



APPROVED SUPPLIER PROGRAM

As the global food supply chain becomes more complex, establishing an approved supplier program becomes more important. An approved supplier program is one control measure to ensure that all incoming raw materials, ingredients, packaging materials and processing aids are safe for use and will not pose a risk of contamination to your product. In addition to the inputs already mentioned, approved supplier programs should also consider equipment and chemicals used in the facility that may come in contact with the food contact surfaces, such as those for cleaning, sanitizing, pest control or maintenance. They should also include service providers that impact product safety, such as those for pest control, laundry services, cleaning, maintenance, transport and distribution, storage, lab testing, catering services or waste management. Contracts or formal agreements with service providers must clearly define expectations regarding product safety.

To develop an approved supplier program, begin by compiling a list of all suppliers of raw materials, ingredients, packaging materials, processing aids, equipment, chemicals and service providers. Each supplier and service provider should be subject to a risk assessment. The risk assessment should take into consideration different criteria regarding the product and the supplier. In the risk assessment below, each supplier will be scored against each criterion, and the overall risk will be calculated. Once the overall risk is calculated, the second table will be used to determine if the supplier is approved, conditionally approved, or unapproved.



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RISK ASSESSMENT

Criteria	Risk Rating				Justification
	1 No Risk	2 Low Risk	3 Moderate Risk	4 High Risk	
A. Product Risk (inherent characteristics such as microbiological risk, allergen risk, pH, water activity, shelf-life, storage recommendations, susceptibility to fraud, etc.)			x		Product is groundfish, which has a neutral pH, high water activity, short shelf-life, and storage requirements to control inherent microbiological risks. It is also an allergen (fish) and susceptible to food fraud (species substitution).
B. Supplier History of Performance (history of non-conformances, complaints, recalls, food fraud incidents, etc.)	x				Supplier does not have any history of non-conformances, complaints, recalls, or food fraud incidents.
C. Length of Relationship with Supplier (trusted, long-time supplier or new)				x	Supplier is a new supplier.
D. Country of Origin (level of food safety regulations/enforcement)	x				Supplier is local supplier in Nova Scotia, Canada, where the level of food safety regulations and enforcement is high.
E. Specifications (availability of specifications, Safety Data Sheets, etc.)	x				Supplier has supplied current specifications for the product.
F. Food Safety Program (proof of annual third-party certification and audit results)	x				Supplier has provided proof of SQF Edition 9 certification and their most recent certificate.
G. Regulatory Compliance (licence or approval from the applicable federal/provincial regulatory agencies)	x				Supplier meets all Safe Food for Canadian Regulations and Nova Scotia Fish Inspection Regulations.
Overall Risk = A + B + C + D + E + F + G = 12					

Approval Category	Total Rating
Approved	7-14
Conditionally Approved (Additional Controls Required)	14-21
Unapproved	21-28

In this example, the overall risk was 12, and as such, the supplier was approved without the need to implement additional controls. Depending on the level of risk, you may need to have additional controls in place. This can include a third-party audited food safety program, product testing, supplier audits, etc. Obtaining evidence of these controls from the supplier is most often in the form of documents, records, etc. Examples of this include:

- A copy of their food safety plan (e.g., HACCP/PCP).
- A copy of their third-party food safety program certification (this can also be found and verified through online directories) or an SFC licence.
- Certificate of Analysis (COA) or Certificate of Conformity (COC)/Letter of Guarantee (LOG) or Letter of Analysis (LOA) outlining the results as well as the accredited lab and methods used.
- A copy of their second-party or third-party audit or inspection results.



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In addition to the risk assessment, the approved supplier program should include the frequency, responsibility and method for monitoring and reviewing approved suppliers. This may be completed by the person responsible for the food safety and quality management system and involve an annual review of the risk assessment, specifications, food safety certification status or a supplier audit. The program should also outline the procedure to follow when materials arrive from an unapproved supplier, such as conducting a risk assessment or product testing. A complete approved supplier program should include a register with the following information: the supplier’s name, address, contact information, the item supplied, if current specifications are on file, the date the supplier was approved and who approved them.

A questionnaire is the easiest method of obtaining information about their quality and food safety management program for approving suppliers. The questionnaire should address the supplier’s product safety, traceability, HACCP and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs). Below is an example of a supplier questionnaire that can be used to collect information used to evaluate supplier approval. Keep in mind that you may need to request additional information from the supplier depending on what item they supply. For example, if you are receiving aquaculture fish, you will need to ensure the harvester is following best aquaculture practices.

