

## **Quality is not only food safety – The upside**

With the mounting pressure of "producing food safe products" (pressures ranging from government to the media to competition to the commercial/supply chain), and the complexities of establishing a food safety program (from light GMPs to full blown HACCP system or, depending the industry, even more) we spend massive resources in creating programs that take care of food safety, but are we taking care of quality?

Given the demanding nature of a food safety program, I find that we tend to believe we are creating a "quality product" by simply obeying by food safety regulations. And that is not the case. We might be creating a safe-to-eat product, but quality in food goes beyond that concept.

I am not trying to downplay the role of food safety, rather I want to emphasize the opportunity to take advantage of the systematic approach of food safety and incorporate that into a quality program.

We can certainly treat flavour, texture, physical appearance, and other features specific to the products in question the same way the Food Safety Enhancement Program manual is proposing for food safety. Definition, procedure, check, and monitor seem like logical steps to produce not only food safe products but products that look and taste the way were thought to in the first place.

But there is more to quality. Quality is ensuring that each step of the process produces value added, in terms of customer appreciated features, non-negotiable must have's and, of course, food safety compliance.

Several systems have been developed to ensure quality in food. Those who consider it as a tool for increased business (the system, its interactions and desired outcomes) are more successful than those who concentrate only in some aspects of the whole process. The goal is to sell that product. Customers look for a repeated experience with them. Quality is a way to guarantee they will come for more, again and again.

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