



The Society of  
Food Hygiene  
and Technology

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# SOFHT FOCUS

The Magazine of the Society of Food Hygiene and Technology

[www.sofht.co.uk](http://www.sofht.co.uk)



## ALLERGENS:

Getting it right first time,  
*every time*

**CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION: WRITE UP & PHOTOS INSIDE**

### **PLUS ARTICLES ON:**

Designing a successful allergen cleaning validation study

Ensuring food safety and compliance: the vital role of PLM specification software

Culture, agility, planning: how businesses should prepare for tomorrow's crises



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01



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## THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR...



### Welcome to the SOFHT Focus Autumn Special Edition...

...gosh that seems to have come around quickly! Where did the summer go?

In this edition we 'focus' on our recent Allergen Conference at Drayton Manor. The event was really well attended and the feedback was great, many thanks to everyone involved in organising, presenting, exhibiting and attending. We've included a summary and photos from the day and copies of the presentation are also available on the SOFHT website in the members area for those of you that missed it. We also have a couple of interesting articles relating to allergen management: Jessica Sage of RSSL discusses designing a successful allergen cleaning validation study, and Ellis Northover, of Food Alert Ltd and fellow SOFHT Director, talks about the importance and benefits of Product Lifecycle Management software. We also have an inciteful article from Kimberly Coffin of LRQA about agility and planning to help prepare for tomorrow's crisis.

My thanks to all the authors for providing these articles and I would welcome articles for further editions, so please send these for my attention at [admin@sofht.co.uk](mailto:admin@sofht.co.uk)

Finally it's my turn to be in the spotlight for our regular item 'Focus on a SOFHT Director'. Alan challenged me with some searching and some rather bizarre questions for your entertainment.

Only a month to go before our Annual Lecture, Lunch and Awards for 2023, with guest speaker Adam Henson, from BBC's Countryfile. I look forward to catching up with you all then.

**Dianne Waite,**  
Editor SOFHT Focus

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# Introduction

ALAN LACEY, SOFHT CHAIR

Welcome to our autumn issue!

I hope everybody had a good summer – difficult to believe that we are already in autumn. It has been a busy time for the Society – our Allergens Conference was a great success and there is more detail about the event later in this issue. I remember at our summer meeting the panel of experts were agreed that more “joined up regulation” was required and this would certainly seem to apply to allergen control.

We are busy finalising preparations for the Annual Awards Lunch in November. I look forward to seeing many of you there where we will be sharing some great news about the future of the Society.

**Alan**

## Goodbye Rachel!

After six and a half years with SOFHT, our Office Manager Rachel Znajda has decided to leave the Society.

Many of the members will know Rachel from being at the end of the phone to support with enquiries, training course and e-learning bookings, as well as being a face on the registration desks at the conferences, Summer Lectures and the Annual Lunch. We would like to thank Rachel for her valuable contribution, support and commitment to the Society over the years and wish her all the very best for the future.

Goodbye and good luck Rachel – you’ll be missed!



## Lizzie Latest

As you can see, Lizzie has been making the most of the autumn sunshine, always finding the perfect place to lie to keep herself warm while having a little snooze!

## New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following members to SOFHT:

Gold
Europe Snacks
Sterilex
Silver
Aburnet Hair Containment Solutions
G&S Penrith
Katsouris Brothers
Sensient Flavours
Bronze Personal
Chris Turner
Fidelma Pogorelow
Garry Weeks
Theresa Taylor
Student
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# FOCUS on a SOFHT Director



## Dianne Waite

**SOFHT DIRECTOR & SOFHT FOCUS EDITOR**

**Alan Lacey gives Dianne a grilling in this edition's *Focus on a SOFHT Director*.**

### What made you choose a career in the Food Industry?

Right from an early age I was interested in food and had thought I'd like to become a dietician but once I'd visited a factory I realised I was far more interested in how things were made and where they came from.

### Would you recommend working in the Food Industry?

I've been fortunate to work for some great companies and have been given the opportunities to work in a wide variety of roles, travel the world and meet some amazing people. Yes I would definitely recommend it.

### What have been the high points?

There have been lots, developing products with suppliers and seeing them on the shelf is really satisfying and when they sell well and win awards that's even better.

But I've probably gained most satisfaction in seeing members of my team and small suppliers develop and flourish.

### What is special about SOFHT?

The answer to this is, of course, the people! I've been a board Director for over 7 years. I joined because I wanted to expand my network and knowledge further and joining SOFHT has certainly achieved that; with exposure to members covering a vast array of areas of expertise in manufacturing, retailing, catering, education and all the supporting services. There is always someone just a phone call away willing to offer advice or support. I also love that SOFHT is so inclusive, friendly, and pragmatic - not a stuffy organisation with too many rules.

### What do you consider will be the major issues to hit the food industry in the next few years?

Oh to have a crystal ball! I am particularly concerned about the plight of British farmers and businesses and the impact of increased costs and labour shortages on availability of fresh foods in the UK in the next few years, something Adam Henson might expand on in his lecture at the Annual Lunch.



