Those Pesky Pests

It is that time of year when temperatures begin to drop and those pesky pests are looking for a warm home. Pest control is an important part of any food safety program at all times and good housekeeping controls help to keep them at bay. But a pest control program is only as good as the employees who implement it and ensure that the program is managed and effective. Effective pest control management can save money long-term by preventing pest problems that would require costly remediation.

Current food good manufacturing practices (GMPs) are published in Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 110 (21 CFR 110). GMPs describe the methods, equipment, facilities, and controls for producing processed food. As the minimum sanitary and processing requirements for producing safe and wholesome food, they are an important part of regulatory control over the safety of the nation's food supply. GMPs also serve as one basis for FDA inspections.

A facility should implement sanitation and facility maintenance year round. These proactive measures keep a building’s interior clean and the exterior secure from pests and are a great place to start staff training about their roles in pest control management. During integrated pest management training, assign roles to staff so that each person is responsible for a portion of the pest management program. Through training, employees can help understand, identify, and prevent conditions that are conducive to pest entry and survival.

Company staff need to understand the reasons pests are attracted to the facility so they can take an active part in prevention. Many food safety standards, require staff training about the facility’s pest management program.

For example, it is important to regularly monitor for standing water that can accumulate in and around the facility. Repair all leaks and damaged insulation as needed. Be sure to check floor drains as they can be a breeding ground for flies. Make sure that food in employee break rooms is stored in tightly sealed containers. Dispose of waste regularly to cut down on odor and eliminate another source for pest control.

When it comes to pest management, a facility can never be too prepared. To be well equipped in the event of a pest problem, identify key staff members to follow the pest management program and work with the pest management provider. A successful program relies on communication among management and employees and your pest control management professional.

An effective pest control program helps to ensure the safety of our food.

Sources: FDA, Food Quality Magazine, Dr. Siddiqi, Director of Quality Systems, Orkin Inc.

Pest Control Audit

About 20% of a food safety audit concerns pest control. Before a third party food safety audit, review requirements and documentation concerning pest control with your pest control specialist. Here is a checklist to get you started.

On week prior to the audit check the following:

- On-site documentation review with your pest management provider.
- Pesticide usage logs are up to date
- Material safety data sheets and labels are on file for all pesticides.
- Floor plan includes up-to-date placement of all pest control devices.
- Pest sighting logs and trend data re up to date.
- Service reports are complete.
- Corrective action reports are complete.
- Certifications, licenses, and insurance information is available.
- Walk/audit the interior and exterior of the facility with the pest management provider.
- All pest control devices are identified correctly on the floor plan.
- All devices are placed in accordance with requirements.
- All interior devices are serviced at least weekly and external devices are serviced at least monthly.
- All devices are labeled with service information.
- On-site pest control chemicals are stored securely.
- All rodent bait stations are tamper resistant and secured to the ground.
- Rodent stations are free of decomposed rodents or other animals.
- Rodent burrows and bird nests are eliminated from the property.
- Bird exclusion tactics are in place, if required.

24 hours: before a pest control audit:

- Make sure that all documentation is accessible.
- Eliminate any evidence of pest activity on the interior and exterior of the facility.
- Make sure the interior of the facility is clean and the exterior of the facility if free from litter.

By following these steps, you can be prepared for the pest control portion of your food safety audit.

Source: Food Quality Magazine, Dr. Siddiqi, Director of Quality Systems for Orkin Inc.
### Food and Drug Administration Recalls (www.fda.gov)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product:</th>
<th>Cantaloupe</th>
<th>Possible Health Risk: Listeria monocytogenes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incident:</td>
<td>A Holly, CO firm is voluntarily recalling their shipments of whole cantaloupes because they have the potential to be contaminated with <em>Listeria monocytogenes</em>. <em>Listeria monocytogenes</em> is a bacterium that can contaminate foods and can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. The whole cantaloupes in question were shipped between July 29—Sept 10, 2011. The product was distributed to the following states: IL, WY, TN, UT, TX, CO, MN, KS, NM, NC, MO, NE, OK, AZ, NJ, NY, PA. The whole cantaloupes have either a green and white sticker or gray, yellow and green sticker that identify these recalled products. Consumers who have purchased the affected products should destroy the product. Consumers and media with questions should contact the company directly or visit the company’s website.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product:</td>
<td>Frozen Avocado Pulp &amp; Avocado Halves</td>
<td>Possible Health Risk: Listeria monocytogenes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incident:</td>
<td>An Ontario, CA firm is recalling approximately 1,423 cases of 12/2 lb. frozen avocado pulp and 1,820 cases of avocado halves because they have the possibility to be contaminated with <em>Listeria monocytogenes</em>. <em>Listeria monocytogenes</em> can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. So far, there have not been any reports of illness. The recalled avocado products were distributed to distributors in California since June 2010. The recall was the result of multiple positive <em>Listeria monocytogenes</em> results in 20 lbs. size avocado pulp manufactured at the same facility in Peru. If you have these products in your possession, return them to distributors as soon as possible. The company has ceased the production, importing and distribution of the product as FDA and the company continue their investigation as to what caused the problem. Consumers should contact the company with any questions.</td>
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### United States Department of Agriculture Recalls (www.usda.gov)

