Is "HACCP"
DISAPPEARING?

By **Richard Mallett,**
Managing Director, HACCP International EMEA

This question, in various guises has appeared in our email inboxes a few times now, from concerned customers, who have heard from sources, including commenters on social media platforms, that *"HACCP is disappearing"*. Naturally they have expressed concern, not least because they have gone through the process to have products HACCP International certified, as part of a due diligence process, to support food industry, providing materials and products that have been evaluated and found to control or mitigate potential food safety hazards that may arise from their selection and use. This in turn of course supports food industry that manages food safety through a HACCP based food safety management system. So, is it true? Well, in terms of HACCP International and the product certification programme the answer is No!

The broader question is where this information emanates from and whether there is any truth to it in terms of the food industry. HACCP as a food safety management system is not disappearing. It's far too successful for that. The nomenclature and terms surrounding a food safety management programme, are, however, at least to a certain extent.

A reasonable example of this can be found in the latest iteration of ISO 22000, which is now ISO 22000:2018 (the older version being ISO 22000:2005) with the transition period for food industry, that is certified to this standard, to update to the new version, ending in Summer 2021.

Let's take a look inside this standard and see how it addresses the need to identify and control food safety hazards through the HACCP process. The standard, it should at first be noted, aligns very closely with the format of ISO 9001:2015, the deliberate outcome of trying to align some of the world's most commonly used ISO standards. ISO 9001 of course does not specifically address food safety management, so this topic is picked up in ISO 22000:2018, specifically in section 8.2 (Prerequisite programmes) and 8.5 Hazard control. Section 8.5 specifies the requirement to conduct the preliminary steps of describing and understanding raw materials and product,

in the context of potential food safety hazards, intended use (including reasonably expected mishandling and misuse of end product), flow diagram, hazard analysis, selection and validation of control measures and then, crucially, in 8.5.4 "Hazard control plan". At this point the term "HACCP plan" is combined with "OPRP" and demoted to appearance within brackets after the section title - Hazard Control Plan. This is different to the previous version of ISO22000 (the 2005 standard), in which section 7.6 was very clearly titled "Establishing the HACCP Plan".

The same theme here is picked up in the BRCGS Global Food Safety Standard in its 8th issue, wherein section 2 is entitled "The Food Safety Plan – HACCP". BRCGS, in their key changes document, discuss a slight change in terminology where the Statement of Intent to Section 2 has changed ever so slightly to "The company shall have a fully implemented and effective food safety plan incorporating the Codex Alimentarius HACCP principles". Their comment on this is as follows: *"Some countries (e.g. the US) have introduced regulatory requirements that incorporate all of the HACCP processes outlined by the Codex Alimentarius but use different terminology. The specific terminology within the Standard, such as HACCP, prerequisites or critical control points, are intended to utilise the most commonly used global terminology to describe expectations. Sites are not required to use the specific terminology of the Standard, but are expected to fully meet the requirements"*.

We can conclude from two of the most commonly used global food safety standards, that "HACCP" is not disappearing. Why would it? Despite being methodology that's 55 odd years old (with of course improvements in implementation and practice) it still works. Rather, terms being used within the food industry are changing somewhat, and you will not always necessarily hear the term HACCP, but instead may hear HARPC, "Food Safety Plan" or "Hazard control plan", or similar. The aim and outcome though, in terms of producing safe food and protecting the consumer, is the same, regardless of the terminology used. ❋