



SQF CODE

APPLICATION GUIDELINES



SQF CODE

APPLICATION GUIDELINES



INTRODUCTION

The SQF Code meets the needs of all suppliers in the food industry through an internationally recognized certification system, featuring an emphasis on the systematic application of HACCP for the control of food safety hazards. The implementation of an SQF management system addresses a buyer's food safety requirements and provides the solution for businesses supplying local and global food markets.

First developed in Australia in 1994, the SQF Program and was first recognized in 2004 by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) as a standard that meets its benchmark requirements.

Purchased by FMI in 2003, the SQF Program benefits from direct retail stakeholder input to help food manufacturers and production companies meet the highest standards of food safety.

The most recent edition of the SQF Food Safety Codes is the SQF Code Edition 9, published on October 2020. The SQF Codes Edition 9 is comprised of 13 industry specific codes that provide step by step instructions for production and manufacturing sites to become SQF certified.



The Safe Quality Food Institute has the mission to deliver consistent, globally recognized food safety and quality certification programs based on sound scientific principles, consistently applied across all industry sectors, and valued by all stakeholders.

WHAT IS THE SQF PROGRAM?

The Safe Quality Food (SQF) Program is a rigorous and credible food safety and quality program that is recognized by retailers, brand owners, and food service providers world-wide. Recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), the SQF family of food safety and quality codes are designed to meet industry, customer, and regulatory requirements for all sectors of the food supply chain – from the farm all the way to the retail stores.

HIGHLIGHTS SQF EDITION 9:

- Primary Codes divided into three different codes.
- Pre-packing of produce (module 10) has been removed and is now with Primary Plant products.
- Processing of animal products, pet food and animal feed have been removed from the Manufacturing Code into separate Codes.
- No changes to Food Retail, Foodservice, or Fundamentals Program.

Did you know...?

The SQF (Safe Quality Food) Institute is a division of FMI, and was established to administer the SQF Program, a leading, global food safety and quality certification and management system. While we are most famously known for our globally benchmarked food safety and quality program, we do so much more than writing and maintaining this standard. The SQFI mission is to deliver consistent, globally recognized food safety and quality certification programs based on sound scientific principles, consistently applied across all industry sectors, and valued by all stakeholders. www.SQFI.com

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

HOW TO GET CERTIFIED

SQF has provided resources to help at every step of the way. With step-by-step certification instructions, training, customer service team, and more, SQFI has made food safety and quality certification easier to acquire.



CERTIFICATION STEPS





WHICH PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Obtaining SQF Certification is not only achievable for large suppliers. SQF Certification is possible for every supplier at all levels of the food industry, from farm to fork. Starting your food safety journey has never been easier; whether you are a small family-owned business or a large chain corporation – it all begins with choosing the most suitable SQF Program.

The following SQF Programs are available to implement at your site:

SQF Fundamentals Program

Built as a stepwise approach, The SQF Fundamentals Program is designed to help you integrate robust food safety standards into your existing practices, while creating a pathway to achieve globally accepted GFSI certification.

SQF Food Safety Program

The SQF Food Safety Codes provides sites with a HACCP based approach to ensure that their products meet almost all regulations. Businesses looking to satisfy their retailers' and buyers' GFSI certification requirements should learn more about the SQF Food Safety Program.

SQF Food Safety and Quality Program

This program is most suited for sites who have already implemented a successful, robust SQF Food Safety Plan. Additionally, the SQF Quality Program can be implemented in conjunction with the SQF Food Safety Program.

FOOD SECTOR CATEGORIES (FSCS), APPLICABLE SQF CODES AND MODULES

SQFI has a list of food sector categories to classify product groups and ensure that the auditor who audits your site has the requisite knowledge and skills.

The SQF food sector categories, or FSCs, are aligned with GFSI industry sectors. A full list of food sector categories for all SQF Food Safety Codes are provided on Appendix 1.

FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Codes and Modules	Description	Example of Products
1	Production, Capture, and Harvesting of Livestock and Game Animals, and Apiculture	AI: Farming of Animals for Meat / Milk / Eggs / Honey	The SQF Food Safety Code: Primary Animal Production: • System Elements • Module 5: GPP for Farming of Animal Products	Applies to the capture, transport, holding, intensive animal husbandry, and free-range farming of animals, but does not include seafood. Includes: • Free-range and intensive animal production • Dairy farming • Game animals • Egg production • Apiculture	Includes but is not limited to cattle, lamb, pigs, poultry, eggs, milk, and honey.
2	Indoor Growing and Harvesting of Fresh Produce and Sprouted Seed Crops	BI: Farming of Plants (other than grains and pulses)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Primary Plant Production • System Elements • Module 18: GAP for Indoor Farming of Plant Products	Applies to the production, harvesting, preparation, packaging, and on-site storage of plant products under controlled environment agriculture (CEA). Includes all products grown in indoor growing operations, greenhouses, mushroom farms, and sprout operations.	Includes but is not limited to: • All varieties of microgreens • All varieties of sprouted seed • Tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and lettuce • Mushrooms
3	Growing and Production of Fresh Produce and Nuts	BI: Farming of Plants (other than grains and pulses)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Plant Production System Elements Module 7: GAP for Outdoor Farming of Plant Products	Applies to the production, harvesting, preparation, field packing, and on-site storage of fresh whole fruit, vegetables, and nuts. Includes all produce grown under broad acre and intensive horticulture production system, including orchards, viticulture, aquaponics, and external nursery operations.	All fresh fruit and vegetable and nut varieties that are ready-to-eat (RTE) or for further processing including: • Tropical and temperate tree fruits, carrots, beets, potatoes, wine grapes • Table grapes, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, all forms of leafy greens, spring mix, tomatoes, peppers, herbs and spices and tomatoes, green onions, baby spinach, lettuce, melons, etc.
4	Fresh Produce, Grain, and Nut Packhouse Operations	BIII: Pre-process Handling of Plant Products	The SQF Food Safety Code: Plant Production • System Elements • Module 10: GOP for Pre-processing of Plant Products	Applies to the cleaning, shelling, packing, sorting, grading, and on-site storage (including controlled atmosphere storage) of fresh and pre-packaged whole unprocessed fruits, vegetables and nuts, and the cleaning and packing of grain and pulse products.	Includes all fruit, vegetable, grain, and nut varieties that are packed in pack houses and that may undergo controlled atmosphere storage.

FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Codes and Modules	Description	Example of Products
5	Extensive Broad Acre Agricultural Operations	BI: Farming of Grains and Pulses	The SQF Food Safety Code: Plant Production • System Elements • Module 8: GAP for Farming of Grains and Pulses	Applies to the production, harvesting, preparation, transport, and storage of broad-acre crops including pulses, cereal, and other grains. Also includes growing and harvesting of animal feed crops.	All grain and cereal varieties for human consumption and animal feed including but not limited to wheat, oats, rice, pulse crops, hemp (where legally permitted), soy, legumes, maize, corn, cotton, pasture, silage, and hay.
6	Intensive Farming of Seafood	All: Farming of Fish and Seafood	The SQF Food Safety Code: Aquaculture • System Elements • Module 6: GAP for Farming of Seafood	Applies to the intensive farming of freshwater fishes and shellfish, including purification, transport, and storage and extends to gilling, gutting, shucking, and chilling operations.	All farmed fresh fish and shellfish species including: • Tuna, salmon, trout, and other farmed fish spp. • Oysters, mussels, shrimp, lobster, crab, and other farmed shellfish spp.
7	Slaughtering, Boning, and Butchery	CO: Animal Primary Conversion	The SQF Food Safety Code: Animal Product Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 9: GMP for Processing of Animal Products	Applies to the slaughtering, dressing, processing, on-site storage, chilling, freezing, and wholesaling of all animal species and game animals for consumption and extends to all meat cuts.	Includes uncooked poultry, pork, and red meat animal species prepared in retail butcher shops, boning rooms, and meat wholesale markets, including ground (minced) meats. Bone-in and whole muscle fillet for pork and red meat species including ground (minced) red meat. Bone-in and whole muscle poultry fillet and ground (minced) poultry meat.
8	Manufactured Meats and Poultry	CI: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	The SQF Food Safety Code: Animal Product Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 9: GMP for Processing of Animal Products	Applies to the processing, manufacture, transport, and on-site storage operations where meat (all red meat species and poultry) is the major ingredient including all value-adding operations (i.e. cook-chill, crumbing, curing, smoking, cooking, drying, fermenting, and vacuum packing) and chilling and freezing operations, but not canning of meat or poultry product.	Includes poultry, pork, and red meats blends and raw heat-treated and fermented poultry, pork, and red meats, including salami, hot dogs, sausages, bacon, pepperoni, and meat pastes etc.
9	Seafood Processing	CI: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	The SQF Food Safety Code: Animal Product Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 9: GMP for Processing of Animal Products	Applies to the processing, manufacturing, transport, and on-site storage of all fish and seafood species and extends to value-adding operations, including dismembering, fermenting, crumbing, smoking, cooking, freezing, chilling, drying, and vacuum packing, but not canning of seafood product.	Includes whole fish, fish fillets, reformed fish cakes, coated fish portions uncooked fish product, sashimi, sushi surimi smoked cooked fish products chilled or frozen that require no further cooking prior to consumption.

FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Codes and Modules	Description	Example of Products
10	Dairy Food Processing	CI: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing, transport, and storage of food products from all species used for milk collection and extends to all value-adding operations, including freezing, pasteurizing, ultra-filtration, evaporation/concentration, fermentation, clarification, culturing, and spray drying of milk but not UHT operations. (refer to FSC 15). Includes milk substitutes where the technology is essentially the same.	Includes milk and cream, butter, cottage cheese, sour cream, all forms of cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and dried milk. Also includes milk substitutes such as soymilk and tofu, and infant formula.
11	Honey Processing	CIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing, packaging, and on-site storage of food products from all species used for honey collection including clarifying and treatment operations.	Includes honey, honeycomb, pollen, and royal jelly.
12	Egg Processing	CI: Processing of Perishable Animal Products	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the, grading, cleaning, processing, transport, and on-site storage of food products from all species used for egg collection and processing.	Graded, cleaned eggs and value-added products where egg is the major ingredient.
13	Bakery and Snack Food Processing	CIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing, packaging, and on-site storage of extruded snack foods and cake mix formulations and extends to all bakery operations.	Includes baked items such as meat pies, custard pies, bread, cookies, cakes, and mixes and all varieties of snack food.
14	Fruit, Vegetable, and Nut Processing, and Fruit Juices	CII: Processing of Perishable Plant Products	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing, packaging, and on-site storage of all processed fruit, vegetable, and nut varieties, including freezing, fermenting drying, slicing, dicing, cutting, and modified atmosphere processing of all fruits and vegetables, and the roasting, drying, and cutting of nuts. Does not include canning of fruits and vegetables.	Includes frozen, fermented, dried, sliced, diced, cut, and modified atmosphere packaged (MAP) fruit, vegetable, and nut products, including prepared and deli salads. Includes fresh and pasteurized fruit and vegetable juices.

FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Codes and Modules	Description	Example of Products
15	Canning, UHT, and Aseptic Operations	CIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing of low- acid canned foods and sterilization (retorting) UHT, or other high- temperature or high-pressure processes (HPP) not covered elsewhere and the manufacture of the associated hermetically sealed containers.	Includes: The commercial sterilization of fish, meats, fruits and vegetables, and other low-acid soups and sauces in metal or glass containers or retort pouches. Does not include pasteurization of dairy, fruit, or vegetable juices, but does include UHT treatment of • Milk or milk products; or • Egg or egg products; or • Fruit or vegetable juices. • Canned pet food (refer to FSC 32)
16	Ice, Drink, and Beverage Processing	CIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to fermentation, concentration aseptic filling, or drying operations processes. Does not include powdered milk and pasteurization and UHT treatment of milk or milk products or fruit and vegetable juicing operations. Does not apply to dry beverage ingredients (e.g. tea, coffee).	Includes carbonated soft drinks, carbonated and non-carbonated waters, mineral water, ice, liquid tea and coffee, energy drinks, wine, beer, and other alcoholic beverages.
17	Confectionary Manufacturing	CIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing, packaging, and on-site storage of all types of confectionary and extends to all chocolate and imitation chocolate-based processing.	Includes all confectionary products that undergo refining, conching, starch molding, compression, extrusion, and vacuum cooking.
18	Preserved Foods Manufacturing	CIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing, packaging, and on-site storage of all foods preserved under high temperature processes not covered elsewhere, compositionally preserved foods that are not high- temperature processed or other alternative acceptable methods not covered elsewhere.	Includes dressings, mayonnaise, sauces, marinades, pickled foods, peanut butter, mustards, jams, and fillings.
19	Food Ingredient Manufacturing	K: Production of Bio-chemicals or Bio-cultures used as Food Ingredients or Processing Aids in Food Production	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing, blending, re-packaging, and on-site storage of dry food ingredients, cultures, and yeast, but does not include dairy products, fermented meats, or other fermented products mentioned elsewhere.	Includes starter cultures used in cheese, yogurt, and wine manufacture and cultures used in the baking industry and other products used for the preservation of foods. Other additional products include additives, preservatives, flavorings, colorings, soup mixes, sauces, dehydrated culinary products, salt, sugar, spices, and other condiments. Applies to dried tea and coffee products.

FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Codes and Modules	Description	Example of Products
20	Recipe Meals Manufacturing	CIII: Processing of Perishable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing, receipt, controlled temperature on-site storage of foods prepared from a range of ingredients (mixed foods) that require cooking, heating, freezing, or refrigerated storage prior to serving.	Includes ready-to-eat (RTE) chilled meals and deserts, frozen meals, pizza, frozen pasta, soups, and meal solutions, sous vide products, and freeze-dried and dehydrated meals. Includes sandwiches, wraps, plated or boxed meals, and high-risk desserts for distribution to food service.
21	Oils, Fats, and the manufacturing of Oil or Fat-based Spreads	CIII: Processing of Perishable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the manufacture of all animal and vegetable oils and fats and to the manufacture of margarine. Includes clarifying and refining processes.	Includes shortening (animal and vegetable), oils - olive, peanut, corn, vegetable, sunflower, safflower, canola, nut, seed, hemp (where legally permitted), and oil-based spreads such as margarine and oil-based spreads.
22	Processing of Cereal Grains	CII: Processing of Perishable Plant Products	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Applies to the processing of cereals of all varieties, including sorting, grading, picking, handling of bulk grains, milling, and extruding.	Includes wheat, maize, rice, barley, oats, millet, pasta, hemp (where legally permitted), and breakfast cereals.
23	Food Catering and Foodservice	E: Catering	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food-service • System Elements • Module 16: GRP for Foodservice	Applies to all on-site food preparation and service activities, including, storage, and distribution undertaken with mixed foods that are ready-to-eat and do not require further treatment or processing by the consumer. Only applies to products prepared on-site that are ready to eat, ready to serve.	Includes food service caterers, retail delicatessens/self-serve facilities, restaurants, fast food outlets, delicatessens, school cafeterias (canteens), hospital/institution meal services, childcare centers, and mobile and home delivery food services. Includes sandwiches, wraps, and high-risk desserts that are prepared on-site.
24	Food Retailing	FI: Retail/ Wholesale	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Retail • System Elements • Module 15: GRP for Retail	Applies to the receipt, handling, storage, and display at retail level of stable or pre-processed and packaged foods and/or food intended for further preparation by the consumer. Retailers that prepare ready-to-eat (RTE) foods must include FSC23 also.	Includes all foods distributed and sold through retail outlets. Does not include foods that are prepared on-site.
25	Repackaging of Products not Manufactured On-site	CIV: Processing of Ambient Stable Animal and Plant Products (mixed products)	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products	Assembling of whole produce and packaged products (e.g. nuts, hard candy, dried fruit, and beef jerky) that are manufactured elsewhere. Applies to products not covered elsewhere.	Includes gift baskets, festive hampers, and presentation packs.

