

New regulations take aim at listeriosis

The threat of listeriosis hasn't subsided since the 2017/2018 outbreak. In fact, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases confirmed in October 2019 that 87 laboratory-confirmed listeriosis cases had been reported in the year since then.



The new Compulsory Specification for Processed Meat Products are a direct result of the listeriosis outbreak and aim to eliminate further food contamination crises by setting out clear checks and balances for processed meat manufacturing.

Published by the Department of Trade and Industry, the regulations now give effect to the guidelines for the processed meat industry as laid out in SANS 885. This national standard specifies the handling, preparation, processing, packaging, refrigeration, freezing, chilling and storage of processed meat products. The new regulations cover all aspects of a manufacturing facility, from its physical structure and equipment, to ingredients used, test methods and the handling, preparing, processing, producing, packaging, marking, labelling and storage of the product.

HACCP principles

Hygiene practices and processes are an important part of the regulations. These apply to the processing facility, equipment and employees, and also specify the level of microbiological content allowed. The basic principles of a hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) food safety management system are recommended in the regulations as the model to adopt, says Emma Corder, managing director of Industroclean.

This requires that manufacturers identify potential hazards, where they may occur and how this can be controlled. They should then set limits that allow these hazards to be controlled at each critical point, and ensure these limits are properly monitored.

HACCP further recommends that producers determine what corrective action is needed if they have failed to control a hazard.

All these steps should become part of any manufacturer's processes, including the recording, verification and review procedures.

"Applying the simple steps and covering all the bases outlined in HACCP guidelines for food manufacturing should, at the very least, ensure that bacterial infections are avoided. Hygiene procedures and cleaning schedules are obviously a key part of this process, and in many ways the low-hanging fruit that producers can grasp to ensure the minimum levels of compliance, she says.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>