



Food Safety labeling explained

By : [Elizabeth Evers](#)

Submitted 2009-10-30 11:26:19

Food Safety certification is vital for food retail and international trade. Without food safety certification producers and suppliers cannot hope to sell their produce within the food chain. There is significant reputational and business risk attached to the degree, type and source of certification and it is therefore advisable to get certified by reputable third-party bodies to an internationally recognized standard.

In most countries food safety issues are monitored by a government-affiliated authority which in turn make recommendations on legislation and food safety management which forms the basis of national legislation and standards. Examples of such national authorities are the Food Standards Authority in the UK, the US Food and Drug Administration, and the State Food and Drug Administration of China. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) also conducts risk assessment on food and feed safety in collaboration with national authorities to provide independent scientific advice and communication on emerging or existing risks.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization publishes the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) guidelines which are an integral part of the top food safety standard, ISO22000. The HACCP guidelines include seven principles which state, among other things, that food producers have to conduct a pre-production hazard analysis to identify chemical, biological or physical issues that make food unsafe for consumption by humans; establish safety or 'control points' monitoring systems; and implement comprehensive record-keeping processes.

The application of these principles is mandatory in the US for food products including meat, juice and seafood. The HACCP principles form the basis for third-party food safety certification in many other countries too.

The ISO 22000 is a globally-recognized standard developed from the International Organization for Standardization which draws on the HACCP principles. This standard outlines the food safety management systems that should be applicable to any organization, regardless of its size, which is involved in any aspect of the food chain. To meet this standard an organization must show its ability to control food safety hazards to ensure that food is completely safe at the time of human consumption.

The British Retail Consortium Global Standard for Food Safety, also known as the BRC Global Standard, is trusted by global retailers to deliver supply chain management as well as legal compliance. It was the very first standard in the world approved by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GSFI) benchmarking committee.

GlobalGAP is a membership organisation which sets voluntary standards for the certification of 'pre-farm-gate' Good Agricultural Practices and agricultural products. GlobalGAP's standards are awarded by third party certification bodies in 80 countries globally.

Other leading standards include the Food Alliance Certification which is bestowed on North American sustainable food products. This certification includes elements such as the humane treatment of animals, the exclusion of hormones, non-therapeutic antibiotics, certain pesticides, and GM crops or livestock, as well as protection of soil and water.

SQF (Safe Quality Food) Certification assures that a supplier's food safety and quality management system comply with domestic and international regulations and has been awarded to companies operating in Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East and North and South America.

Author Resource:- Elizabeth Evers is the editor of ekobai.com, the world's first online [B2B directory for certified suppliers](#). In this article she explains the basics of how [food safety labeling](#) works and outlines the top standards.

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