SECTION 1. SUPPLIER INFORMATION		
Company name		
Company address		
Contact person, name and title		
Mailing address		
Email address		
Phone number		
Fax number		
Raw material, ingredients, packaging, processing aids, equipment, chemical or service supplied to (Company Name)		
SECTION 2. FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM		
Does your company have a food safety program in place? Circle one.	YES	NO
If yes, please indicate the food safety program and attach your latest audit certificate.		
Is the food safety program GFSI recognized? Circle one.	YES	NO
Are you inspected or certified by a provincial, federal, 2 nd or 3 rd party? Provide details.	YES	NO
Is your facility approved by the appropriate authority (i.e., CFIA, FDA, Provincial, etc.)? Provide details.	YES	NO
Do you have an Allergen Control Program? If yes, please complete the attached Allergen Checklist for each product supplied.	YES	NO



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SECTION 3. COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF NOT GFSI-CERTIFIED

Do you have an employee hygiene policy/GMPs, etc., in place? Circle one. If yes, please attach a copy of your policy.	YES	NO
Do you have a Pest Control Program in place? Circle one.	YES	NO
	Name of pest control provider	
	Frequency of service	
Please indicate the source of water for your facility (i.e., well, municipal, seawater).		
Do you conduct routine water testing? Circle one.	YES	NO
	Frequency of testing	
Do you have a documented Sanitation Program in place? Please provide details on sanitation at your facility. Circle one.	YES	NO
	Details	
Please describe your Recall and Traceability Program.		
Can you supply current specifications, certifications, etc. for items provided? Circle one.	YES	NO
Do you have a HACCP/PCP Plan? Circle one.	YES	NO
SECTION 4. PRODUCT TESTING/CERTIFICATES OF ANALYSIS		
Are your products tested before being shipped to customers? Circle one.	YES	NO
Is a Certificate of Analysis provided for each lot/batch of production? Circle one.	YES	NO
SECTION 5. SERVICE PROVIDERS		
Are you a service provider? Circle one.	YES	NO



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ALLERGEN CHECKLIST FOR SUPPLIERS AND MANUFACTURERS

(Based on CFIA's Allergen Checklist for Food Suppliers or Manufacturers)

Please complete the following table for each product supplied. The first column describes the product component. The second indicates the allergens that may be found in the product, from addition or cross-contact. The third indicates the allergens present in other products that are run on the same equipment but at a different time. The fourth column indicates if any allergens are present in your plant.

Please fill in each cell of the table with a YES or NO and, when applicable, include the name of the ingredient. Do not leave any empty cells.

COMPONENT	PRESENT IN THE PRODUCT	PRESENT IN OTHER PRODUCTS MANUFACTURED ON THE SAME LINE	PRESENT IN THE SAME MANUFACTURING PLANT
Peanut or its derivatives, i.e., peanut pieces, oil, butter, flour, mandelona nuts (an almond flavoured peanut product), etc. Peanut may also be known as ground nut.			
Tree nuts, i.e., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts (filberts), macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts (pinyon, pinon), pistachios and walnuts or their derivatives, i.e., nut butters and oils, etc.			
Sesame or its derivatives, i.e., paste and oil, etc.			
Milk or its derivatives, i.e., milk caseinate, whey and yogurt powder, etc.			
Eggs or their derivatives, i.e., frozen yolk, egg white powder and egg protein isolates.			
Fish or its derivatives, i.e., fish protein and extracts, etc.			
Crustaceans (including crab, crayfish, lobster, prawn and shrimp) and Shellfish (including snails, clams, mussels, oysters, cockle and scallops) or their derivatives, i.e., extracts, etc.			
Soy or its derivatives, i.e., lecithin, oil, tofu and protein isolates, etc.			
Wheat/Gluten or its derivatives (triticale), i.e., flour, starches, brans, etc.			
Sulphites, i.e., sulphur dioxide and sodium metabisulphites, etc.			
Mustard or its derivatives			
Others (as considered necessary)			

Do you have procedures to avoid cross-contact of the product with the allergens not present in the product but noted in the third or fourth columns? YES NO

Please attach a finished product label to this form for each product. If for any reason there are any modifications in this product, you are responsible for updating your records, including labels and specifications, and for notifying us immediately.

Approved Supplier Programs must be reviewed annually at a minimum, including a review of the appropriate documentation required (i.e., specifications, certificates, etc.). Programs may need to be updated throughout the year as suppliers change or as new ingredients, equipment or services are required.

For More Information Contact:

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