### What's your favourite travel destination?

Today my answer is India for its people, culture and wonderful food but ask me another day and I'll give you a different answer.

### Fry up or green smoothie?

I feel I should say the smoothie but I'm not a great fan of a liquid diet (yes I do like beer) and I do believe we should get all our nutrients from a balanced diet. So it has to be the fry up with a good cuppa.

### What are your hobbies?

I have sung in choirs for years now but always in a choir and never solo - unless you count being forced into karaoke in Korea! As a member of Rock Choir I got the opportunity to sing at some great venues; on the pitch at Wembley stadium and recording at Abbey Road Studios. I'm now part of a choir called Soul Voices and enjoying the music and the socialising. Living in the Peak District I am also loving the great outdoors with lots of beautiful walks.

### Tell me about your recent house move...

Like so many, lockdown made me re-assess and we decided to relocate to be nearer to family. We've bought an old farmhouse on the edge of the Peak District with outbuildings and a bit of land. I get excited by the lovely views, seeing sheep in our field, cooking with home grown produce and seeing the hay being harvested and baled. We have lots of plans and one of the next projects will be getting some chickens. I'm no longer working full time but still keeping up to date with the food industry doing some consulting / advisory work on a self-employed basis which I enjoy very much.

### Favourite member of Boyzone/ Il Divo /Village People

What a question Alan!, I did have to google who Il Divo were, perhaps a little sophisticated for me. I will, however, confess to a soft spot for Ronan Keating as after all 'life is a rollercoaster' especially in the food industry!

# Complete allergen management services

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## Allergen analysis

We deliver accurate and fast results tailored to your needs helping you to substantiate free-from claims, conduct effective cleaning validations and comply with labelling requirements.

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- Supplier assessments
- Allergen food safety risk assessment
- Compliance with the latest regulations



## Allergen training and workshops

Our allergen workshops can be tailored to your needs, allowing attendees to gain hands-on experience in risk analysis in their own manufacturing environment. Current training options include:

- Allergen risk assessment, management and communication
- Allergen cleaning validation
- Awareness level training
- Online allergen training



*'I found the session very informative and well explained. I look forward to putting what I've learnt into practice.'*

Workshop attendee

**RSSL – your trusted partner for allergen testing, training and consultancy.**

SOFHT CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

# ALLERGENS:

## Getting it right first time, *every time*

WEDNESDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023  
DRAYTON MANOR HOTEL, TAMWORTH



On September 20th, SOFHT hosted a conference at Drayton Manor, sponsored by RSSL. The event was well attended with over 100 delegates from industry and academia. Copies of the presentations are now available on the SOFHT website in the members area should you have missed it. Below is also a brief summary of the day's proceedings.

The conference opened with a powerful and emotional video from the Anaphylaxis Society followed by a presentation from **Paul Carey**, whose son Owen died from an allergic reaction after eating with friends to celebrate his 18th birthday. Paul described the impact of this on his family and gave details of their campaign – “Owen’s Law” – for better allergen information on restaurant menus.

Paul spoke about the family’s discussions with MPs and the Food Standards Agency and their mission to get changes made to the law in respect of food labeling of allergens.



## ALLERGENS: GETTING IT RIGHT FIRST TIME, EVERY TIME

Following this introduction our guest speakers shared their thoughts and expertise with a series of presentations, culminating in two question and answer sessions (before lunch and to close the event).

In between these presentations our exhibitors took the floor to talk about how their companies and products could support with improving allergen management and encourage attendees to visit their stands in the breaks.

**Dr. Rachel Ward**, Exponent International, discussed the incidence of allergic reactions globally with some fascinating information on how different allergens affect various ethnic groups and also described the threshold limits of various allergens. She referred to the FARRP website which contains useful information on allergen labeling worldwide. Rachel discussed the long timescales involved in updating codex and the urgent need for health based guidance limits values to help with allergen management.

**Jordan Cox** of Food Alert talked about the role of technology in this area, describing how IT systems can be used for recording product ingredients and monitoring. She stressed the importance of provision of live data to ensure accuracy in recipe control and consumer information.

Marks and Spencer's approach to working with suppliers was outlined by their factory standards manager, **Katie Satterthwaite**. She discussed the hierarchy of controls and how they work with suppliers to identify risk. She also stressed the importance of assessing risk and the requirement for additional COPs to support this. A gradual move toward total electronic recipe control will lead to enhanced confidence in controls. Katie raised the issues faced when retailing ranges such as "without" and vegan.

**Claire Langford**, from Abergavenny Fine Foods, kindly stepped in at short notice to represent the manufacturing sector, and continued the discussion from a food factory standpoint. Describing how they work with entirely separate production lines with dedicated personnel and colour coding everything from uniform items to equipment to help support total segregation. Key messages from Claire were to involve clients in every conversation and stick with your core competencies "know your limitations". She also made a case for more joined up and consistent regulatory controls. Claire also raised the issue of lack of clarity around the term "vegan".