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<tr>
<th>Product:</th>
<th>Ground Turkey Products</th>
<th>Possible Health Risk: Salmonella</th>
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<tr>
<td>Incident:</td>
<td>A Springdale, AR establishment has recalled approximately 185,000 pounds of ground turkey products because they may be contaminated with a strain of <em>Salmonella Heidelberg</em>. <em>Salmonella</em> can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. The products subject to recall include: ground turkey chubs, fresh ground turkey trays and fresh ground turkey patties. The products subject to recall were derived from bone-in parts produced on Aug. 23, 24, 30 and 31 and were distributed at the retail level nationwide. The strain of <em>Salmonella Heidelberg</em> is identical to that of an outbreak of <em>Salmonellosis</em> that resulted in an Aug. 3, 2011 recall of ground turkey products. The company requests that consumers who may have purchased these products return them to the point-of-purchase. Anyone with questions should contact the company directly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product:</td>
<td>Chicken Caesar Salad</td>
<td>Possible Health Risk: Undeclared Allergen</td>
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<td>Incident:</td>
<td>A Tracy, CA establishment is recalling approximately 52,191 pounds of chicken Caesar salad products because they may contain an undeclared allergen, egg. Egg is a known allergen, which is not declared on the label. The egg is an ingredient in the Caesar dressing packet in the salads. The recall includes salad kits, café salads and pasta layered salads with chicken. These salads were shipped to distributors in CA, OR, WA and nationwide. The problem was discovered when a consumer had a reaction after consuming the Caesar salad. The consumer had a known allergy to eggs and suspected that eggs were an ingredient in the salad dressing. Individuals concerned about an allergic reaction should contact a physician. Media and consumer with questions about the recall should contact the company directly.</td>
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### Consumer Product Safety Commission Recalls (www.cpsc.gov)

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<tr>
<th>Product:</th>
<th>Soft Dolls</th>
<th>Hazard: Strangulation</th>
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<td>Incident:</td>
<td>A San Francisco, CA importer is voluntarily recalling about 8,100 soft dolls in the USA (1,300 units in Canada). The recall involves dolls made in China measuring 17 in. high with hair made of yarn. The doll’s name can be found on a tag sewn onto her bottom. The hair on two of the dolls may contain loops that are large enough to fit around a child’s head and neck. Group activities can cause a strangulation hazard. These dolls were sold at a retailer nationwide, online and through catalogs from July 2006 through April 2011. The firm has received 5 reports, including one report in which a loop was found around the child’s neck, but uninjured. Consumers should immediately take away the dolls, cut the looped hair and remove any headbands to eliminate the hazard. They can also return it to the retailer for store credit. Contact the company with any questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product:</td>
<td>Blender</td>
<td>Hazard: Laceration</td>
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<td>Incident:</td>
<td>A Minneapolis, MN importer in cooperation with the CPSC is recalling approximately 304,000 units of blenders sold nationwide from Sept. 2007 - Feb. 2011. The six speed blenders, manufactured in China, consists of a six-inch tall, white electrical base with five, white speed-selector buttons and one gray button. They have a clear plastic pitcher with handle, a white plastic lid with clear lid stopper and a white plastic blade assembly with two angled, stainless steel blades. While in operation, the plastic pitcher can separate from the blade assembly, leaving the blade assembly in the base and exposing the rotating blades. This poses a laceration hazard to consumers. There have been 11 reports of the blade assembly separating from the pitcher, 7 of which reported serious lacerations. Consumers should stop using the recalled products and return them for a refund. For more details, contact the company directly.</td>
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For more information about these topics and more, please contact:

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