Dairy Food Safety VICTORIA

Developing a Food Safety Program: Pre-requisite programs
Management of incoming goods

A food business must take all practicable measures to ensure it only accepts food that is protected from the likelihood of contamination.
Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Std 3.2.2 Div 3 Clause 5(1)

A food business must, when storing food, store the food in such a way that -
it is protected from the likelihood of contamination, and
the environmental conditions under which it is stored will not adversely affect the safety and suitability of the food.
Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Std 3.2.2 Div 3 Clause 6(1)

As part of the documented food safety program in clause 3, a dairy primary production business must have a system that enables the tracing of inputs; and animals to be milked; and the milk produced.
Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Std 4.2.4 Div 2 Clause 5

A dairy processing business must have a system to identify the immediate supplier of dairy products and ingredients and the immediate recipient of the dairy products.
Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Std 4.2.4 Div 4 Clause 14

Introduction

Food businesses are expected to take all practicable measures to ensure that incoming goods are safe and suitable. Incoming goods are the raw materials or ingredients, packaging or other goods received by a business for use in food production, or other support activities such as maintenance.

Incoming goods procedures describe the process for receiving, checking and accepting goods. This can include review of the raw material product information form (PIF), checks of temperature, package integrity, overall quality and acceptability, label compliance and batch details, matching Certificates of Analysis (CoA) and may require testing of product. The procedure also outlines who is responsible for undertaking these checks, what records need to be taken and what actions are required if the product does not meet specifications.

Raw materials pose a potential food safety risk, such as the presence of pathogens, foreign material, chemical contamination, undeclared allergens and incorrect labels. Effective implementation of incoming goods procedures ensures that all materials are of good quality, conform with requirements or specifications and are suitable for use.

The Product Information Form (PIF) is a tool widely used in the Australian food industry. It is an industry standardised questionnaire which allows your suppliers to provide detailed information about their products and ingredients in a single document. The PIF should be completed in full by the supplier and updated (by the approved supplier) as required. The manufacturer should keep each raw material PIF on record. More information can be found here.

Preparing and implementing a program to manage incoming goods

1. Determine what checks are required

Based on their HACCP plan, most business will set specifications for incoming goods which define acceptable limits to ensure that food safety requirements are met. Acceptable food safety parameters are based on the potential physical, chemical (including allergens) and microbiological hazards identified for each product during the HACCP hazard analysis. Some businesses may expand these to include quality attributes, regulatory requirements or additional customer specifications, such as retail standards.

Packaging can also pose a potential food safety risk and should be monitored to ensure it meets required specifications. Packaging requirements are outlined in **Standard 3.2.2** of the Food Standards Code with further explanation in **A Guide to the Food Safety Standards (2023) by Safe Food Australia**. The supplier of your packaging materials should confirm that materials supplied meet these criteria.

2. Develop procedure

Once you have established what goods need to be inspected and what checks are required, an incoming goods receivals procedure can be developed. This will include details of what needs to be checked when certain goods arrive on site, i.e. the process for receiving, inspecting and accepting incoming goods to confirm they meet specifications. It also details who is responsible and what records are needed to demonstrate that checks have been done. The procedure will describe:

a) Who is responsible for goods receipt and inspection

These staff will need to be trained, competent and familiar with the tasks they are responsible for. There should also be designated back-up staff who are trained and competent to receive, inspect and accept incoming goods.

b) What needs to be checked for each type of material

This will be determined as part of the hazard analysis of incoming goods in your HACCP plan. For example, checks that could be undertaken to manage potential food safety hazards in incoming goods could include:

- temperature checks of refrigerated goods to ensure that temperature has remained below that which allows microbial growth
- visual checks to ensure packaging has not been compromised, resulting in microbial or physical contamination
- checks for the presence of physical contaminants or evidence of pest infestation
- labelling checks to ensure the material is what it should be, is correctly labelled and whether it contains allergens
- checks of delivery vehicles to confirm that refrigerated storage has been adequate or that the vehicle is in appropriate condition
- confirmation that the required paperwork has been received and is filed accordingly, such as the raw material product information form (PIF) and certificate of analysis (CoA) for the batch which shows that it meets specification
- Quality checks such as sensory examination such as odour and texture may also be described.