## SOFHT CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

After lunch **Darryl Thomson**, from UK Hospitality, explained why allergen control in hospitality and food service is a much more complex and difficult issue. It is not possible to simply transpose what happens in food manufacturing to retail with food manufacturing to hospitality. The industry brings £93 billion to the economy but microbusiness account for 77 % of the total operations. Darryl also referred to a hierarchy of controls he had named ERIC (Eliminate, Replace, Isolate and Communicate). He argued that lower threshold for entry requirements and lower skills add to the problems of control when producing many different commodities in limited space. There was a suggestion that an assessment of allergen control might be included in the food hygiene rating score but questioned the ability of poorly resourced local government agencies to monitor and enforce this.

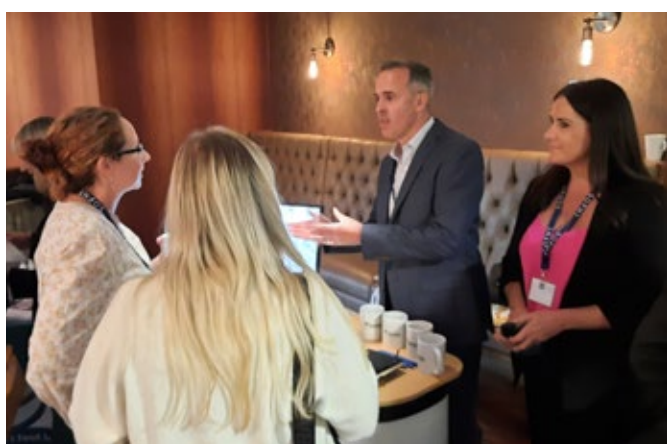
**Deb Smith** of Vikan and **David Childs** of Kersia, both SOFHT Directors, jointly explored cleaning and hygiene practices as a factor in allergen control. Poor equipment and staff practice was a consideration with a key solution being hygienically designed production areas to eliminate dust traps etc. Illustrations of how some cleaning practices such as jet washing can spread allergen particles over a large area provided an argument for careful detailed cleaning.

The final speaker of the day was **Barbara Hirst** from RSSL. Barbara talked about the importance of choosing the right labs and doing the right tests. Choose a good partner and always ask the question "is testing appropriate?" She advocated the importance of testing a positive control sample giving some excellent advice on taking correct representative samples and testing regimes.

**Peter Littleton**, SOFHT Events and Training Director and Conference Chair, wrapped up the session and thanked everyone for their participation, in particular the SOFHT team for once again organizing and delivering an excellent, informative and enjoyable event.



## ALLERGENS: GETTING IT RIGHT FIRST TIME, EVERY TIME



# Designing a successful allergen cleaning validation study

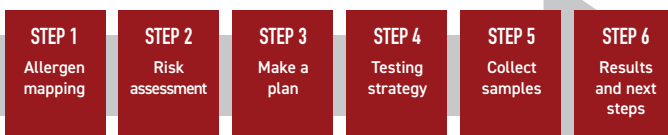
JESSICA SAGE FOOD SAFETY & QUALITY CONSULTANT, RSSL

Why is allergen cleaning validation important?

Cleaning is one of the essential control measures employed within food businesses to prevent cross-contamination of allergens from one product to another. It should go without saying that cleaning should not be relied upon in isolation – many other control measures are needed to prevent unintentional allergen presence.

However, where equipment and lines are not dedicated to specific products or allergens, cleaning plays a critical role. The cleaning procedure must be validated to demonstrate that it is effective at removing the allergen and reducing the risk to the next-made product. The validation process is important in providing evidence to the business that the control of cleaning is working to manage the risk.

## 6 key steps to a successful allergen cleaning validation study



### STEP 1 Allergen mapping

Before beginning to plan how to validate your cleaning procedure, it is important to understand where the allergens handled on site are, and how they move within the production process. This can be achieved through allergen mapping, which lists out each ingredient and the allergens they contain. This can be extended to a product or recipe level. In some cases, it can be useful to use a diagram to map out the location of the allergens and where they move to throughout the facility.

### STEP 2 Allergen risk assessment

Following the allergen mapping procedure, a food business should conduct an allergen risk assessment to determine where there is potential for allergens to get from where they are meant to be, to where they shouldn't be. Through this process, it should be possible to identify where cleaning is a key control measure in the prevention of cross-contamination of allergens. It is in these areas that validation work should be carried out to demonstrate that the cleaning is fit for purpose and effective at removing the allergen to an acceptable level. What that acceptable level is will be for the manufacturer to decide, but industry best practice is to work to non-detectable levels.

### STEP 3 Making a plan for the validation

Prior to commencing the work on validating the cleaning, several key aspects must be considered, and a thorough plan developed. Frequently, businesses identify a need to validate cleaning and rush to complete it as quickly as possible. This can result in higher sample numbers being taken and several repeats of sampling due to errors or unexpected results being obtained. For this reason, it is highly recommended that a business takes the time to plan the study, and in so doing, ensure that every sample is taken for a reason and is adding value, avoiding any unnecessary over-sampling. The plan must consider which allergen to use as the target for the study, which test methods to use, which samples to take and where to take them from.

