



Media Release

9 December 2021

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION IS REQUIRED FOR SAFE FOOD AND FOOD PRODUCTS

The recent issues experienced with listeriosis, leaking cans, expired nuts and fruit are examples that demonstrate the **need** for food manufacturers, producers, retailers and every organisation involved in the handling of the supply chain to be trained and certified in Food Safety System Certification 22000 (FSSC 22000). The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) offers FSSC services in training, testing and certification of food and food products.

“When one considers the millions of various food products, their distribution, their manufacturing, their handling and the growing processes, it is understandable that a comprehensive food safety management system is should require to assure the end users of its safety and quality. Currently, the global standard for food safety is the Food Safety System Certification 22000 (FSSC 22000). The FSSC Certification is a complete food, feed and packaging safety certification scheme for the auditing and management of Food Safety Systems (FSMS). The new Version 5.1 of the scheme is offered and managed by the Foundation FSSC, which is a non-profit independent scheme owner, which is recognised by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)”, explains Dr Sadhvir Bissoon, Divisional Head of the SABS Standards.

Dr Bissoon says that the FSSC 22000 V5.1 scheme consists of three components, namely the implementation of the ISO-based management system (ISO 22000:2018); together with relevant prerequisite programs (PRP) specifications (ISO/TS standards and BSI PAS) and the FSSC additional requirements. The comprehensive Food Safety Scheme is a globally recognised food safety control mechanism necessary to support the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to provide trust and deliver impact to the consumer goods industry. All organisations involved in the food chain should be familiar with the requirements of this standard through training and to ensure that food production and products are certified,

The SABS has the capability to test and certify food products. Our suite of laboratories can identify the nutritional percentage of ingredients, pesticides and chemicals, bacteria, microbes, fungi and any other substance that may be of benefit or harm to consumers.

“There are certain processes in the food value chain that need to be controlled despite challenges that may be experienced such as, excessive periods of no electricity which may compromise refrigeration and thus food quality, food warehouses that may have experienced rodent infestation or chemical leaks, retailers that fail to remove expired products from their shelves, or delays in transportation of produce.

Having a comprehensive food management system such as FSSC 22000 will ensure that staff are trained to identify and manage risks that could compromise food safety. SABS Training Academy was the first in the African continent to be recognised to offer training in FSSC 22000 and remains a licensed training partner with Foundation FSSC. SABS recommends that FSSC 22000 V5.1 become entrenched in every organisation that deals with food and food products.

The certification scheme is accredited under ISO 17021-1 and the three pillars of FSSC 22000 scheme requirements. This allows food manufacturers to use the FSSC 22000 standard to meet the requirements of several global retailers or major branded food companies under a single, internationally recognised food safety management system

The SABS is a national standards body and does not have the regulatory authority to promulgate FSSC 22000 or any other standard as a compulsory requirement, however, the SABS works with policy makers and regulators and other industry bodies to set the requirements or standards for products and processes as well as provide independent conformity assessment services to the industry, that is Testing Certification, Inspection and Training Services.

Dr Bissoon explains that regulators such as the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) and the National Department of Health (NDOH), the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and related agencies have the authority to regulate certain types of food and food products, conduct inspections and when there is a potential health risk and market failure of a product, have the power to recall products.

Food manufacturers already certified against ISO 22000 will only require a review and the implementation of compliance mechanisms enough to meet the additional FSSC requirements in order to transition to the FSSC 22000 standard. FSSC 22000 can be applied to organisations of any size or complexity in food manufacturing.

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