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NEWSLETTER

CERES CERTIFICATIONS INTERNATIONAL



Internal Auditing: Your Way of Watching Your Own Back

Folks have a tendency to let things lie until the time for action is neccessary. In our industry it's sometimes waiting until the last minute to "get it together" in time for the Certification, FDA or USDA auditor to come and pick apart your processes, equipment, staff, etc. The challenge is to always be prepared so that you are comfortable with your business to have any auditor come in anytime and not a drop of nervous sweat exists.

Internal Auditing is a skill that is learned and experienced, hopefully with the help of the entire staff from the President down to the sanitation crew mopping restroom floors.

Putting such a system in place is a lot of work but it is critical. It becomes second nature and builds your team. The amount of preparation within your internal auditing program also eases the process of your third-party audit, moving your business beyond simple checklist"box-checking"to verify the effectiveness of procedures and drive improvements.

Revisiting and refreshing your program throughout the year can reduce audit findings, improve compliance, strengthen your overall food safety culture and build a solid team.

What Customers Say About Us!

When I first called CCI, I didn't really know what a GFSI audit was. As a newly appointed Food Safety Manager, with a background in academic research, and little food safety training, I was pretty lost. CCI helped me through it all, gave me advice and answered every question I had. They still do! I will never use anyone else for my audit needs.

— Forest to Fork ★★★★★

Quick Updates

New Initiative: Ask about our Customer Referral Program!

Audit Ready? Download scheme specific Audit Workbook on our website

Event: IDDBA Show
June 7-9, 2026
Orlando, FL

SQF Edition 10 Is Here: What Certified Sites Need to Know

The release of SQF Edition 10 marks one of the most significant updates to the SQF program in recent years. Developed through extensive industry collaboration, Edition 10 is designed to strengthen audit credibility, improve consistency across the supply chain, and place greater emphasis on how food safety systems perform in practice—not just on paper.

While the new Code is now available, implementation is expected to begin January 2, 2027, pending completion of the GFSI benchmarking process. This transition period gives certified sites, auditors, and Certification Bodies time to understand the changes and prepare for a smoother rollout.

A Stronger Focus on Risk and System Effectiveness

Edition 10 introduces several structural and philosophical shifts intended to better align audit outcomes with actual food safety risk. One of the most notable changes is the revised scoring model. While Edition 9 used a traditional "100 minus deductions" approach, Edition 10 introduces weighted "Core Clauses" tied to foundational food safety programs. Findings against these clauses now carry heavier scoring consequences, reinforcing the importance of critical system elements such as:

- Management commitment
- Allergen management
- Sanitation programs
- Environmental monitoring
- Food safety plans
- Approved supplier programs
- Corrective and preventive action
- Product identification and traceability
- Foreign material controls

The intent behind the updated scoring model is clear: strong audit scores should more accurately reflect strong food safety systems.

A Digital-First SQF Experience

Edition 10 also introduces a more modern and accessible digital experience.

SQFI has launched an interactive Code Selector tool to help users identify the correct Code based on their scope and operations. The digital-first format is designed to improve navigation, searchability, and usability while allowing faster updates and multilingual accessibility.

For organizations that still prefer printed copies and annotated binders, printable versions remain available, but the Code is now structured primarily around how food safety professionals work today—digitally, collaboratively, and in real time.

Food Safety Culture Becomes Measurable

Edition 10 also formalizes food safety culture as an assessable component of the SQF system.

Historically, organizations could demonstrate compliance through documented procedures and completed records while underlying behavioral risks remained hidden. Industry experience has shown that many food safety incidents occur not because procedures were absent, but because organizational culture discouraged reporting concerns, normalized shortcuts, or prioritized production over food safety.

Under Edition 10, sites are expected to maintain a documented food safety culture assessment plan that evaluates how food safety is practiced day to day. Auditors will assess culture through interviews, observations, records, management review activities, and evidence of continual improvement efforts.

The goal is not perfection, but transparency, accountability, and proactive identification of risk.

What Sites Should Be Doing Now

Although Edition 10 audits are not expected to begin until 2027, preparation should start well before implementation deadlines approach. Sites should consider using the transition window to:

- Conduct a gap assessment against Edition 10 requirements
- Evaluate readiness against Core Clauses
- Strengthen management review and trend analysis processes
- Shift internal audits toward risk-based evaluation
- Review environmental monitoring and preventive control programs
- Assess organizational food safety culture and employee engagement
- Train teams on upcoming scoring and documentation changes

Organizations that begin preparing early are likely to experience a far smoother transition and stronger audit outcomes once Edition 10 becomes effective.

Supporting Clients Through the Transition

As a Certification Body, we recognize that Edition 10 represents more than a routine Code update. It reflects an industry-wide effort to improve confidence in certification outcomes and ensure food safety systems are both effective and sustainable.

Over the coming months, additional guidance, training opportunities, and implementation resources are expected from SQFI. We encourage certified sites to stay engaged, begin evaluating their systems early, and reach out with questions regarding audit timing, transition planning, or Edition applicability.

Preparation today will position organizations for a more successful transition tomorrow.

World Food Safety Day



This year's World Food Safety Day theme highlights the importance of using data and science to turn the burden of foodborne illness into practical, targeted solutions. Foodborne diseases affect millions worldwide and have far-reaching impacts on health, economies, and livelihoods—but they are largely preventable. By leveraging reliable data, governments, businesses, and consumers can make informed, evidence-based decisions to reduce risk and improve food safety practices. The message is clear: when we work together and apply the best available knowledge, we can prevent contamination and ensure safe food for everyone, everywhere.

More information and communication toolkits can be found on the WHO or FAO websites.

Joke of the Month!

Why don't eggs tell jokes?...

Because they might crack up.

Stay in Touch

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"You have a friend in the business- We guarantee it!"



CCI is Growing!

We're excited to officially welcome our new Caribbean-based auditors and clients to the CCI family!

Expanding our network in the Caribbean is an exciting step forward, and we're proud to partner with such dedicated professionals and organizations who share our commitment to food safety, quality, and continuous improvement.

Featured Social Media Post



CCI - Ceres Certifications,

Small-town Wisconsin roots.
A love for dairy.
Decades in agriculture.

CCI started in Chippewa Falls and has grown alongside the food supply chain — from farms to food manufacturing — delivering practical certification support across SQF, PrimusGFS, and beyond.

Because in this industry... it helps to have a friend in the business; especially one who loves cheese.
#CCI #FoodSafety #Audits #Cheese #Dairy #Agriculture #Wisconsin #Certification #CeresCertifications

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