When choosing a target for the validation study, it is best to choose something that is present at high levels, has a high protein content and is hard to clean away from the line. You are trying to demonstrate that the clean works in the most challenging situations, so ideally you want to be using your worst-case scenario to prove this. It can be tempting to opt for a target that can be easily cleaned away to establish a quick win - however by basing the validation on the worst-case situation, it should then be possible to gain assurance that the cleaning will work across multiple scenarios where the cleaning is less challenging. It would not be possible to make this assumption based on validation of a clean of something easily removed or present at low levels.

## DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL ALLERGEN CLEANING VALIDATION STUDY

### STEP 4 Choosing the right allergen testing strategy

You need to be sure there is a good laboratory test method to detect the chosen allergen in your samples - ideally you should use a quantitative method. For allergen cleaning validations, the recommendation is to use an ELISA test where possible as these look for protein and will provide quantitative results (within a range). As it is the protein that causes people to have allergic reactions, it is good practice to be aiming to detect this with any testing. PCR testing is generally not recommended for allergen cleaning validation studies as these tests are looking for DNA rather than protein, and the results are not easily quantifiable or translatable into levels of protein. You may be in a situation where there is no suitable ELISA test for your target allergen (as is currently the case with celery). In these situations, the advice is to consult with the lab and see whether there is another target you could use, or whether the PCR test will give you the information you need.

Bear in mind that some validation work may need to be done by the lab if they haven't tested your products or source of allergen before - they should be able to advise you if this is needed. This might include spike recovery testing of your next off-line product, as well as cross-reactivity checks. Spike recovery testing is used to check whether the lab's test can detect the allergen in a product or ingredient, should it be present as carry-over. Testing a positive control is also a key part of validating the test method, as is outlined below.

### STEP 5 Collecting your samples for laboratory testing

The samples you should be looking to take for your study include:

- Positive control – this is the source of the allergen contamination of your line/equipment. It could be an ingredient, part-made product or finished product depending on the equipment being cleaned. Your positive control should be tested once to ensure the allergen can be detected and at the level you are expecting it to be at – you do not need to test this for every round of the validation.
- Post-clean samples – typically these will be swabs, rinse waters or purge material. The type of sample will be dependent on the cleaning method being performed. When deciding where to collect the post-clean samples from, focus on the areas that are most challenging to clean, as these represent the worst-case scenario. If these can be cleaned well, then the less difficult to clean surfaces also will be. If testing rinse waters, ensure it is the final rinse that is collected, as this will most closely represent what the next product will be exposed to.
- Next off-line product – this typically is the first ingredient or product that comes into contact with the equipment after the cleaning has been done. Testing this product or ingredient is the only direct measure of what the consumer will be exposed to. If carry-over of allergen is detected in this sample, this represents a risk to an allergic consumer.

Industry best practice is to repeat the validation exercise three times (but only test the positive control once), and to achieve non-detectable results for all post-clean and next off-line samples in three consecutive rounds. Where possible, include different shifts to demonstrate that the clean is performed consistently and is fit for purpose regardless of who does it.



### STEP 6 Results and next steps

Part of the planning stage of the validation study should include consideration of what action to take should unexpected results be obtained. Where any results come back as detected, this should deem that round of validation failed, and the whole exercise should be repeated. Before this, it is essential to review where the result came from and to try to understand what could have caused it on that occasion. There could be a simple fix that would save potentially repeating the exercise unsuccessfully.

A successful cleaning validation study is one that is well planned and considers all the aspects outlined above. Always keep in the front of your mind that you are collecting evidence of effectiveness and consistency of the cleaning procedure based on your worst-case scenario.

## How RSSL can support with allergen cleaning validation

RSSL offers a comprehensive allergen cleaning validation service and can support at any stage from the initial design of the validation plan, through to the analysis of samples. Our Allergen Consultants can visit your site to train out best practices and help identify areas for sampling, while our laboratory team can advise on the most appropriate testing methods to utilise. Planning is key to a successful cleaning validation study. We will guide you through the steps of picking an appropriate target and ensuring that you focus on the best places to collect environmental samples from.

### About the Author

Jessica is a consultant with RSSL's Food Safety and Quality Team, where she undertakes projects for clients from different sectors of the food industry, including manufacturers, retailers and food service businesses. Jessica's main area of focus is allergen management and her work in this area has ranged from reviewing policies and procedures, to practical on-site training and gap analysis assessments.





# Ensuring Food Safety and Compliance: The Vital Role of PLM Specification Software

**ELLIS NORTHOVER** COMMERCIAL ACCOUNT DIRECTOR, FOOD ALERT

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In today's fast-paced and highly competitive food industry, ensuring food safety and regulatory compliance is paramount. One of the critical challenges faced by food business operators is managing mandatory food information, particularly allergens.