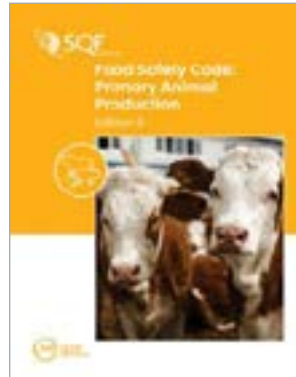
FSC	Category (Site Scope of Certification)	GFSI Industry Scopes	Applicable SQF Codes and Modules	Description	Example of Products
26	Storage and Distribution	G: Provision of Storage and Distribution Services for missing word?	The SQF Food Safety Code: Storage and Distribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Elements • Module 12: GDP for Transport and Distribution of Food Products 	Applies to dedicated distribution centers, warehouses, and transport operators involved in the receipt, storage, consolidation, and distribution of perishable fresh produce and general food lines, including chilled, frozen, dry goods, stable or pre-processed and packaged foods, and/or food intended for further preparation by the consumer at wholesale level.	Includes all transportation, storage, and delivery of perishable and shelf-stable foods sold through markets, retail, and foodservice facilities. Includes transportation, storage, and delivery of all varieties of fresh unprocessed fruit, vegetable, and nut products.
27	Manufacture of Food Packaging	I: Production of Food Packaging	The SQF Food Safety Code: Manufacture of Food Packaging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Elements • Module 13: GMP for Manufacture of Food Packaging 	Applies to the manufacture and on-site storage of food sector packaging materials. Includes items that may be used in food manufacturing or food service facilities, including paper towels, napkins, disposable food containers, straws, stirrers.	All food-grade packaging materials, including flexible films, paperboard-based containers, metal containers, flexible pouches, glass containers, plastic and foam containers (PET, polystyrene, etc.), and single-use foodservice products (e.g., paper towels, napkins, disposable food containers, straws, stirrers).
31	Dietary Supplements Manufacturing	K: Production of Bio-chemicals or Bio-cultures used as Food Ingredients or Processing Aids in Food Production	The SQF Food Safety Code: Dietary Supplements Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Elements • Module 17: GMP for Processing of Dietary Supplements 	Applies to the manufacture, blending, packaging, and on-site storage of dietary supplements.	Includes vitamins, probiotics, natural health products, protein blends, and label supplements.
32	Pet Food Manufacturing	CI, CII, CIII, or CIV as applicable	The SQF Food Safety Code: Pet Food Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Elements • Module 4: GMP for Processing of Pet Food Products 	Applies to the Pet Food Manufacturing intended for consumption by domestic animals and specialty pets.	Includes dry and moist pet foods and treats, semi-raw, chilled, or frozen product. Does not include canned pet food (refer to FSC 15).
33	Food Processing Aides Manufacturing	K: Production of Bio-chemicals or Bio-cultures used as Food Ingredients or Processing Aids in Food Production	The SQF Food Safety Code: Food Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Elements • Module 11: GMP for Processing of Food Products 	Applies to the manufacture, storage, and transport of chemicals and aides used in the food processing sectors.	Includes food-grade lubricants, processing aides, and chemicals for clean-in-place systems.
34	Animal Feed Manufacturing	D: Production of Feed	The SQF Food Safety Code: Animal Feed Manufacturing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Elements • Module 3: GMP for Animal Feed Production 	Applies to the manufacture, blending, transport, and storage of animal feeds.	Includes compounded and medicated feeds.

