



Using SAP® to Support HACCP in the Food and Beverage Industry:

A Recipe for Success



Food safety is a key concern for manufacturers, regulators, and increasingly consumers. As consumers push for greater assurances around the safety of their food, regulators have responded with more stringent regulations. Under the recently amended Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), the Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls (HARPC) require food and beverage companies to implement controls in order to prevent or significantly minimize known or reasonably foreseeable potential hazards.

HARPC shares some commonalities with the Hazard Analysis and Critical Controls Points (HACCP) but shifts the focus from the reactive approach of HACCP to a more proactive approach. HARPC also extends oversight over a food and beverage processor or manufacturer's entire supply chain and includes many more hazards than the three covered in HACCP (physical, chemical, and biological).

Regardless of the differences, food and beverage manufacturers seeking to effectively manage supply chain operations to the best of their ability leverage both HARPC and HACCP, as well as Current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP) practices. For businesses seeking to successfully meet HARPC requirements, HACCP serves as the optimal precursor.

Implementing and managing HACCP successfully in order to prepare for HARPC requires a technology component that can be easily and efficiently adapted to the business' enterprise technology landscape. For many food and beverage manufacturers, SAP® can be used to seamlessly and effectively manage both HACCP and the greater business with unique industry features and options helpful to the quality control process.

LEVERAGING HACCP WITH SAP PROCESSES

For many food and beverage businesses, failure to meet HACCP standards comes down to a combination of human error, lack of supplier visibility, and poor documentation and organization controls. These issues are compounded by the fact that many businesses have multi-plant and multi-site operations, leaving them with a greater exposure to risk.

The range of capabilities offered in a robust ERP system like SAP can be leveraged to fully satisfy HACCP requirements, improve coordination with external parties, and minimize the risk of failure to comply. Standard modules in SAP can be utilized to record and document control critical points as defined in the business' HACCP plan. Production process instructions, step and sequence enforcement, and equipment management functions can be managed, monitored, and reported on via SAP production modules.



On the quality side, HACCP critical control points (CCPs) and critical limits can be established using SAP Quality Management (QM), a component of SAP that provides robust functionality for identifying, monitoring, and understanding quality issues. Through SAP QM, quality professionals can more effectively execute and track sample management on incoming and post-process materials. For businesses that also utilize a laboratory information management system (LIMS), SAP QM can be further integrated with the organization's LIMS solution to provide even more sophisticated measurement and recording for acceptable results. With the functionality afforded by these quality controls, actions can be taken when an out-of-specification limit is reached. Process step completion and acceptance of process values outside predefined tolerance limits can be accomplished through SAP Production modules.

Furthermore, the SAP Materials Management and Sales & Distribution modules are able to fully support inventory, batch, and lot management and best-used-by/expiration dating. Meanwhile, the SAP extended Warehouse Management system (eWM) allows for efficient, end-to-end inventory of warehouse processes and includes the ability to control both in-house and co-manufacturing facilities to improve coordination and collaboration among sites.



TAKEAWAYS

In order to meet evolving regulations and consumer expectations for safety, and effectively mitigate risk, businesses in the food and beverage industries should utilize every available tool for food safety management. Even if the regulations do not explicitly apply to your business category, meeting HACCP is a demonstration of commitment to safety, quality, and transparency that also provides processes to protect your brand and reputation. Furthermore, with enterprise technology like SAP built to support HACCP compliance, your business will be optimally positioned to also meet HARPC and other food safety regulations in the future. As it can support the full range of processes related to production/manufacturing, quality inspection, genealogy, usage, safety, and supply chain, companies using SAP can ensure that they are in full support of the highest safety standards.

In the current environment, the ability to execute a safe manufacturing process is table stakes for any food or beverage manufacturers – but the daily diligence required to continue to inspire high consumer confidence is process, system, and people dependent. Companies will need to develop and evolve their safety processes to continue to support both ongoing compliance and anticipate preventative measures needed to maintain their brand and reputation.

With deep expertise and extensive IT systems industry knowledge, Clarkston can implement or audit your SAP application, train and empower your team, and design an approach to implement or enhance your cGMP/HACCP compliance requirements that serves as a foundation for your HARPC program. To learn more, visit Clarkstonconsulting.com or contact us.