In this era of heightened awareness and stringent regulations, the importance of accurate, timely, and comprehensive product specifications cannot be overstated.

Enter Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software, a powerful tool that can transform how food business operators manage their product data and meet regulatory requirements.

At the recent SOFHT allergen conference, speakers were united in the drive for the food industry to follow best practice in relation to allergen management, whether that be through cleaning, testing, packing and allergen thresholds.

Jordan Cox of Food Alert spoke about her experiences of handling mandatory food information for a large UK restaurant chain and as a consultant to the wider food industry. She described how the use of technology and digital specifications can help mitigate risk to food businesses and validate food allergy and nutritional data.

## Understanding PLM Software

Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software is a multifaceted solution that changes the way companies manage data throughout the entire product development journey. From concept and manufacturing to approval, launch, and performance measurement, PLM software streamlines processes and enhances collaboration.

It's a game-changer for the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry and many others, facilitating the integration of data, documents, business systems, and the people involved in product development.

One of the primary goals of PLM software is to improve productivity and collaboration, enhance product quality, stimulate New Product Development (NPD), and reduce time-to-market. The ability to track and document every change a product undergoes during its development journey promotes traceability and due diligence, critical aspects in today's food industry landscape.

## The Challenges of Specification Management

Jordan went on to provide more information about the challenges of using "old school" methods to manage product specifications, which can be a daunting task for smaller food business operators, and several challenges often arise:

- **Time-Consuming Processes:** Completing specifications on some PLM systems, PDF's or Word documents can be time-consuming, affecting overall efficiency.

## ENSURING FOOD SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE: THE VITAL ROLE OF PLM SPECIFICATION SOFTWARE

- **Incomplete Specifications:** Specifications are often completed incorrectly or not fully, leading to potential misunderstandings and errors.
- **Complexity:** Some specification processes are intricate, making it challenging to maintain accuracy and consistency.
- **Version Control:** Ensuring that suppliers and stakeholders always have the latest specification can be challenging without automated workflows and notifications.
- **Lack of Documentation:** Important information and agreements are sometimes exchanged via phone calls, leaving no audit trail of critical decisions.

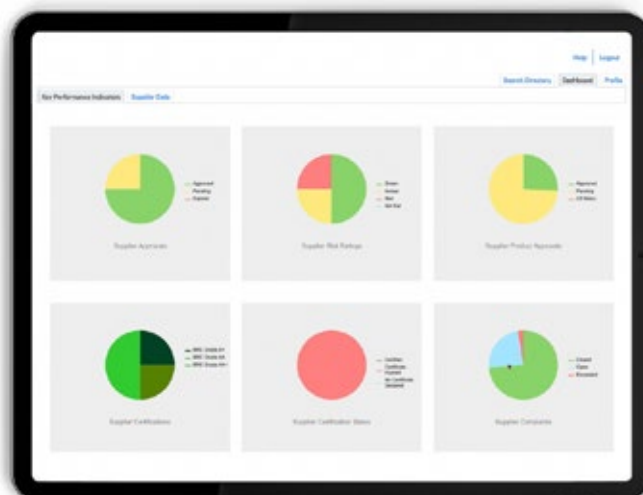
### The BRC Food Standard Requirement

To address these challenges effectively, food business operators must have a robust food specification PLM system in place. The British Retail Consortium (BRC) food standard mandates the implementation of product specifications to ensure the highest level of food safety and compliance.

### Benefits of Product Lifecycle Management Software

Investing in a product lifecycle management system offers significant benefits for food businesses:

- **Customer Communication:** Enhances communication with customers by providing them with accurate and up-to-date product information.
- **Workflow Optimization:** Streamlines NPD processes, improving efficiency and collaboration among teams.
- **Due Diligence:** Provides a robust framework for maintaining due diligence, reducing the risk of legal issues and recalls.
- **Supplier Approval:** Simplifies the process of approving and managing suppliers, ensuring consistency and quality.
- **BRC Compliance:** Helps businesses meet the stringent requirements of the BRC food standard effortlessly.
- **Food Authenticity:** Ensures the authenticity of food products by maintaining accurate records of ingredients and processes.
- **Food Information Labelling Compliance:** Helps businesses comply with food labelling regulations, including allergen declarations.
- **Allergen Validation IP:** Allergen validation tools to prevent allergen-related incidents.
- **Global Collaboration:** Food business operators and suppliers can collaborate seamlessly.
- **Efficient Communication:** NPD project ideas and conversations can be managed, ensuring clarity and accountability for all stakeholders.
- **Comprehensive Food Information:** Ensure compliance with Food Information Labelling Compliance (FILC) by managing nutrition, ingredient, and allergen data.
- **Pack Copy Generation:** Automate the creation of pack copies while ensuring policy compliance and due diligence.
- **Reporting Tools:** Utilize built-in reporting tools to generate and share reports for better data visualization.
- **Packaging Management:** Track the entire packaging process.



