



A NEW CHAPTER FOR GMA-SAFE

As it enters its eighth year of operation, the Supplier Assessments for Food Excellence Program (GMA-SAFE) is writing a new chapter in its story with plans to enhance and reposition the program in the global food safety, food defense, and quality management market. "At a time in the food industry when the challenges have never been greater, GMA-SAFE is uniquely positioned to assist the industry with meaningful solutions to tackle these issues", states Bruce Becker, GMA-SAFE Program Director.

Since its inception, GMA-SAFE has gathered information on numerous facilities across 30 countries including the U.S., Canada, and Mexico having performed over 4000 assessments. Clients of the program, with their diverse needs have utilized the GMA-SAFE information gathered to assess facilities and suppliers against many different evaluation systems, standards, and parameters. With 2008 customer survey results achieving over 90% satisfaction, it is clear that GMA-SAFE continues to exceed expectations.

GMA-SAFE will be guided by the depth of experience of a GMA-SAFE "Industry Advisory Group" (IAG) (formerly "Operations Committee") who recently met in Denver, Colorado. Chaired by David Lawrence, Director, Quality Assurance of Safeway Inc., the IAG is well represented by many founders and current users of GMA-SAFE. IAG representatives include Alcan, Bemis/Milprint, Costco, General Mills, GMA, Kraft, Kroger, McCormick, National Starch, Nestlé, Procter & Gamble, Sysco, Unilever, The Coca-Cola Company, and Welch's. The IAG will continue to provide input on the strategic direction of GMA-SAFE and also on the practical and technical aspects of the program, in particular on matters related to the quality, consistency, and integrity of service delivery. In addition to industry representatives on hand in Denver, Dr. Craig Henry, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Scientific and Regulatory Affairs at the GMA stated that GMA looks forward to its continued support of GMA-SAFE to ensure its success moving forward.

GMA-SAFE will build on the flexibility and unique qualities of the program with enhanced data and information management features. With the support of its new parent company, QMI-SAI Global and its Agri-Food Group, along with feedback from the IAG and program auditors, GMA-SAFE will make new investments in the program's technology platform. This includes providing expanded functionality and further enhancements to the customer and auditor interfaces. Phase one of the new system upgrade is expected to be implemented before the end of the first quarter of 2009.

GMA-SAFE will also be making investments to further support its clients by developing capabilities which include the ability to gather data and information necessary to achieve certification to a GFSI benchmarked standard, a new requirement currently being mandated by some retailers.

“We are very excited about the added depth of new resources and the senior management commitment from QMI-SAI Global, not to mention their position as an accredited leading certification body for three of the GFSI benchmarked standards,” states Randall Wilkinson, GMA-SAFE Director of Service Quality. One of the important new developments includes changes to the operating structure of GMA-SAFE. By now using a proprietary system for managing a large pool of auditors, assessors, and inspectors already developed by its parent company, GMA-SAFE will enhance its auditor management program with tighter oversight and quality controls in addition to more cost-effective training tools.

Wendy Tilford, President of QMI-SAI Global, sums it up this way, “We are pleased about opening this new chapter of GMA-SAFE. They have proven to be a strong force in the market working with a wide range of food organizations on issues of food safety, food defense, and quality management. We believe the investments will benefit clients and enhance the program in the marketplace!”

About GMA-SAFE

The GMA-SAFE Program provides organizations with a unique and effective information and data collection platform that enables them to better manage their facilities and suppliers handling issues of food safety, food defense, and quality management. GMA-SAFE assessments are conducted by more than 200 GMA-SAFE certified auditors having conducted over 4,000 assessments in over 30 countries worldwide. We are a global leader committed to exceptional customer service. Information concerning GMA-SAFE can be accessed through our public web page at www.gma-safe.org. Additionally, interested parties can call Bruce Becker, GMA-SAFE Program Director at 202-637-4808 or via e-mail: Bruce.Becker@gma-safe.com.

