

PRESS RELEASE

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Milestone for Simply OK: the first certificate awarded

Foundation Simply OK is pleased to announce the first company is certified against the Code of Practice of SimplyOK. On the 11th of December Petra Hol, representative of certification body Vinçotte ISACert, handed over the first Simply OK certificate to Nelleke van der Wekken, Quality Assurance Manager at Dutch Spices.

SimplyOK is a non-profit foundation with the purpose of providing clear, reliable and complete information about allergens on food labels. A certification scheme is developed, to audit the allergen management system of the food business operator. Dutch Spices, supplier of herbs, spices, marinades and sauces, is the first company who is certified according to the SimplyOK criteria.

Five basics

The requirements on allergen management in SimplyOK are built on five basics. They are determined on the basis of years of experience and lessons learned from recall analysis.

1. Collect raw material information
2. Apply correct recipe
3. Designing correct label
4. Prevent exchange of products and labels
5. Prevent cross contamination

Detailed requirements for each basic are laid down in freely available Code of Practice. The certification scheme provides customers the warranty of substantiate allergen information for all allergen information on a food label: the list of ingredients, gluten free or lactose free claims and even in case of cross contamination. A precautionary allergen statement however is only applied when cross contamination cannot be prevented and a risk assessment is conducted by means of the VITAL® program. VITAL® has a scientific base and has laid down safe limits for each allergen, so called reference doses.

Experience

The process of auditing started last August. One of the biggest challenges for Dutch Spices was to collect accurate raw material information from suppliers worldwide. Although many of them are BRC, IFS or FSSC certificated, allergen information was in most cases incomplete. According to Nelleke the selection process took time but working with carefully selected suppliers has many additional benefits. "We have reduced issues regarding sudden change of composition and therefore labelling of our products. Also other quality aspects as contaminations are better controlled by these suppliers. They understand our needs which helps to prevent issues caused by ignorance."

Nelleke has been involved in the run-up to SimplyOK certification as Project manager for over a year. „Our dream is not only to produce allergen safe products but to offer tasteful products which are affordable for everyone. This challenge has been addressed with a

multidisciplinary team, including purchase, planning production, sales, R & D and ICT departments. All our hard work has been rewarded by receiving the certificate.”

Audit

The audit at Dutch Spices is performed by Vinçotte ISACert. Food business operators can check their allergen management system through a third party audit. This audit will be performed in addition to your FSSC-, BRC or IFS-audit. Vinçotte ISACert is one of the two certification bodies from whom auditors has been fully trained in all five basics of allergen management and are capable to judge a VITAL calculation.

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