### Conclusion

In an industry where food safety, compliance, and consumer trust are paramount, food business operators must invest in the right tools and systems. Product lifecycle management software, such as Assure65 by Food Alert, empowers businesses to manage mandatory food information effectively, with a focus on allergens, while streamlining processes, reducing risks, and ensuring compliance with industry standards.

As food safety regulations continue to evolve, and with the possibility of Owen's Law on the horizon, staying ahead with cutting-edge software solutions becomes not just a choice but a necessity for success in the food industry.

For those ready to embark on this transformative journey, the benefits are clear: enhanced food safety, streamlined operations, and a competitive edge in an ever-demanding market.

### About the Author

Ellis Northover is a distinguished figure in the food industry, renowned for his expertise in quality and regulatory compliance. His journey began in the heart of the UK's food sector, where he honed his skills at a prominent spice company.



Ellis's dedication to ensuring food safety and regulatory compliance led him to a role in food law enforcement with Northamptonshire Trading Standards, where he provided invaluable guidance to local food businesses.

Over the past 25 years, Ellis has played a pivotal role in safeguarding the reputations and quality of supply chains for some of the largest retail and food service giants in the UK and Europe. His extensive experience has earned him numerous accolades, including multiple award-winning product launches.

Today, as the Commercial Account Director at Food Alert, Ellis continues to be a driving force in the industry, ensuring that brands maintain their integrity and that consumers enjoy safe and high-quality food experiences.

# Culture, Agility, Planning:

How businesses should  
prepare for tomorrow's crises



**KIMBERLY COFFIN** GLOBAL TECHNICAL DIRECTOR FOR SUPPLY CHAIN ASSURANCE, LRQA

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The American writer Ernestine Ulmer is credited with the line *Life is uncertain, eat dessert first*. The first part of her remarks could well be applied to today's food supply chains which have borne the brunt of unprecedented pressures beyond what many could have predicted.

The food industry has done exceptionally well at keeping its head above water, but as the tidal wave of Covid fades into the distance, it is closely followed by the tsunamis of war and climate change.

Because of this, there is sadly little hope for any return to "normal". Instead, we must look into a future we can't predetermine and prepare accordingly. This begs a monumental question: how can we prepare for something we cannot predict?

## Creating a culture

With the risk landscape evolving, businesses must build responsiveness into every part of their operations. In the past

few years alone, the industry has addressed consumer concerns around food fraud and plastic packaging, pandemic restrictions, and supply shortages brought on by the impact of events in Ukraine. Of course, these obstacles did not wait their turn to be handled. They overlapped enormously, compounding the difficulties inherent to food production, manufacture and shipping.

What has been learned is that the capacity to respond – to pivot between alternate processes and suppliers – is an attribute companies need to cultivate and instil as part of their culture. When people within an organisation are actively working to anticipate risk, that organisation is more likely to survive supply chain setbacks.

As part of this culture, food safety should be emphasised as the priority. Every person needs to understand how their role contributes to upholding food safety. The same is true of operations – each person involved needs to know the reason for each process and how it helps create or uphold standards of food safety.

By ensuring that everyone in the organisation has the proper focus and perspective, they will be able to apply their experience and industry knowledge to re-examine process suitability. This is instead of following a previously established procedure purely because that's how it's always been done. The fact is that some well-established methods are no longer fit for purpose and that food producers, along with their supply chains, need to weave adaptability into every process. By doing this, they can become more agile and better prepared to cope with the supply chain stress that the industry has been navigating since 2020 and will be for the foreseeable future.

### Four focuses for business agility

As the food industry learns to navigate this 'new normal,' there are four actions that all business should take to increase their agility and increase their chances of successfully traversing unexpected obstacles in their supply chains:

**1. Understand the Impact of Process Disruptions:** Study the process involved in your operations and look into how disruptions will affect them. Put broad reaching, yet product specific business continuity plans in place that account for these events.

**2. Implement Change Management:** Establish a process-driven approach to change management. Continuously learn from challenges, re-evaluate processes, and validate improvements to enhance resilience in the face of unexpected issues.

**3. Provide Training and Clarity:** Offer training to personnel to clarify non-negotiable elements of food safety and the organisation's risk tolerance. Empower your team to take initiative and implement risk control measures when necessary.

**4. Spotlight Risk Management:** Examine the spectrum of risks that may impact your supply chain, especially those related to food safety. Changes in supply chains will impact processes, ingredients and packaging so it is essential to assess what bearing that might have on risks to food safety.

### Ongoing continuity

Food supply businesses couldn't avoid the impact of Covid, nor the fallout of the ongoing Ukraine war. So it would be naive to imagine that the sector might be immune to the next crisis, whether it be centred on geopolitics, economics, public health, climate change or – more likely – a combination.

To arm against the inevitable yet unpredictable supply chain difficulties, each business must develop a robust continuity plan. These plans should be ever-evolving,



regularly revised and updated as more information, resources and processes become available. Any change to a business should come with a corresponding update to the continuity plan. Once a crisis is over, these plans can be used as a resource to guide future planning.