SQF FOOD SAFETY CODES EDITION 9

PRIMARY PLANT PRODUCTION



PRIMARY ANIMAL PRODUCTION



AQUACULTURE



FOOD MANUFACTURING



PET FOOD MANUFACTURING



ANIMAL FEED MANUFACTURING



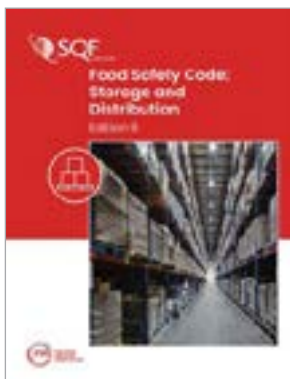
ANIMAL PRODUCT MANUFACTURING



DIETARY SUPPLEMENT MANUFACTURING



STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION



MANUFACTURE OF FOOD PACKAGING



QUALITY CODE

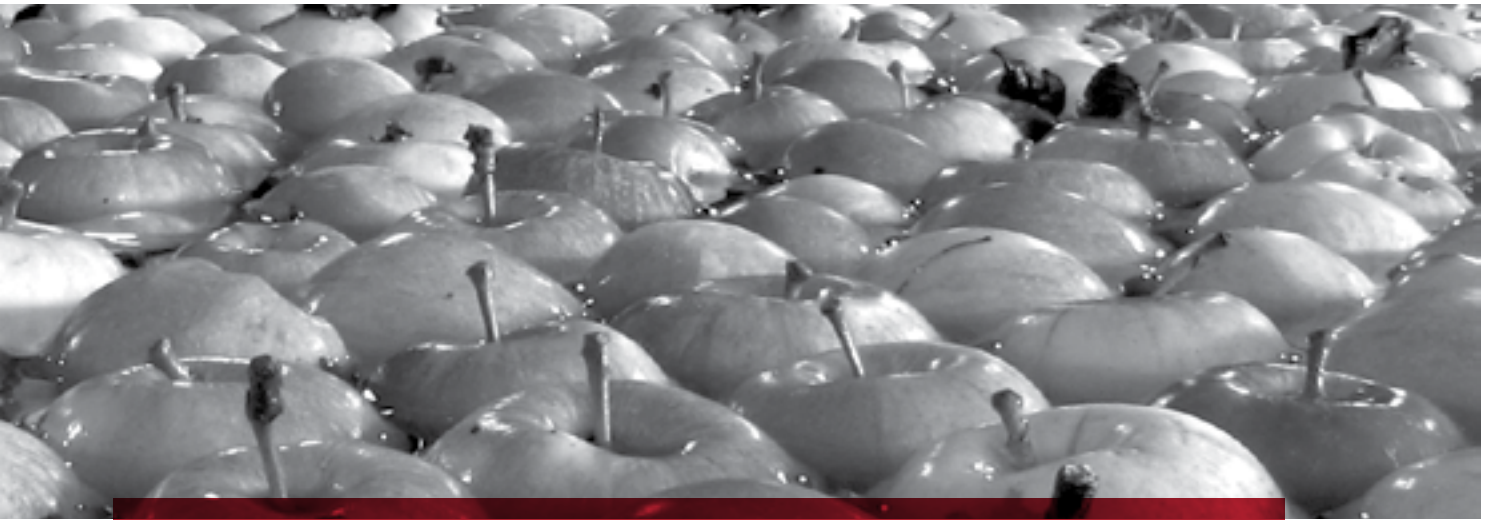


Companies using SQF Code to achieve the highest level of food safety management practices are leaders in the industry and trusted partners of retailers and consumers.
Download SQF Codes <https://www.sqfi.com/resource-center/sqf-code-edition-9-downloads/>



BENEFITS TO SUPPLIERS:

- Only GFSI recognized program that applies to the entire supply chain - from Farm to Fork
- Free downloadable resources including Codes, guidance documents, checklists, and more.
- Only GFSI certification program that has a full-time customer service team.
- Reduce recalls and improve traceability while protecting your brand, buyer, and bottom line.
- A division of the Food Marketing Institute, SQFI has a direct connection to food retailers as well as access to local, state and federal regulatory agencies



BENEFITS TO BUYERS:

- By choosing to work with SQF Certified Suppliers, you will gain confidence in the companies you work with while lessening the likelihood and impact of a recall.
- SQF Certification is a rigorous, accredited, global program that is benchmarked to GFSI and fulfills most regulatory requirements.
- The SQF Program assesses suppliers by focusing on critical food safety and quality elements such as hazard analysis, risk assessment, and proactive prevention strategies.
- The SQF Program helps reduce assessment inconsistencies and costs of multiple audits.
- The SQF Program incorporates retailer and buyer feedback.
- SQF Supplier Search makes it easy to find an SQF Certified site.

