

Case study

Scott Maddux of BrucePac, a leading US meat manufacturer, spoke to us about joining the BRCGS Enrolment Program, handling non-conformities and achieving an 'A' Grade certification.



The BRCGS Food Safety Standard was introduced in 1998 and to date has certificated over 15,000 suppliers in more than 100 countries worldwide. It was also the first Food Safety Standard to be benchmarked by the GFSI.

Why did BrucePac choose to become certificated and why choose BRCGS Standard for Food Safety? "GFSI food safety audits are becoming mandatory by our customers and their customers. And if we wanted to grow as a company we needed to become certificated. We have always had a great food safety record and we always thought we had everything covered. That all changed when we looked at the BRCGS Standard for Food Safety. We knew this Standard would take us to the next level and that's where we wanted to be."

How did BrucePac select a Certification Body to work with?

"There are lots of Certification Bodies to choose from. We have done a lot of food safety training with AIB and we really like what they have to offer, so we picked AIB to be our Certification body."

Why did you choose to go on the BRCGS Enrolment Program?

"The Enrolment Program allows you to have a full BRCGS audit and if you receive the grade you want you can progress to certification. If you don't receive the grade you want or don't pass you can have another audit within 12 months. We decided to go with the BRCGS Enrolment Program because this would be our first BRCGS audit and we knew there was a learning curve."

How did your implementation program proceed?

"Very well. Our senior management team is fully behind us becoming BRCGS certificated and made sure everyone understood that. The process took about 15 months to complete."

And how about any pre-audit top tips?

"You can't inspect the plant enough. For the most part you will be on top of all the documentation. The plant walk around is a long process and the inspectors look and see everything. One month, three weeks, two weeks and then the week before walk around the facility with your maintenance manager to ensure everything is perfect."

So what happened during the enrolment program audit?

"I discovered we had a little work to do! I also discovered that we had done a really good job in a lot of areas but we ended up with 46 minor non-conformities. I was very disappointed that we didn't pass our audit straight off. But BRCGS is a very strict Standard and there are things that need to be done that have never been done before. The good thing was we had enrolled in the enrolment program so I knew we could make it up before the official audit. Also I knew our customers could follow our progress on the BRC website."

Over **1500**
products

Established
1986

So you think the Enrolment Program was worth doing?

After the first audit I felt like I truly understood what needed to be done and what BRCGS expected. We had no food safety issue. The issue all came from not understanding exactly what we needed to do to meet or exceed a few clauses. The BrucePac management team worked very hard to make sure all minor issues were addressed and during the nine weeks before the official audit we met weekly. This allowed us to keep on top of things and keep the information flowing to each department. The auditor showed up and went through the same audit line for line and looked at all the same documentation as the first audit. After the audit we ended up with five minors and an 'A' grade. Our team did an outstanding job and also understood how BRCGS was taking us to the next level. Each department started to see how the changes affected their department and our company in a positive way.

So what major improvements were made to the site?

The biggest thing we did was make improvements to how we entered our Cook Room (high-risk). We had to build boot and shoe racks, purchase a new boot wash and reconstruct the room to meet the clause.

Would you recommend implementing the BRCGS Standard to other companies?

Yes I would. We sure feel a lot better when our suppliers are BRC certified because we know what they go through to ensure they follow a great food safety program in their facility.

Have you any tips for other sites thinking about implementing the Standard?

Yes, make sure your senior management team wants this to happen. When you build your BRCGS team - and make sure to do this right off the bat - you must have senior management and department managers on it. Our BRCGS team consisted of the Vice President, five senior managers, the facility manager and me, the assistant QA manager. Make sure you purchase the Interpretation Guideline. Then make sure you bookmark the BRCGS website and find a Food Safety Network like International Food Safety & Quality Network (IFSQN) so you can ask questions from professional people from all around the world. This was the biggest thing that helped me. BRCGS is a worldwide

recognised certification that means there are lots of people who have gone through what you are going through. When you received your audit report did you share the result across your organisation, local press and customers? It was a great day when we received an 'A' Grade. The first thing I did was inform the senior management and all the team members at the facility. After that we thanked all our suppliers for doing their part in helping us with all the documents we needed. Lastly we let all our customers know. We also use the BRCGS Food Certified Logo.

And finally, anything else you want to add?

If it was easy to become BRCGS certified every company would do it and pass with an 'A' grade the first time. This is what sets BRC apart from the others. They expect a lot from a company and hold them to really high standards. If every food processing facility, USDA and FDA, were BRC certified we would have a lot less food safety issues in the market place.

About BrucePac

BrucePac has been a pioneer in value-added meat processing for three decades and today its customers include food manufacturers, food distributors, food service companies, institutional feeders, retailers, and restaurants. From 1986 the company has focused on designing and producing specialty meat products which are mostly ready-to-eat and now have over 1500 USDS-approved product labels and a wide range of processing capabilities at their two plants in Oregon, USA. Woodburn and Silverton.

About the BRCGS

BRCGS is the world's biggest provider of Safety and quality Standards programmes for food manufacture, packaging, storage and distribution. Our aim is to be the best in the world in everything we do.

Our Standards are generated with the help of technical specialists, retailers, manufacturers and certification bodies from around the world so everything is rooted in practicality, rigour and clarity.

As well as the Standards, as part of the programme, we offer comprehensive support to help new and established businesses to achieve their quality and safety aims.

For more information about BRCGS please visit www.brcglobalstandards.com