APPLICATION OF HACCP PRINCIPLES FOR THE MEAT INDUSTRY

GUIDANCE SHEET NO: 5

GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES (GHP) A PREREQUISITE FOR HACCP PRELIMINARIES FOR HACCP

GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES (GHP) ARE A PREREQUISITE FOR HACCP

Before starting to develop and implement a HACCP system it is essential for your factory to have implemented Good Hygienic Practices (GHP) successfully. GHP's are a prerequisite for HACCP and consist of the basic hygiene measures that must be in place in your food business prior to you undertaking a HACCP study. They include matters such as supplier approval, incoming material specifications, finished product specifications and staff training. An overview of the various aspects of the factories GHP system are given later in this guidance sheet.

Dependent on the nature of your business not all of the GHP components may be applicable for your production processes. Once you have identified which prerequisites are relevant to your business, you should develop procedures (see guidance sheet 17 for more details of standard operating procedures and sanitation standard operating procedures), or review existing documentation, to ensure that adequate control measures are in place.

For each prerequisite you may wish to include the following points in your procedure:

- The title of the document. For example "Policy for glass and plastic management."
- A brief statement on the purpose of the prerequisite measure. For example "To prevent contamination of products from glass or plastic from the factory environment."
- What measures are necessary to achieve the desired outcome. For example, "No glass containers to be taken into production area."
- Who will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements are met. For example, "Production supervisors must ensure that no glass containers are taken onto the production floor."
- The nature and frequency of any checks that are to be made and by whom. For example, "Production supervisors must check the production area for any glass containers prior to commencing production each day."
- What should happen if something goes wrong. For example, "Glass bottle found in production area. All staff provided with refresher training on glass policy to prevent recurrence."
- How, where and by whom these checks are recorded. For example, "Production supervisors must record each pre-production glass check on form GP1."
- When and by whom the procedure must be reviewed for example, "This policy to be reviewed every 12 months by the Operations Manager."

OVERVIEW OF GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES (GHP)

The following section provides a brief summary of the 35 major components of a GHP system for a meat processing industry. The list of components is not intended to be comprehensive as some businesses require extra components to deal with specific hygiene issues related to their product range and processing systems. You may wish to look at meat industry guides to good hygienic practices for more detailed discussions on each aspect of your GHP system.

1. Location of food establishments -An assessment of the impact of neighbouring businesses on the food operation should be undertaken and in particular of potential sources of contamination. This is particularly important where there are shared facilities such as toilets, goods yards and canteens.

2. Layout and design of food premises - In particular, areas of potential cross contamination between raw and ready to eat food should be identified and eliminated through appropriate design of the premises layout. For example, wherever possible, raw foods should be handled in separate rooms to ready to eat foods. Where this is not possible, separate defined areas within the same room should be identified and only when this is not possible should consideration be given to management controls to control the hazard.

3. Structure and condition of food premises - Structures within food establishments should be soundly built of durable materials and be easy to maintain, clean and where appropriate, able to be disinfected.

4. Food allergen control - Regard should be had to the 14 internationally recognised food allergens (see guidance sheet 6 for details). If you are in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) or wish to export your products to an EAEU market you must taken account of the 14 internationally recognised allergens plus aspartame/acesulfame making 15 allergenic substances in total for EAEU regulatory compliance. Wherever possible product formulation should avoid the inclusion of these allergens, food ingredients containing these allergens should be carefully controlled and other, non-allergenic foods should be protected from cross-contamination.

5. Temperature control - Depending on the nature of the food operations undertaken, adequate facilities should be available for heating, cooling, cooking, refrigerating and freezing food, for storing refrigerated or frozen foods, monitoring food temperatures, and when necessary, controlling ambient temperatures to ensure the safety and suitability of food.

6. Waste control - Suitable provision must be made for the removal and storage of waste. Waste must not be allowed to accumulate in food handling, food storage, and other working areas and the adjoining environment except so far as is unavoidable for the proper functioning of the business.

7. Supplier control - Ingredients and supplies should, wherever possible, be purchased to specification from reputable suppliers. Supplies of products of animal origin such as meat, fish, dairy products etc should normally only be sourced from establishments which have been approved by the relevant food authority and bear the appropriate health (for fresh meat carcases) or identification marking (for other types of products of animal origin).

8. Packaging - Packaging should be fit for purpose, storage of packaging should be considered to lower the risk of contamination and deterioration.