### Ready for change

For the past few years, it could be said that the industry has been doing something similar to 'papering over the cracks' – hoping that temporary measures will suffice before no longer being needed. The problem is that, as time goes on, it becomes obvious that some cracks are deep and

need more work to fix. Without a food safety culture, improved business agility and evolving continuity plans, businesses lower their chances of surviving the next major crisis.

The only constant that can be safely bet on is that change will continue to occur. For many businesses, change is synonymous with threat – perhaps especially in the food industry. By focussing on the impact change has on processes, practices and plans, threat can be minimised, businesses can come through crises stronger, and – most importantly – there can be greater confidence that there's been no compromise to the safety of food.

For more information, see [LRQA.com](https://www.lrqa.com).

### About the Author

Over the past 30 years, Kimberly has worked for and with leading food and beverage manufacturers, retailers and associated supply chain organisations across the USA, Latin America, Asia and Australia/New Zealand.



# UPCOMING SOFHT TRAINING EVENTS

**24th October 2023**

## **BRCGS: RISK ASSESSMENT**

**Online Training Course**

This one-day course will provide delegates with a thorough understanding of risk assessment and enable them to use different risk assessment models. This is particularly useful when implementing product safety management systems onsite, and when implementing the requirements of the BRCGS. This course is part of the BRCGS Professional recognition programme.

### **Who should attend?**

- Technical and quality personnel
- Auditors
- Consultants

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/risk-assessment-brcgs/>

### **At the end of the course you will:**

- Understand risk assessment terminology
- Be able to choose and use different risk assessment models for processes onsite
- Understand what BRCGS Global Standards expects from a thorough risk assessment

**26th October & 2nd November 2023**

## **LEVEL 3 AWARD IN HACCP FOR FOOD MANUFACTURING**

**Online Training Course**

Food businesses are required by law to implement and effectively maintain a food safety management system based on the principles of HACCP.

Regulation (EC) No.852/2004 on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs also requires those responsible for the development and maintenance of HACCP systems to have received adequate training in the application of its principles.

### **Who should attend?**

This accredited course is delivered on 2 consecutive days (RQF) and is aimed at supervisors, managers, owners and anyone else responsible for HACCP. Candidates will gain a practical understanding of HACCP based on industry best practice, current legislation and real-life case studies. The course materials also include a comprehensive level 3 textbook.

We recommend that you have completed a level 3 food safety course prior to enrolment although this is not essential.

### **Assessment method**

The assessment method for this qualification is a one-hour examination, consisting of 30 multiple choice questions. To pass, 18 or more questions must be answered correctly. A merit will be awarded for 24 or more questions answered correctly.

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/level-3-award-in-haccp-for-food-manufacturing/>

### **Course programme**

#### **DAY 1**

- Introduction to food safety management
- Common food safety hazards
- Pre-requisite programmes
- The legal requirements for HACCP
- Preparing for the implementation of HACCP
- Flow diagrams
- Hazard analysis and control measures
- Critical control point
- Critical limits, target levels and tolerances

#### **DAY 2**

- Monitoring
- Corrective actions
- Verification vs validation
- Documentation and records
- HACCP Preview
- Examination

1st November 2023

## LEADING & MANAGING A POSITIVE FOOD SAFETY CULTURE

### Online Training Course

Building a business culture that supports a strong food safety ethic and behaviour is becoming more and more important. It is simply not enough to train your food handlers in prerequisite programmes and HACCP plans. The right culture needs to be embedded throughout the business and be led from the top. This course takes a step-by-step approach in how you can develop and maintain a positive food safety culture that delivers safe food to your customers and looks after your brand. Content is particularly useful in providing key knowledge in achieving new and additional requirements within the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety Issue 8. These include food safety culture (clause: 1.1.2) and management review (1.1.4).

Regulation (EC) No.852/2004 on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs also requires those responsible for the development and maintenance of HACCP systems to have received adequate training in the application of its principles.

#### Who should attend?

This course is intended for food safety professionals and leaders in businesses where food safety is paramount. It applies to all sectors including small independent food manufacturers and retailers, hospitality and food manufacturing.

#### Course Content:

The course will provide information on:

- Introduction to food safety culture
- Factors influencing a food safety culture
- The role of leadership and management
- Components of a food safety culture
- How to assess an existing food safety culture
- Developing and promoting a positive food safety culture
- How to create a clear plan for continual success.

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/leading-managing-a-positive-food-safety-culture-online-session-2/>

7th November 2023

## PRACTICAL FOOD LABELLING & LEGISLATION

### Online Training Course

This one-day course will provide an initial understanding of food labelling requirements within the Food Information to Consumers Regulation (FIC), including its application post- Brexit.

