

Introduction

This document aims to introduce the concept of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) analysis, and to explain the benefits of such a system to crop production, in particular, the production of potatoes for pre-packing.

Definition

HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point.

It is 'a system which identifies, evaluates and controls hazards which are significantly for food safety'. – CCFRA, 1999.

The same principles can also be applied to the quality aspects of growing a crop.

Why do I need HACCPs?

This is a pertinent question, especially in this age when growers are seemingly bombarded by quality assurance schemes, and similar systems, including; [REDACTED] etc. However, in the same way that these separate schemes 'slot together', with a minimum of overlap, so HACCPs can be introduced into the picture.

HACCPs are principally concerned with ensuring Food Safety. In this way, they are similar to crop assurance schemes. However, while crop assurance schemes (along with legislation) provide the standards and guidelines to work to, HACCPs provide a management tool that allows you to determine the best way for your business to meet these standards.

What do HACCPs do?

They help to 'prevent food safety and quality problems', by encouraging you to look at your business processes in a focused way. They can then be used to suggest ways to change what you do, in order to minimise the risk of such problems occurring.

So HACCPs mean I have to change what I do?

Not necessarily. They do focus your mind on where problems might occur (such as uncovered lights in stores), and allow you to plan to reduce the risk. In many cases, few changes will be required, and these will be minor. HACCPs also allow you to record the action you have taken to reduce the risk, and present a powerful defence in the event of a problem.

So HACCPs mean more paperwork then?

Again, not necessarily. There will be some extra work involved initially, but once an assessment has been carried out, the monitoring and review procedures are relatively straightforward. If you are already complying with the requirements of the Assured Produce scheme, you will find that you need little extra paperwork.

Are there any other benefits?

The Assured Produce scheme already makes reference to HACCPs in its audit. They are also good evidence of general good management, and are a useful way of proving to your customers that you are aware of the possible implications of your actions on the rest of the food chain.

HACCPs will also provide a strong defence in the light of proposed changes to product liability legislation. This will place more of the responsibility for the safety of a finished food product, onto *anyone who handles the crop once it has been harvested*. This would include on-farm storage and grading operations.

What should I do now?

Read the enclosed document, and then compare it with your business. There are bound to be differences, but where similarities occur, you should look at the risks that apply in your business, and devise strategies to implement them in your business.

Depending on the size of your operation, you may want to include others who are involved in the production of the potato crop, such as Tractor Drivers, Spray Operators, and Store Managers.

How do I find out more information?

If you want to find out why we support on-farm HACCPs, or their importance to our customers, please telephone:

████████████████████ on ██████████, or ██████████.

If you would like to find out more about HACCP principles, there are a number of courses and publications available. We would recommend those supplied by ██████████

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