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Document Control & Procedure Writing

Fact Sheet

Quality & Food Safety

SOP
1-Standard
2-Operating
3-Procedure

SAY WHAT YOU DO, DO WHAT YOU SAY, PROVE IT, IMPROVE IT

Why is this important, do we really need to write everything down?

Creates consistency among your employees.
If someone is doing something correct or in a more efficient way, capture it! Then others can be trained on how the task should be done.

Makes training employees so much easier.
It gives them something to reference while they are learning and they are clear on expectations.

Great tool for continuous improvement.
Records can be used to gauge how well the company is doing in producing the product. By continuously reviewing completed records changes which might improve efficiency and profitability may become obvious.

Because it's necessary.
Documents may also be a new regulatory or customer requirement or can be used as a selling and marketing tool.

Selling/Marketing tool
Retailers and consumers want to know they are purchasing and consuming quality safe food. Advertising that you have a documented and implemented Quality and Food Safety Program will put a lot of minds at ease.

SAY WHAT YOU DO

When creating documents there are items aside from content that need to be present. Typical information normally found in the header or footer include:

1. document title (header)
2. company name
3. revision date
4. supersedes date
5. documents approver (usually the author)
6. a revision/issue number

Track Updates/Changes
Changes need to be logged along with the title of the document, who changed it and when it was changed and communicated. This helps with remembering why and when the document was last changed. Some businesses have a separate change log to record changes to their whole program, others add a change log at the bottom of each document.

Content

The content of the standard operating procedures and/or work instruction documents should include:

- Purpose (*why the task is being done*),
- Responsibility (*who is monitoring or doing the task*),
- Frequency (*how often the task should be completed*),
- Procedure/method (*how to do the task*),
- Deviation procedure (*what to do when the task doesn't happen as expected*),
- Verification (*who is the verifier, how often is it verified, where is this recorded*), and
- Records (*where the task is recorded*).

DO WHAT YOU SAY

While you are writing your prerequisite and HACCP documents please keep in mind that these documents aren't a wish list, they are a reflection of what actually happens at your farm/ facility.

Keep It Simple

Please remember when you are writing procedures and records of any type to keep them simple; point form when possible. Use existing equipment or proven practices where possible. User-friendly, well integrated documentation is more likely to be followed.

- Keep it simple with bullet points and flow diagrams.
- Write at a grade 3-5 level.
- Start by documenting what you currently do.
- Use existing procedures/memos.
- Improve them to meet the standard.

Computer records and programs are okay. Use technology when possible to simplify work.

It is important to work with the employees while documenting a procedure because what seems to make sense on paper, may make no sense to the employee when they actually perform the procedure as it has been written. Working with the employees will ensure that the procedure is documented accurately and will create a cooperative food safety culture.

PROVE IT

Record Keeping Best Practices

Detailed SOP's are great, however if you cannot prove that they are being followed then their effectiveness is uncertain. That is where monitoring records comes into play. There is a saying, "If you didn't document it, it didn't happen."

When creating records remember to capture the information needed and to combine records where it makes sense. This works best for smaller organizations where one or two people in some cases are the only ones that operate the facility. For example, if there are a number of checks that are completed on a monthly basis, they could potentially be combined onto one sheet if it makes sense to do so. Once again, get the employees feedback. If the records are cumbersome or do not make sense, then the employees are less likely to fill them out or fill them out correctly.

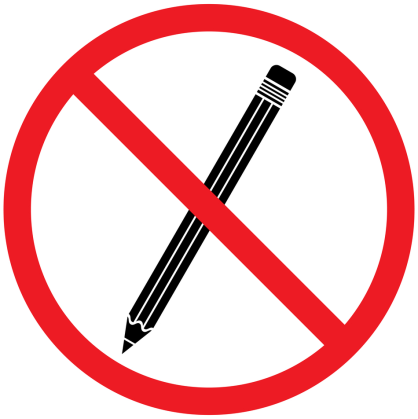
CARCASS SURFACE TEMP CHECK DRIP COOLER
DRIP COOLER OFFAL SURFACE TEMPS
DAILY PRODUCTION OFFALS REPORTS
carcass temp before cut
pre shipment authorzation records
daily trim tracking
SCALES
SWABBING RECORDS
RECEIVING
DAILY MONITORING CHECKLIST
SHIPPING

Make sure the person doing the task is signing off on the document; this is the Monitor. The Monitor is the person who is observing, taking measurements or documenting that the process is under control according to your procedures and policies. The Monitor cannot be the Verifier.

Someone other than the Monitor needs to verify that the information is complete and the record is filled out properly. This is called the Verifier. They are the person that observes and reviews what the monitor has completed and ensures that the records have been filled out accurately to reflect the task at hand. The Verifier cannot be the same person as the Monitor.

When you are filling out records keep in mind the following best practices:

- Use pen, not pencil.
- No liquid paper or correction tape. If you make a mistake draw a line through it and initial.
- Complete them in real time not on scrap paper then transcribed later (auditors love to see well used documents as long as they are still legible).
- Entries need to be dated and initialed or signed by the monitor either at the end of the row or column or on the page.
- Add a spot for the verifier to sign and date.



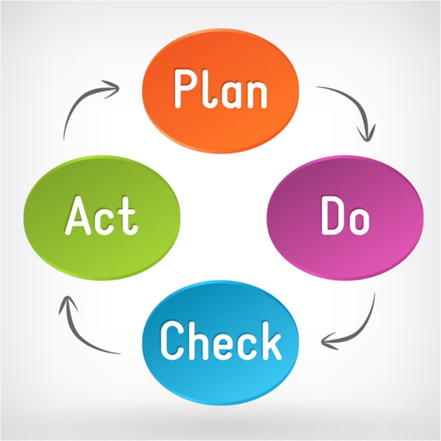
IMPROVE IT

These documents are not set in stone, as the business grows they need to grow.

Remember don't create policies, SOPs and records for the sake of creating paperwork. Make sure what you write down is useful.

Plan - Do - Check - Act

1. Make a plan; you know you need to document your policies, procedures and records, so start writing.
2. Do a test of what is documented, have the employees try it out, review the policies, procedures and records. Are they accurate to what the employees are doing? Are the records easy to understand and use?
3. Check to make sure that, based on feedback, everything is where it needs to be.
4. Act, put the completed policies, procedures and records in place. Don't forget to implement the program. Keeping a binder on the shelf or in a file on the computer doesn't mean you have an effective quality and food safety program. Communicate and train the employees (document that too). Check in after a little while. Do the documents still make sense? Can some records or procedures be combined?



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