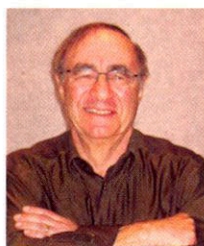


Safety Under Wraps

More packaging companies are becoming certified to PACsecure food safety HACCP standards

BY LARRY DWORKIN



Over the past year, a number of Canadian packaging firms have become certified to The Packaging Association's (PAC) PACsecure/HACCP-based food safety standards for individual packaging materials.

Not surprising, the industry's response has been spurred on by many of its food industry customers – both in Canada and the U.S. – most of which are already HACCP compliant. Leading the charge among Canadian packagers to become certified are Toronto-based Atlantic Packaging, Jones Packaging of London, Ont., Layfield Packaging of Richmond, B.C., and Dartmouth, N.S.-based Farnell Packaging. More than a dozen additional organizations are expected to become certified within the next few months as the industry makes an all out effort to meet its due diligence obligations to ensure the safety of its packaging products used for food. The PACsecure standards have also been accepted by the U.S.-based Food Safety Alliance for Packaging.

Identifying Risks

There are 24 different general manufacturing processes to make a package. As a result, "one size does not fit all" when it comes to implementing a food safety standard for packaging materials. Each packaging sector has its own unique issues when it comes to developing HACCP-based food safety standards to eliminate risks. Unlike many standards, which were developed on broad-based principles for the food industry, the PACsecure standards were specifically designed by the association and more than 100 members working in conjunction with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency over a seven-year period, to identify potential hazards associated with each of these 24 common packaging manufacturing processes, resulting in more cost-effective solutions.

The standards, which are reviewed annually, are a sys-

tematic approach to food safety that addresses the biological, chemical and physical hazards through preventative action rather than by finished product inspection.

Additional Resources

In addition to its one-day "Train the Trainer" sessions, PAC is developing on-line training tools for employees and management, under a program being funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. It is anticipated that the on-line training will be launched by the end of the year. Under the same funding program, the association will be completing the third-party auditing process, undertaking a national recall and traceability initiative, upgrading a food defence and security module and pest control module, and making additions to the "Train the Trainer" program. PAC is now applying for involvement in the Global Food Safety Initiative and has been asked to serve on a technical committee dealing with packaging.

PAC has also appointed a number of consulting organizations to assist firms in becoming compliant as well as to undertake third-party audits. Organizations that have been approved to do third-party audits include: QMI-SAI Global of Mississauga, Ont.; the Guelph Food Technology Centre (GFTC); Burlington, Ont.-based TWD Technologies; and Kasar Canada of Halifax, N.S. The GFTC, TWD Technologies and Kasar are also approved to assist firms in developing the PACsecure program. ■

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National Recall and Traceability Study: Is the Package the Problem?

As part of the PACsecure initiative being funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, The Packaging Association (PAC) will be undertaking a mock recall and traceability study of the entire food supply chain starting this fall and continuing through to spring 2011. PAC requested this initiative because most recall and traceability studies that have been carried out by the food processing and retail sectors have not included packaging in their studies.

PAC will be working with both on-farm and post-farm organizations to ensure they incorporate the packaging sector in their plans. The association will also be holding six recall and traceability workshops across Canada for its members and other appropriate sectors to increase awareness of the program.