

## **Positive food safety culture that prioritises people ‘key to reducing risk of contamination or recalls’**

*A food safety culture that prioritises people and supports collaboration in manufacturing facilities, food service businesses, restaurants or retail stores can help improve quality, minimising the risks of contamination or recalls, while also benefiting productivity and talent retention.*

*New global guidance from BSI, developed through consensus with industry giants including McDonald’s, PepsiCo, Compass Group and 3M, and published recently, identifies that the common factor in food safety incidents, quality failures and recalls is people rather than failures of machinery or technology. Equally, when issues occur, people are the key to avoiding recurrence.*

*According to the World Health Organization (WHO), consuming contaminated food results in an estimated 600m people falling ill every year, leading to 420,000 deaths. A desire to tackle this led to a round-table discussion at the 2019 International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) Annual Meeting, then ultimately the creation of an industry steering group. The resulting document, *Developing and sustaining a mature food safety culture (PAS 320)*, is designed to guide organisations of all sizes across food, beverage and retail to create a culture where people are prioritised, all employees embrace food safety, take responsibility for reporting issues, and are empowered to initiate change.*

*Relevant to anyone from manufacturers and factory workers to restaurateurs and baristas, the guidance has been published by BSI following extensive sector discussion on food safety culture, including what it is, how to measure it and how to ensure continuous improvements. The document defines food safety culture as the ‘shared values, beliefs and norms that affect mindset and behaviour toward food safety in, across and throughout an organisation’.*

*It notes that creating and maintaining a strong culture that preserves quality and reduces risk requires management commitment and a mindset that safety is the responsibility of everyone at every stage of the food supply chain. Culture is also highlighted as key for employee retention, improving quality and decreasing contamination risk by decreasing turnover rate.*

*PAS 320 includes steps on identifying gaps and then implementing a plan for change. It makes recommendations related to leadership; the organisation’s vision, mission, values and policy; organisational structure; responsibilities, accountabilities and authorities; guiding coalition team; interested parties; change champions; influencers; and food safety documentation. The guidance also includes advice on how prioritising people in the sector not only supports improved food safety, but also brings other benefits including investment return, business performance improvement, reduction of the costs associated with poor quality, and enhanced efficiency.*

*The FSSAI's (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) 'Eat Right India' movement emphasises that reducing the burden of foodborne illnesses requires influencing people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour towards safe food practices. This includes actions of organisations involved in food production, processing, packaging, and distribution.*

*In India, the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011 mandates that every packaged food must bear all relevant information about the product including its name, nature, ingredients, nutritional information, and manufacturer's details. This regulation is enforced by the FSSAI and aims to provide consumers with accurate information to make informed choices and prevent allergic reactions.*

*Neil Coole, director, Food and Retail Supply Chains, at BSI, said: "A positive food safety culture that prioritises people and gives everyone a stake in driving quality can have a transformative effect and help reduce the risk that comes from unsafe food. This starts with leadership taking steps to turn ambition into action in order to build and sustain continuous improvements across their organisation and the wider supply chain.*

*Reference: <http://www.fnbnews.com/Top-News/positive-food-safety-culture-that-prioritises-people-key-to-reducing-risk-of-contamination-or-recalls-72123>*