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By

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TITLE: WHAT ARE WE ASSURING AS FOOD SAFETY AUDITORS?

The PURPOSE of this talk is to put Food Safety Auditing back in a proactive stance instead of a defensive and reactionary position.

It took a few hundred years to put investment bankers in a negative light. It only took a few months to do that to Food Safety Auditing.

I would like you to note these articles.

[Food safety problems slip past private inspectors, 5/6/09, NY Times]

[Food giants agree new regulation needed, 3/8/09, Bloomberg News]

[The government and the food industry are working overtime to beef up guidelines on what companies need to do to keep consumers safe. 4/2/09 USA Today]

[Obama Stresses Food Safety, Super Market News]

[Peanut Recalls Spark Scrutiny of Audit Firms, 3/30/09, Super Market News]

Food safety recently has gone from a non-issue in Super Market News to front page articles.

I am passionate about Food Safety Auditing since I have lived it since the early 1970's. When I worked for the FDA, there were no GMPs and HACCP in the current form, just a goal of preventing adulterated foods.

When I worked for Schreiber Cheese Co. (now Schreiber Food, Inc.) in the early 1970's we didn't have a QA department or QA Manager. The line supervisor (me) was responsible for food quality and safety of my department and shift.

When I worked for Allied Mills Pet Food in the mid 1970's, I was hired to start a QA department for the plant.

Now after 30 plus years, we have the Quality Assurance Association, which if named today may be the Food Safety and Quality Assurance Association.

So with that said; what are we assuring? It has to be more than a certificate.
What can we do now? GFSI is a step in the right direction.

I believe we must be pro-active.

We shouldn't be scoring audits that allow Major and sometimes Critical deficiencies to still rate a 90 + percent score. Audits should be scored so good plants receive high scores and the poor and marginal plants receive low scores, below 70 percent.

In auditing for food safety, we have more important things to worry about than the company president's job description.

Again we must be proactive because none of us know what the next food safety problem will be. It may be something we haven't thought of yet.

A few proactive ideas;

Noting the temperature of refrigerated trailer box before beginning the loading process.

Removing loose pack peanut packets from vending machines.

Checking eye care glass frames for rhinestones.

Testing irrigation water for microbial contamination at end of irrigation lines, not at the beginning.

Assuring that third party auditor has basic knowledge of your type of facility and product.

Thank you