International food safety standard revised to meet the evolving challenges of the food chain

BSI, the business standards company, has published the revised international standard for food safety management. ISO 22000:2018 *Food safety management systems – requirements for any organization in the food chain* provides a framework based on best practice for any organization, from a small, family-owned farm to a multi-national food service outlet, to implement a comprehensive food safety management system.

The World Health Organization estimates that one in ten people fall ill and 420,000 die because of contaminated food every year. The updated version of ISO 220000, first published in 2005, works to reduce this by helping food organizations implement food safety management systems that defend against the potential hazards and risks that lead to contamination.

Food safety hazards can occur at any stage in the food chain. Adequate control throughout the food chain is essential. By combining the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle to manage business risk with HACCP to identify, prevent and control food safety hazards, ISO 22000 helps organizations to reduce exposure to risk and improve safety.

The standard has a structure for the operational requirements of food safety management, namely: operational planning and control; hazard control and control plans; and the updating of controls. ISO 22000 specifies requirements for a food safety management system enabling organizations in the food chain to:

a.) Plan, implement, operate, maintain and update a food safety management system providing products and services that are safe, according to their intended use
b.) Demonstrate compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory food safety requirements
c.) Evaluate and assess mutually agreed customer food safety requirements and demonstrate conformity to them
d.) Effectively communicate food safety issues to interested parties within the food chain
e.) Ensure that the organization conforms to its stated food safety policy
f.) Demonstrate conformity to relevant interested parties
g.) Seek certification or registration of food safety management systems by an external organization or make a self-assessment or self-declaration of conformity to the standard

The requirements of ISO 22000 are applicable to all organizations in the food chain, irrespective of their size or complexity. It can help farmers, food manufacturers, retailers, animal food producers and harvesters of wild plants and animals protect their livelihood by embedding a system that helps prevent foodborne illness and product recalls. The standard is also of relevance to organizations providing food services, catering services, cleaning and sanitation services, transportation and food packaging materials.

David Fatscher, Head of Sustainability at BSI, said: "ISO 22000 is a global standard which addresses a global need: a food safety management system which recognizes that food supply chains are increasingly cross-border, with a typical supermarket stocking lamb slaughtered in New Zealand and asparagus picked in Peru.

"An organization implementing ISO 22000 is able to demonstrate to its customers and suppliers a commitment to providing safe foods and services that meet statutory and regulatory requirements, and conformity to an internationally recognized food safety management system."

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About BSI
BSI is the business improvement company that enables organizations to turn standards of best practice into habits of excellence. For over a century BSI has championed what good looks like and driven best practice in organizations around the world. Working with over 86,000 clients across 193 countries, it is a truly international business with skills and experience across a number of sectors including automotive, aerospace, built environment, food, and healthcare. Through its expertise in Standards Development and Knowledge Solutions, Assurance and Professional Services, BSI improves business performance to help clients grow sustainably, manage risk and ultimately be more resilient.

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