

A Foodsafety Control System for the Oils and Fats Supply Chain

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During the last decades, Unilever developed a foodsafety system to control the risk of presence of hazardous contaminants in their products. Oils and fats is a major ingredient of Unilever's foods products with a supply chain which is different from most of the other food ingredients. Therefore, a foodsafety risk control system, tailor made to the characteristics of the oils and fats supply chain, was developed and applied.

The main elements of this system are:

1. Supply chain risk assessment visits to study the growing, harvesting, storage, transport, milling, and crude oil transport practices with special focus on risk of contamination with hazardous chemicals.
2. Crude oil analyses for presence of contaminants like pesticides, poly aromatic hydrocarbons, mineral oil and myco-toxins.
3. Supply chain risk assessment and crude oil analyses resulted in a crude oil risk matrix which is the guideline for contaminants analyses frequencies.
4. Setting –up of a Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) document for crude oil transport, reception, oil processing and refined oil storage and transport. This document is part of the supply contract for third party suppliers and a mandatory guideline for Unilever oil processing operations.
5. A hazard and quality control analysis of the oil processing operations (design HACCP and refinery link table).
6. Fully refined oils and fats supplier audits to check alignment of their practices with GMP and design HACCP.

This system is now operational for several years and it has proven its effectiveness in controlling the risk of hazardous contaminants in fully refined oils and fats.