



GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE

STAKEHOLDER MEETING REPORT

Wednesday 4th February 2009
Barcelona, Spain



Chaired By: **Catherine François**, Director Food Safety Programmes, CIES – The Food Business Forum
Cindy Jiang, Director of Worldwide Food Safety, Quality and Nutrition, McDonald's, USA (GFSI Board Vice Chairman)
Yves Rey, Corporate Quality General Manager, Danone Group, France (GFSI Board Vice Chairman)
John P. Suarez, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, International Division, Wal-Mart Stores Inc., USA (GFSI Board Chairman)
Kevin Swoffer, Independent Consultant and Chairman of GFSI Technical Committee, UK

Participants:

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Introduction

The meeting began with a short overview of the Stakeholder Meeting objectives:

- Update Stakeholders on GFSI Activities and Objectives 2008/9
- Create an open dialogue on current and emerging food safety issues
- Identify areas for collaboration on common top priority food safety issues which can be tackled by GFSI

JP Suarez, GFSI Board Chairman, underlined the importance of having open and candid dialogue so that the Board can understand the current and emerging food safety issues to focus in the upcoming year. In today's economic climate he also stressed the fact that resources need to be used effectively to keep the GFSI momentum going and address key issues in the industry today.

Yves Rey, Vice Chairman of the GFSI Board, reminded the group of the mission of GFSI: to create convergence between food safety standards by means of benchmarking processes through food safety standards and to improve cost efficiency throughout the food chain.

He also gave an update on GFSI objectives for 2008.

- Building on the foundation of common acceptance by 8 retailers
- Continuing to communicate and build awareness on GFSI
- Auditor Competence and training
- Auditing in Emerging Markets and protocols for small suppliers
- Food Defense & bioterrorism
- Greater consistency on food safety requirements in vertical supply chains
- Safer sourcing in the supply chain

Cindy Jiang, Vice Chairman of the GFSI Board, presented the issues received from GFSI Stakeholders prior to the meeting and the participants were asked to consider these topics as part of the group discussions.

- Auditing Challenges in Emerging Markets
- Auditor Competence and Complaints Process
- Auditor Qualifications
- Trends in Certifications
- Status of discussions with Global GAP
- Status of GFSI and ISO 22000
- Government recognition of third party certification
- Representation on GFSI Board of all stakeholders?
- GFSI and accreditation requirements – Product vs. process

Catherine François, Director of Food Safety Programmes at CIES, gave an overview of the format of the meeting. She stressed the importance of the discussions and that the feedback contributes to the strategic decision making process for GFSI, in order to be as responsive as possible to the needs of the marketplace. She informed the group that the feedback provided would be taken into consideration at Board level, who would decide on the priorities for the short and long term. As many work items as possible will be taken on board by GFSI depending on resources and the time that could be allocated by members to each project.

Meeting participants were asked to provide their feedback about GFSI via two questions:

1. **What do you consider to be the 3 key areas for GFSI to focus on during 2009/2010**
2. **What do you consider were the major achievements of GFSI in 2008?**

The results are as follows.

1. **What do you consider to be the 3 key areas for GFSI to focus on during 2009/2010 (in order of most to least commented items)?**
 - a) Drive consistency in auditor competence
 - b) Driving convergence
 - c) Development of relationships with government organisations
 - d) Communication – increase recognition of GFSI standards worldwide and acceptance by retailers
 - e) Capacity building in emerging markets/small suppliers
 - f) Whole supply chain approach via stakeholder involvement
 - g) Technology development/data sharing
 - h) Review of GFSI Guidance Document
 - i) Cost efficiency
 - j) Standard proliferation
 - k) Globalisation
 - l) Accreditation
 - m) Establish KPI's for GFSI

2. **What do you consider were the major achievements of GFSI in 2008?**
 - a) A worldwide approach on food safety
 - b) Increased awareness and recognition of GFSI standards outside of Europe
 - c) Increased awareness of GFSI in Asia thanks in large part to the Asia Roadshow
 - d) Making convergence a reality
 - e) Partnership with GlobalGAP and continued work with ISO
 - f) Excellent progress by the GFSI Technical Committee working groups, especially on food defense and emerging markets
 - g) Continued provision of an effective platform for stakeholder communication
 - h) Geographic and sectorial expansion of GFSI Board and Technical Committee
 - i) Work carried out on auditor competence
 - j) Harmonisation of scheme owner requirements regarding additional requirements for Accreditation Bodies

Kevin Swoffer, chairman of the GFSI Technical Committee, thanked the group for their feedback, and presented the group with the compiled list of items that had been identified by each table (see 1 above). Auditor competence and driving convergence both came out as top stakeholder priorities, followed by the need to work more closely with government organisations. A high priority was also 'communication', and GFSI will be liaising more closely with stakeholders to determine whether this refers to communication with governments, external vs. internal communication or general communication about the work of GFSI.

These points, along with the others identified in the list above, will be considered by the GFSI Foundation Board of Directors in order to prioritise and define the working plan for the next year. As part of the wider discussion, there was a question from the floor regarding the possible future addition of activities such as social compliance and logistics into the scope of GFSI. It was reiterated that the scope of GFSI when the initiative began was the non-competitive area of food safety only. Concerning matters of social compliance, the Global Social Compliance Programme (GSCP) run by CIES is involved in creating a reference tool to reduce duplication in social compliance audits and create convergence.

Further discussion centred on the 'whole supply chain' approach of GFSI and the progress that has been made in this area. The GFSI Board informed the group that it has begun working with GlobalGAP towards a mutual agreement and collaboration effort on pre-farm gate standards. A

query was raised regarding a scheme owner such as GlobalGAP being given responsibility in a benchmarking system.

In response to this question, Catherine François clarified the GFSI/GlobalGAP working relationship for the stakeholder group. The GFSI benchmarking process and GlobalGAP benchmarking processes are to be compared, along with the requirements for benchmarking pre-farm gate standards. An analysis will be carried out to determine the differences. Once agreement has been reached, a process will be considered where common requirements can be built into the benchmarking process of GFSI and GlobalGAP, spurring a process of mutual recognition. The aim is to achieve harmonisation and convergence of benchmarking criteria in order to drive confidence in the use of whichever standard an organisation is being benchmarked by. Catherine reassured the group that GFSI is a benchmarking organisation and will continue to act as such.

A query was taken from the group regarding the status of the GFSI work on accreditation. Over the past year the Standard Owners have been participating in a task force organised by GFSI and working alongside the IAF in communicating the food industry's approach to and requirements for standards such as Guide 65 and ISO 17021. Cécile Gillard Kaplan from Carrefour presented a brief overview of the progress on auditor competence to date. The first step to harmonise all the scheme owners' requirements regarding accreditation bodies has been completed. Further review to finalise a document for the IAF meeting in Mumbai was to be carried out later that afternoon.

A suggestion made to use the GFSI stakeholder group to develop a platform to share lessons learned from food safety crises will be taken into consideration by the GFSI Board and taken forward if deemed appropriate.

Members were thanked for their contributions and the meeting was closed.

Global Food Safety Initiative

Major Achievements of GFSI in 2008:

