Quality considerations

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SR SCIENTIST
- Food safety and quality issues have received a great attention in recent years.
- Regulations are increasingly active to safeguard the food we eat.
- Coupled with the international and domestic revolution in quality assurance, consumers are demanding products and services with a high degree of safety, consistency of quality and value for money.
- The rapid globalization of market concerns over food safety, the dismantling of traditional investment and trade barriers and the emergence of private labels is resulting in many changes and developments in today’s International Food Trade Environment.
- These events are having an impact on rules and regulations concerning Product quality, Product safety, Environmental, ecological, ethical and social issues and regulatory requirements.
Two of the WTO Agreements have set new dimensions for International food trade, namely

- Agreement of Technical Barrier to Trade (TBT)
- Agreement on Phytosanitary Regulations (SPS)

The agreement also imposes a binding obligation to harmonize its domestic mandatory standard with international standards such as ISO, Codex Alimentarius to avoid trade barriers. Codex standards are identified as the international standards for reference as mentioned in the WTO proposal. As per the recommendations of Codex and FAO, the best way to integrate and harmonize the safety system is by an integrated company wide Quality System including

HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) is the state of the art food safety system developed to control the risk of food contamination in the manufacturing/processing of food. It is designated to minimize the risk of food safety hazards. It is not a no risk system.
HACCP - principles

1. Identification of potential hazards and preventive measures
2. Identification of critical control points
3. Set critical limits
4. Monitoring of critical limits
5. Corrective actions
6. Develop record keeping system
7. Develop verification procedures
HACCP- issues driving

- Customer (Customer preferences)
- Regulatory bodies (Governments)
- World Health Organization (CODEX)
- Market Access (EC/USFDA)
- Shareholders, Insurers (Litigation/Claims)
- Retailers and Private Labels (Brand Protection)
Several International Agencies have come up with their own standards to tackle the food safety issue in their Exports and Imports. Some of the notable ones are:

- **AQIS** – Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, with its own set of Standards for various food product.
- **National Food Safety Initiative of the USA 1997**
- **White paper on Food Safety of the European Commission – January 2000**
Private Labels, Marks and Brands

The new approach is about transforming commodities into products known as the value added concept. These market forces will lead to the increased emergence of private labels, international marks, and brands that consumers can trust – products that signify a higher degree of safety, consistency, predictability and value for money. Research into the Food/Agri industry indicates the importance of

- Brand image
- Brand loyalty
- Good public perception

Quality assurance is the best way of achieving all three.
Characteristics of successful marks, brands and private labels

- Conformity to a recognized standard by objective assessment.
- Independent certification by an accredited body
- International recognition of the certifying body.
- Recognition by regulatory and statutory bodies.
- A network to enforce and protect the mark against fraud and abuse.
- Promotion of the mark.
- Tangible benefits to the consumer.
Product branding attributes could include

- Confirms to Codex HACCP Guidelines for safety, e.g. SQF 2000CM
- Origin, place of manufacture, assembly or packing imprinted.
- Contains less than a specified amount of nominated substances.
- Complies with product specifications e.g. taste, texture, size, shape or other quality attributes.
- Organic – grown under conditions specified in organic definition.
- Chemical residue status – tolerance levels for pesticides, herbicides etc.
- Ecological – grown under certain environmental conditions.
- Healthy lifestyle perception e.g. free from salt, low fat.
Delivering quality and safety in food to customers in world market is a tall order. It requires special skills, systems and attention to detail.
Quality standards

- The number of standards and guidelines for food in the market today is growing exponentially and imposing huge costs and confusion on the supply chain.
- Different buyers are imposing in-house HACCP/QA schemes on suppliers as they or the governments in the countries from which they operate do not understand, relate to or accept local standards initiatives.
Internationally recognized standards such as ISO 9000, ISO 14000, SQF 2000CM and others will continue to be developed to formalize systems which will

- Provide uniformity and standardization
- Prevent duplication of standards
- Provide a level playing field

These standards will encompass product and service quality as well as safety, environmental and social issues and will eventually become common terms of trade.
In the food / Agri industry such standards already exist and include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ISO 9000</td>
<td>Internationally recognized world-class quality management system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SQF 2000&lt;sup&gt;CM&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Safety Quality Food. A standard designed specifically for the industry to manage food safety and quality based on Codex HACCP and compatible with ISO 9000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMS-ISO 14000</td>
<td>An International environmental standard which sets guidelines for clean and more sustainable processes and production techniques.</td>
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Risk will change as consumer perceptions change. What is tolerated and acceptable today will not necessarily be acceptable in the future. As consumers become better educated, more aware through improved communications and more effluent, their perceptions and buying patterns will change. This is what changes markets.
The question this raises is. “How do we manage these types of risk?”
The answer is- By building quality and safety into the product using HACCP technique to determine the critical points and then incorporating this into an auditable quality management system to ensure that the preventive controls and corrective actions are implemented.
If your customers ask you to prove that you have an appropriate system in place to ensure
- Product specifications are met.
- Consistency and predictability is maintained.
- Regulatory compliance is fulfilled.

How will you prove this?

With QF 2000CM (Safe Quality Food) – a standard that provides a useful option to manage food safety risk and to build in product quality.
It is the world’s largest testing, inspection and quality systems certification organization operating in 140 countries and employing over 39000 employee. SGS offers a full range of service to support the implementation of:

- GMP, SSOP Certifications
- HCAAP, SQF 2000\textsuperscript{CM} Certification
- ISO 9001:2000 Certification
- ISO 14000 Certification
- Organic Certification
- EUREP\textsuperscript{G}AP Certification
- BRC Certification
- CIEH (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health) Training Programs
AGMARK RULES

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 3 of the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, 1937, the Central Government makes the following rules, namely:

“Organic Agricultural Produce Grading and Marking Rules, 2009”
DESIGN OF THE AGMARK INDIA ORGANIC INSIGNIA

AGMARK
CA. NO.
Thanks