#### Who should attend?

- Technical Directors
- Consultants
- Quality Managers
- NPD Managers
- Food Technologists
- Regulatory Compliance Officers
- Specification Technologists

#### Course content:

The course will provide information on:

- Food labelling law
- Penalties for food labelling non-compliance
- Mandatory food information
- The effect of product specific legislation and compositional standards
- An overview of controls on voluntary information and product claims

These will be illustrated with labelling examples, and, where possible, practical exercises.

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/practical-food-labelling-legislation/>

## UPCOMING SOFHT TRAINING EVENTS

9th November 2023

### MICROBIOLOGY FOR NON-MICROBIOLOGISTS

Online Training Course

This one-day 'taster session' provides an essential guide to microbiology within the food manufacturing environment and how it can impact on the daily running of a site.

#### Who should attend?

The course is suitable for those requiring basic microbiological knowledge in order to operate safely in food manufacturing.

#### Course Content:

The course will cover an introduction to basic microbiology along with an overview of laboratory tests for microbes and what those results mean for you. The main sources of factory-based bacteria will be examined, and guidance will be given on how to minimise those bacterial risks. A profile on food poisoning and a study of the major bacterial groups will complete the programme.

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/microbiology-for-non-microbiologists/>

21st & 22nd November 2023

### BRCGS: INTERNAL AUDITOR

Online Training Course

This two-day course will enable you to undertake internal audits and prepare companies for third party audits. It's delivered via a series of workshop-led discussions, presentations and an interactive case study. During the live case study, you will be given feedback and support to enable you to carry out an audit at your own workplace. You will be assessed throughout the course [50%] and you will also need to undertake a workplace audit and submit an audit report for assessment (50%). You will need to gain a 75% pass for this assessment. This course is part of the BRCGS Professional recognition programme.

#### Who should attend?

- Quality and Technical Managers
- Operations Managers
- Staff responsible for managing an internal auditing schedule
- Staff responsible for undertaking internal audits as required by the BRCGS

#### At the end of the course you will:

- Understand the roles and responsibilities of auditors
- Be able to plan and conduct an internal audit
- Know how to write concise, accurate and factual audit reports
- Be able to undertake audit follow-up activities

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/internal-auditor-brcgs-2/>

23rd November 2023

### SENSORY EVALUATION

Classroom Session

This highly interactive course will deliver an introduction to the principles of sensory analysis and will screen delegates for their ability to taste against BS7667 Part 1: ISO 8586.

#### Who should attend?

Technical, Production or NPD professionals who would like an introduction to sensory analysis; taste panel members who require screening for their ability to taste and an insight into the basic principles of sensory analysis; businesses wishing to implement a more formal approach to sensory analysis by developing a taste panel team and procedures; and anyone who would like a refresher or insight into this fascinating subject – whether from a production, technical or development background.

#### Course Content:

The course will provide information on:

- What sensory analysis is
- What senses are involved
- What the purpose of sensory evaluation is
- How it can be used in food production
- The sense of vision and its role in sensory evaluation
- How we taste with our eyes
- What the primary taste sensations are and what taste is
- How taste varies from person to person
- Screening for ability to taste
- Aroma and taste – mechanisms and words used to describe aroma
- Developing an aroma and taste vocabulary
- Feel and texture – how food behaves in the mouth

Delegates will also be introduced to some simple taste panel tests.

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/sensory-evaluation/>

28th November 2023

## LEGIONELLA AWARENESS

### Online Training Course

This introductory course will enable delegates to understand the potential risks, responsibilities, and relevant standards regarding the management of Legionella.

#### Who should attend?

This course is aimed at Technical, Health & Safety and SHE Managers, Hygiene Managers, and those with an interest in understanding the need of Legionella management.

#### Course Content:

This course will enable you to identify the management issues to follow to enable you to recognise and address the risks from this micro-organism.

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/legionella-awareness/>

#### Topics will include:

- Background and history of Legionella and why it is a problem
- Types of "at risk" water systems, UK regulations
- Legislation and guidance
- Responsibilities
- Risk assessment
- Management (including control, cleaning & disinfection etc)
- Record keeping
- Monitoring through sampling and analysis

30th November 2023

## INTERNAL AUDITING

### Online Training Course

This one-day course is designed to ensure that attendees gain an understanding of the skills and techniques required to get the most out of internal auditing.

#### Who should attend?

The course will suit current internal auditors seeking to enhance their knowledge, anybody wishing to become an internal auditor and those with responsibility for managing internal audit programmes.

To book please visit: <https://sofht.co.uk/course/internal-auditing/>

#### Course content

The course covers the entire process of internal auditing. From the use of risk assessment to determine audit plans, to developing templates and audit scopes to ensure thoroughness and consistency through to the completion of effective audits and the management of corrective actions. Workshops are run throughout the day to support the learning process. Successful completion of the short exam at the end of the course will lead to certification.

## Don't miss

SOFHT's [Training Academy Prospectus](#), covering our exciting training package, focusing on the topical issues affecting everyone working in today's fast-moving food industry.

**Plus...** Our [E-Learning Prospectus](#), bringing together the essentials of food safety and hygiene in straightforward courses covering the basic principles and practices.





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