Michigan’s Food Safety Risk Self-Assessment Tool for Dairy Processing Plants

Introduction: The Food Safety Risk Self-Assessment Tool for Dairy Processing Plants was developed by MDARD to help our state’s artisan dairy facilities comply with the FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act) rules and regulations. This tool enables the producer to assess the risks associated with dairy food production. This is a comprehensive and proactive program for Michigan’s dairy processing facilities to gain FSMA compliance. The practices described in this tool and the appendices are based on available technology and scientific research to promote sound food safety practices. Processors who complete the assessment will be able to determine what management, structural, or equipment changes (if any) will be needed to comply with the FSMA rules.

Background: The need for the Food Safety Risk Self-Assessment Tool for Dairy Processing Plants was highlighted during an after action debrief from a dairy related foodborne illness outbreak in Michigan. The project was initiated by an MDARD Dairy Inspector and developed by a group of Dairy and Food Regulators, Michigan Rapid Response Team members, Industry, and Academia.

Audience: The tool is for small to medium-sized Michigan dairy processors wondering “What do I have to do to be in compliance that is different than I am doing today?” in relation to FSMA.

How it Works: Owners complete a self-assessment and rate their General Practices, Food Safety Plans, and Good Manufacturing Processes to identify areas for improvement. The industry manager will:
1. Select all relevant sections for their plant.
2. Answer the risk questions by selecting the statement that best describes conditions in the plant.
3. Indicate the risk level in the appropriate column.
4. After completing each section of the risk questions, they list the practices that present a high risk. This will be the facility’s Plant Food Safety Improvement Action Plan.
5. In the Plant Food Safety Improvement Action Plan, industry managers will list:
   - Alternative practices, structures, or equipment that are planned to implement or install that will help reduce risks to food safety.
   - Sources of technical and financial assistance.
   - Target dates for accomplishing the changes.

Resources and Appendices (Append-i-cheese): The tool follows the fictional processor “Calico Creamery, L.L.C.” and provides complete examples or plans for Bioterrorism Registration, Food Safety Preventative Controls Alliance Certification information, Hazard Analysis, Allergen Control, Sanitation, Recalls, Sanitary Design and Equipment, Supplier Verification, Employee Health, and Environmental Monitoring that the plant can use to model their own plan.