



## **GLOBAL TRENDS**

### **Food Safety – ISO 22000 – 2009/09**

On September 11, 2009, Reuters reported that Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz announced funding to upgrade Canada's food safety system and hire more inspectors in the wake of a listeriosis outbreak in 2008 in which 22 people died.

Over the past few years, food recalls and food-borne illnesses or deaths have made major headlines. A variety of products have been implicated, such as peanut butter, processed meats, fresh produce, and pet food. Major food buyers such as supermarket chains and food service establishments are demanding safety assurances from their suppliers.

The increased demand for safe food, as a result of globalization and international trade, has made food safety management more important than ever before. Several food safety standards have been developed to address this critical issue on a global scale. The ISO 22000:2005 standard defines food safety management systems requirements for all organizations that produce, manufacture, handle, or supply food or feed.

According to BDC Consulting Partner, Bettie Johnston, although compliance in the ISO 22000:2005 standard is entirely voluntary, it's often in a firm's best interest to get certified.

"It's driven by their customers," explains Johnston, who advises companies on how to obtain certification. "If they want to do business in international markets, they're going to need that certification."

ISO 22000 can be applied to all types of organization within the food chain, ranging from feed producers, primary producers, food manufacturers, transport and storage operators and subcontractors to retail and food service outlets – together with inter-related organizations such as producers of equipment, packaging material, cleaning agents, additives and ingredients.

Clear communication along the food chain is essential to ensure that all relevant food safety hazards are identified and adequately controlled at each step. This implies communication of an organization's needs to the other organizations both upstream and downstream in the food chain. Communication with customers and suppliers, based on the information generated through systematic hazard analysis, will also assist in meeting customer and supplier's requirements in terms of feasibility, need and impact on the end product.

ISO 22000 combines the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles and application steps developed by the Codex Alimentarius, with prerequisite programmes. It uses a hazard analysis to determine the strategy for hazard control.

## **ISO 22000 – Global Trends**

In a report dated May/June 2008, in just over 30 months, the number of countries revealing ISO 22000 certifications has gone from about 24 countries to at least 72 and probably many more. Turkey leads this survey with 200 establishments certified followed by Japan, India, Denmark and China (excluding Hong Kong) all in the range of 50 to 60 certificates issued.

Regionally, Europe leads the way with just under 60% of the certificates which is not surprising given that it is the home of many of the private food safety management system standards and its food businesses have borne the brunt of multiple audits and certifications longer than other regions.

The United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia have fewer certificates for several reasons. First, food processors in these countries are subject to government inspection and many have had to implement HACCP as part of those regulatory requirements. Second, in North America implementation of food safety management systems all along the supply chain is not mandatory like in Europe.

The Far East ranks second in certificates issued followed by Africa/West Asia in third place.

### Sources:

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