# PACKAGING CORNER

Focusing on the food packaging industry, this regular feature will examine issues affecting the industry. In this issue we look at some of the certification standards that are currently available for packaging materials.

As most of you are probably aware, in 2011 the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) initiated a programme to produce a benchmark document for packaging standards. To reflect stakeholders and standards effectively, this document was compiled in co-operation with several key standard owners and relevant parties from the packaging industry, as well as support providers such as SGS.

GFSI benchmarking has been developed to introduce a key set of benchmark requirements that every packaging standard would be expected to comply with. Standard owners wishing to be GFSI benchmarked could then submit their standard to the committee, who will evaluate it against these requirements. The benchmarking document itself comprises a number of criteria that a standard must demonstrate compliance with. This also includes items related to the protocol aspects of the standard, not just specific product/process based requirements.

Standards that have already been benchmarked are:

- BRC/IoP Global Standard for Packaging and Packaging Materials – High Hygiene Risk
- FSSC 22000 Food Safety Management System – category M Food Packaging
- SQF Code edition 7 – Module 2 and 13

All packaging standards must have a risk-based element to them, with Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) and Safe Quality Food (SQF) focusing on the use of hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP). British Retail Consortium (BRC) and Institute of Packaging (IoP) do not require any specific risk tool to be used.

The standards all require a documented management system to be in place, with associated quality documents and records being adequately controlled and maintained.

Likewise, all standards require pre-requisite programmes to be in place, with the FSSC standard focusing patriculalry on these through the additional requirements related to PAS223.

In the next issue we will take a more detailed look at the standards and consider their impact on packaging businesses.

SGS is able to offer accredited certification to all of these standards.

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