



## CASE STUDY



### Client

Bluegrass Ingredients –  
A leading manufacturer of flavorings and flavors that empower brands to produce the custom flavors and formulas they need to stay ahead.

### Challenge

Build secure, reliable and easy-to-manage cloud-based food safety systems that puts data at the heart of their operations across manufacturing facilities.

### Solution

Food Safety Management and Professional Services.

### Results

- Real-time oversight across 2 sites to ensure they are audit ready every day.
- 25 audits each month conducted in 1 day.
- SQF rating 99.

[www.bluegrassingredients.com](http://www.bluegrassingredients.com)

## BEING AUDIT READY, EVERY DAY

**Safefood 360° drives Bluegrass Ingredients to consistent annual SQF scores of 98 and 99.**

In 2014, Bluegrass Ingredients compliance systems were traditional, paper-based and limited to binders. They were struggling and a simple review could cause significant delays - often sitting on desks for days before anything could be actioned - causing ripple effects elsewhere in the business.

When they did manage to capture processes, the data remained in clipboards and spreadsheets, not allowing them to expand their efficiency, meaning audits and mock recalls remained a regular challenge.

Facing increasing demands from customers, standards, legislation and their own internal desire to grow the business, they realized the challenges before them were a greater task than they were equipped for - quickly seeing they needed a smart system to help them manage their requirements.

Selecting the right vendor to support them was critical to Bluegrass Ingredients' success and a platform was needed that was reliable, scalable and simple to deploy.

By selecting and standardizing their processes with Safefood 360°, they were able to quickly implement oversight of all their operations in real-time and put food safety data and innovation back to the heart of their offerings - allowing them to do what they do best - empower America's leading brands and flavor houses with world class ingredients.

### The Challenge

For more than 25 years across two sites separated by almost 100 miles in the heart of the Kentucky bluegrass, Bluegrass Ingredients provide a one-stop-shop for food brands looking for to rapidly concept, test, and produce the custom flavors and formulations they need to stay ahead.

To deliver on this, each year they produce more than 10 million lbs. of cheese, used to manufacture traditional dairy products like milk, cheese and sour cream powders. Additionally, Bluegrass Ingredients provides non-dairy fruit flavorings and plant-based powders enforced with pea-protein.

Placing agile ingredient innovation at the heart of their business, they needed a vendor that could ensure their daily compliance obligations unaffected with the ability to use the data they capture daily to drive the business forward.

“It was easy to see the thought processes behind Safefood’s design and how it was built against compliance standards specific to our industry”.

**Mike Wernigk,**  
Director of Quality,  
Bluegrass Ingredients

### The solution

Although they looked at multiple systems, Bluegrass Ingredients immediately knew that Safefood 360° was exactly what they needed. Once they discovered that the Food Safety Management Solution had 35 modules, they knew they had everything they needed combined in one application. “We have total control and oversight of our systems in real-time. We know the exact status of our documents and nothing is ever lost,” notes Mike Wernigk, Director of Quality at Bluegrass Ingredients.

“I have complete access and oversight of our complaints and all background information in one place, and our root causes and corrective actions can be easily displayed in easy-to-use reports.”

Deployed across Bluegrass Ingredients sites that span Kentucky, Safefood 360°’s foundation complements Bluegrass Ingredients’ approach to agile ingredient innovation and allows them to remain flexible to their customer demands while knowing their compliance systems are secure.

“I now have real time visibility of what is happening in our sites and am always instantly alerted when something needs to be done” says Wernigk. “No matter where I am in the world, whether it’s on the road or locked down at home, the fact that we can do this and ensure that our sites are always standard and equal, can’t be underestimated”.

### The results

Wernigk notes how Bluegrass once had an unannounced FDA audit while he was 2,000 miles away on a business trip. “Luckily, we had just finished implementing the software a few months prior, so we had a lot more confidence navigating what could have been an otherwise tricky situation”.

Maintaining compliance on Safefood 360° allows Bluegrass to concentrate on their

customer need’s and allows them to spend resources on more value added activities. “I truly believe we need to be audit ready every day to be compliant with GFSI and Safefood 360° gives us the system and processes to ensure we are” confirms Wernigk. “We do 25 audits on the first of every month and our auditors are able to directly complete actions and assign a score for everyone to see or a corrective action if it’s needed so we can improve”.

The increased emphasis on internal requirements has resulted in an extremely positive yearly SQF results. “We’re extremely proud that since implementing the software we’ve achieved nothing but high SQF audit scores” Wernigk notes. “During the height of lock down and restrictions, we actually achieved a score of 99 with our hybrid audit”.

The ethos of bluegrass to provide best-in-class ingredients extends to its emphasis on compliance systems. “Safefood 360° gives us the confidence and flexibility to improve, and our most recent audit was delivered in 30% less time than expected.”

### The future

Wernigk states Bluegrass has full confidence in the platform and the future. “I’m always surprised at how active the development and enhancements are. There’s always something new to learn”.

Underpinning Safefood 360° is a world-class Business Intelligence layer that excites Wernigk for upcoming projects. “It’s great being able to build dashboards, but the ‘Ask Data’ feature allows us to go and question our data directly, using that to establish baselines is going to change how we think of continuous improvement and be a tremendous benefit for our future plans and growth aspirations”.

Wernigk concludes that “when a customer audits us, we can quickly show them that we are a world class operation, because we use Safefood 360° software.”