c) Determine testing requirements

It may be necessary to test some incoming goods to verify that they meet food safety or quality standards (such as microbiological or chemical specifications) and confirm compliance. Satisfactory results on a CoA may form part of the conditions for acceptance of testing could include:

- chemical contamination (e.g. antibiotics, adulterants)
- presence of microbiological contamination that may affect safety (*e.g. Salmonella, E. coli, Listeria monocytogenes*) or quality (e.g. yeasts, moulds, standard plate count)
- presence of undeclared allergens
- indicator tests for possible product abuse (e.g. temperature, acidity)
- presence of contamination indicators that may affect quality (e.g. standard plate count, bulk milk cell count)
- compliance to compositional or quality attributes (e.g. fat, protein levels, colour, etc.)

The program for sampling and testing of incoming goods (as well as finished product) will be described in your Food Safety Program.

d) What information is recorded to demonstrate that checks have been done

This may include a record such as an incoming goods receival form, which is completed by the person inspecting the goods and provides a record of whether the goods were checked and acceptable. This may include a compilation of what checks are required for each material to assist the person responsible for receiving the goods.

e) The process for dealing with non-conforming goods

Damaged or unsuitable goods should not be accepted. The procedure will include:

- who is responsible for dealing with any non conforming product
- how it is identified and segregrated from other product
- holding procedures if further verification is required
- process for disposal

f) How goods are managed once inspected and accepted

This may include storage requirements or locations for specific raw materials

3. Maintain records

Goods receival records should be completed for all goods received and retained for a defined period. They can be made available for both internal and external auditors as evidence of compliance with your incoming goods program. Records can also provide useful follow-up information to help resolve product or processing incidents, traceability and for root cause analysis. An example of an incoming goods receival records is shown below.

Figure 1: Example of a incoming goods receival record

Product	Date of receipt	Supplier name	Batch code	Temperature	Quantity receipt	CoA received / checked	Accepted (Y/N)	Stored

4. Storage

All accepted goods and raw material ingredients need to be stored under suitable conditions to ensure they remains safe and suitable. This may include refrigerated or frozen storage, or in a designated dry goods area. Storage areas should be kept clean and tidy. Temperature controls, where appropriate, should be in place and monitored.

Your storage procedures should ensure that raw materials, ingredients and packaging are:

- held at appropriate temperature and humidity levels to prevent contamination and degradation.
- segregated from potential contaminants such as oils, solvents, cleaners, odiferous chemicals etc.
- protected from the elements and pests
- protected from to light exposure if sensitive to light
- separated from other ingredients if they are allergens, or contain allergens to prevent the likelihood of cross-contamination or mistaken use. (Further information about about allergens is available in the DFSV Guideline - A guide to managing allergens in the dairy industry).
- labelled and segregated if they have not been cleared for use (e.g. products awaiting test results)
- Subjected to a first-in, first-out (FIFO) inventory system to minimize the risk of using expired materials.

Verification of your incoming goods and raw materials management program

Verification of pre-requisite programs is an important element of your food safety program and involves ensuring that activities designed to manage food safety have been effectively implemented and are working as intended.

Your incoming goods and raw materials management program can be verified by:

- Document reviews and sign-off e.g. daily receival records, temperature checks and delivery documentation
- Internal and external audits
- Routine GMP audits
- Completion of corrective actions raised from non-conformance procedures and root cause analysis

Effective implementation and verification of procedures to manage incoming goods and raw materials helps to demonstrate how you manage potential food safety hazards associated with materials used onsite.

Further information

Further food safety technical information is available at www.dairysafe.vic.gov.au or by contacting Dairy Food Safety Victoria at info@dairysafe.vic.gov.au

References

Safe Food Australia, A Guide to the Food Safety Standards. Standard 3.2.2 Clause 5, 2023.
Australian Food and Grocery Council, *Product Information Form – version 6*, Canberra, 2017
Dairy Food Safety Victoria, *A guide to managing allergens in the dairy industry*, DFSV, Melbourne, 2018.
Dairy Food Safety Victoria, *Developing a Food Safety Program: guidelines for dairy food manufacturers*, DFSV, Melbourne 2018.
Allergen Bureau, Industry Resources - Allergen Bureau, Allergen Bureau, 2024.