9. Incoming material specifications - Specifications for all raw materials (including packaging) or services which could affect the finished product should be in place and functional.

10. Finished product specifications - Specifications should in place and functional for all finished products.

11. Training (see guidance sheet 17) - Food handlers should be supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activity. Those responsible for the development and maintenance of HACCP should have received adequate training in the application of the HACCP principles.

12. Contract services (such as waste removal or laundry) - Systems should be in place to make sure that any contract services used meet the requirements of your business. Consideration should be given to prevent contamination of products or production areas.

13. Pest Control - Adequate procedures should be in place to prevent pest access to premises and harbourage. In particular steps should be taken to prevent the contamination of food by pests.

14. Glass and plastic management - If possible, glass or other brittle materials should be kept out of premises or work areas. Where they are present action should be taken to protect against breakage with greater emphasis in areas where there is a higher risk to contamination of the product.

15. Calibration of measuring and monitoring devices - Any equipment used for measuring and monitoring must be sufficiently accurate and reliable to provide confidence in results.

16. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) - The company should operate to documented procedures and/or work instructions that ensure the production of consistently safe and legal product with the desired quality characteristics, in full compliance with the HACCP food safety plan (see guidance sheet 17 for more details on SOPs and SSOPs).

17. Distribution - Vehicles and containers used to transport products should not present a risk to the safety or quality of the products.

18. Product recall - Effective procedures should be in place to deal with any food safety hazard and to enable the complete, rapid recall of any implicated lot of the finished food from the market. Where unsafe food has left the initial control of the business, the relevant public health authority should be notified.

19. Document control - A system should be in place to ensure that only the most recent versions of documents and forms are available and in use.

20. Audit schedule (including HACCP/internal audits) - You should be able to demonstrate that you verify the effective application of the food safety plan in your business.

21. Customer complaints - Customer complaints should be effectively addressed and analysed. Information gathered should be used to target issues which led to the complaint with the intention to reduce recurring problems.

22. Tracking non-conformances - Procedures should specify the necessary action to identify and eliminate the root cause of nonconformities. All corrections should be recorded - this information is required for traceability purposes.

23. Microbiological control - Inspection and analyses which are essential to confirm product safety, legality and quality should be carried out using appropriate procedures, facilities and standards.

24. Preventative maintenance - An effective maintenance programme should be in place for plant and equipment. Activities performed should prevent contamination and reduce the potential for breakdowns.

25. Traceability - Systems should be such that all raw material product lots (including packaging) can be traced from the supplier through all stages of processing and despatch to the customer and the reverse (i.e. traceability from the customer back to the suppliers of the raw materials).

26. Utilities (air, water, energy) - Distribution routes for utilities should be designed to minimise the risk of contamination.

27. Equipment suitability, cleaning and maintenance - Equipment and containers coming into contact with food should be designed and constructed to ensure that, where necessary, they can be adequately cleaned, disinfected and maintained to avoid the contamination of food.

28. Measures to prevent cross-contamination - There should be systems in place to prevent, control and detect contamination (such as physical, chemical, allergen and microbiological contamination).

29. Cleaning and disinfection - Adequate facilities, suitably designated, should be provided for cleaning food, utensils and equipment. Such facilities should have an adequate supply of hot and cold potable water where appropriate. Where necessary, suitable disinfection procedures should be developed and implemented.

30. Personnel hygiene and employee facilities - Good personal hygiene practices are important. Staff should understand the risk of cross contamination to the food products and take appropriate actions to minimise this risk. All personnel, visitors and contractors should comply with any personal hygiene requirements.

31. Rework - It is important that when reworking product, it is used, stored and handled in a way that doesn't compromise product safety, quality, traceability and regulatory compliance.

32. Warehousing - Storage facilities for raw materials (including packaging), in-process product, and finished products should be fit for purpose and not pose any contamination risk.

33. Product information/consumer awareness - Information shall be presented to consumers in accordance with the national food labelling and consumer information regulations. If you intend to export your products to another country you must meet the regulatory requirements of the destination market.

34. Contamination control - Appropriate facilities and procedures shall be in place to control the risk of contamination from hazards (chemical, biological, physical and allergens).

35. Return to work - Action should be taken to minimise the risk of product becoming contaminated by personnel when returning to work after rest breaks or after being away from work due to illness.