your costs of wastage will be reduced.