

Missing Pieces - An Auditor's Perspective

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Abstract

Food fraud is a common type of Economically motivated adulteration (EMA) and occurs when someone intentionally leaves out, takes out, or substitutes a valuable ingredient or part of a food. The motivation for food fraud is to make it appear better or of greater value. While the motivation is making higher profit for a substandard product, the implications could impact on the safety of the product as well.

Traceability helps keep track of food in the supply chain, which supports the accurate withdrawal/recall of unsafe food, if required. The importance of traceability also assists in help identifying the origin of the product and where it is distributed to. In the context of food fraud, an effective traceability system will ensure an organisation have information on the supply chain of raw materials, showing due diligence on suppliers and authenticity of supplied materials.

Food Fraud is detectable, and the risk minimised if there is adequate control of suppliers and supplied materials. It remains the responsibility of the food handling organisation to ensure a thorough vulnerability assessment is conducted, effective controls implemented, and that the traceability system is managed and maintained.

Aspects covered in the topic include:

- Common food fraud incidents
- Common mistakes by food handling organizations
- Inadequate vulnerability assessments
- Ineffective supplier control
- Awareness/compliance to standard and legal requirements

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Thomas Smith is currently employed at Merieux NutriSciences SA since 2006 as the Technical Specialist: Management Systems. He is responsible for audits, training and technical consulting. Thomas obtained a BTech Environmental Health at CPUT, South Africa and is currently busy working on his Masters in Public Health (UJ). Thomas' experience in the industry includes food manufacturing, packaging, cosmetics and agriculture. He enjoys sport and has a love for music.