



GETTING READY FOR AN AUDIT... PEST CONTROL STYLE



Many articles have been written about preparing for an audit; however few deal solely on pest management. As one of the foundations for a successful food safety program, having an established and well run pest management program can make preparation that much easier. Plus you have your pest control provider to rely on who will make sound recommendations and assist with a triumphant audit. HACCP has been described in a humorous light to stand for "Have another cup of coffee and pray!". Well instead of relying on caffeine, let's explore sound reasons and methods for a fully functional pest management program and how it can make your audit preparation easier.

Preparing for your audit should be done every day of the year.

Documentation is a key component and some say the starting ground for a solid pest management program. The binder or electronic file that holds your criteria for an established program should be maintained and reviewed constantly, however prior to the audit, one more review should be done to ensure everything is tip top. Auditors will often use documentation as a starting block or guideline to see if a program is working or deficient. Why not give your auditor reason to smile by maintaining your records. Here is a list of the important components to a pest management program that must be in the binder or electronically accessible according to the major third party food safety auditors today:

- Program details – describing what is done and at what frequency
- SOP's – Standard Operating Procedures
- Signed contract
- Insurance certificate
- Pest Control Operator's or Business license
- Technician's Pesticide Applicators license
- Certificate of Training on GMP's
- Quality Pro Standard Certificate (not mandatory, but a good idea)
- Program reviews and audits
- Corrective Action completion tracking
- Service Tickets
- Floor plan
- Pesticide Usage Log
- Permitted Materials list reviewed yearly
- Current label's and MSDS'

This could look like a lot to maintain, however with the assistance of your pest management professional, these records are reviewed and maintained several times a year and expired documents replaced – no excuses. Insert picture of ESM report or documentation pictures.

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Device maintenance is another key component. Traps and other physical controls in place must be functional to capture and monitor for pest activity. Again, this should be maintained each visit by your Technician, however we do hear of plants ensuring traps are extra spic and span prior to the auditors visit. Maintaining the devices is crucial, but placement is important too. Depending on your risk assessment, having traps positioned at set intervals is important in creating a good line of defense. This can be related to a solid perimeter of exterior bait stations to strategically placed fly lights to capture flying insects as they may enter the facility prior to gaining access into production areas. Insert picture of the floor plan.

"I get the occasional mouse or fly activity, am I going to fail my audit?" It's a common question asked in the food industry. Eliminating flour beetles at a flour mill is possible if you 100% eliminate the food source. But then what happens to the finished product and your profits? The reality is there will at some point possibly be pest activity. It is how you prevent and react to the activity that is crucial when dealing with a food safety audit. For instance, mice have been getting into the food plant maintenance area. Through an inspection, it was found that a few small holes exist directly to the exterior. Immediately a corrective action was put into place to increase the number of traps in the area and repair the holes in the wall leading to the exterior. This is an excellent example of quickly and efficiently solving pest activity with a successful corrective action. These corrective actions should be documented and closed off when identified for resolution. Another great example is a very common instance of a trap being blocked by improper storage. The client can implement a corrective action by documenting the product has been removed and warehouse staff received GMP training focusing on pest management and proper storage techniques. Insert picture of person doing an inspection.

Now more than ever, third party auditors are seeing real validity in training of food plant staff. Everyone, not just management should be aware of pest management. Educating your staff is an excellent way to prepare for an audit and ensure the day goes smoothly. If all employees know the importance of keeping doors closed to prevent pest entry, there is a greater chance that door will be closed come audit day and every other day of the year. Your pest management professionals have a presentation that can be geared to your plant and the challenges'/successes specific to your product.

So, when gearing up for your next audit, utilize your pest management professional to ensure a smooth and easy transition occurs from the everyday to the audit day.

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