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For Immediate Release

What is the Global Food Safety Initiative and How Does It Impact American Business in the Food Eco-System?

By Jeff Gusdorf

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) is a collaborative effort by manufacturers and retailers to provide a uniform food safety management system that streamlines the certification process for complying with regulatory requirements while reducing the cost of doing so.

The effort to create a global system of compliance has been underway in Europe for several years. In the US, Wal-mart announced in February, 2008 that all food suppliers will have to have their factories certified against one of the GFSI standards.

With Wal-marts' high-visibility adoption, it is expected that this standard in the US will be required by other food retailers. This is likely to accelerate the effort of retailers, distributors and suppliers to harmonize food safety standards.

Under the current standards environment there are many certification bodies and thus, many different audit checklists that a supplier must comply with. This is expensive and time-consuming for suppliers to comply with. The GFSI provides for a uniform group of standards that all certifying bodies comply with and thus only a single audit will be needed to achieve the certification.

The Safe Quality Food Institute administers the program in the US and is responsible for managing the many components of this process. They publish the codes, train and license the SQF consultants and auditors, maintain the centralized database of certification and compliance records and provide on-going training.

This initiative has many components to it and companies that participate in the Food Supply Chain need to understand the process so that they can comply with the process and reduce their compliance costs. Gary Smith, Technical Director of the SQF Institute will be conducting a free webinar to introduce the GFSI and answer questions on December 3, 2008. To learn more go to www.software4distributors.com/sage/registration.html

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December 1, 2008

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About The Author

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About The Brown Smith Wallace Consulting Group

The Brown Smith Wallace Consulting Group has been serving the distribution community for more than 20 years through the publication of the Distribution Software Guide, speaking at industry programs, giving free telephone advice to distributors and providing fee-based consulting services to companies who need help selecting the best software packages for their business. For more information visit www.software4distributors.com.

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