“The BRC Global Standard is simple to understand, ensuring food safety is prioritised in an effective way.”
Shrikant Kulkarni, Manager, Operations, Sahyadri Farms

SAHYADRI FARMS
GROWING SAFE FOOD SO YOU CAN EAT SAFE FOOD

The BRC Global Standard for Food Safety was first introduced in 1998, and was the first food safety standard to be benchmarked by the GFSI. Shrikant Kulkarni of Sahyadri Farms, a farmer producer company and the leading exporter of table grapes to Europe, the Middle East and Asia, told us about why his company decided to pursue BRC Global Standards certification.

THE SAHYADRI FARMS STORY

Sahyadri Farms was first established in the early 2000s as a collective of 10 ‘marginal’ farmers (owning land less than 1 hectare in size) in the village of Mohadi, in the Maharashtra region of India. The farmers faced challenges such as lack of infrastructure, agri inputs and advisory; a fragmented supply chain; poor cold storage facilities; high post-harvest losses; and exploitation by multiple intermediaries on the way to market. As a collective, they hoped to address these issues and reduce rural poverty by connecting farmers with markets.

Over the next several years, focusing on their mission to become farmer-entrepreneurs, they grew to over 140 marginal farmers, working together to realise the changes they wanted to see in the industry. They began to ship their produce to leading supermarkets, supplying fresh grapes across the globe. In 2011 the company was incorporated as Sahyadri Farmers Producer Co. Ltd (SFPCL) and was successfully overcoming many of their initial challenges.

Now, the site employs over 300 employees and encompasses over 8,000 farmers, and continues to enjoy a reputation as the leading exporter of table grapes to Europe, the Middle East and Asia. They also produce processed foods such as aseptic pulps and concentrates, individually quick-frozen fruits and vegetables, jams, sauces and beverages.

WHY BRC GLOBAL STANDARDS?

Sahyadri Farms chose to become certificated toward the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety for the following reasons:

Safety: Committed to delivering safe, quality products, Sahyadri Farms chose the BRC Global Standard because it is simple to understand, ensuring that food

CERTIFICATED SINCE 2015
EST. 2000
300+ EMPLOYEES
25+ SUPPLIERS
16 SUPPLIER LOCATIONS
safety can be implemented in an effective way. They also wanted a food safety management system that is GFSI recognised.

**Traceability:** Sahyadri Farms strongly believes that in order to know your food, you have to know your farmer. Their emphasis on traceability from farm to table, farmer to customer, is supported and reinforced by the requirements around traceability set out in the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety.

**Process:** By providing a framework and basis for food safety processes and procedures, the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety is helping to transition Sahyadri Farms’ people-oriented work into a systems-oriented mindset. This has contributed to improving product safety, site productivity and efficiency.

**THE ROAD TO CERTIFICATION**

When Sahyadri Farms decided to seek certification for their packing house, they started by purchasing a copy of the Standard. Prior to implementation, they ensured that key team members understood the requirements, then began training each department in order to implement the requirements in a systematic way. Record keeping began at the same time and was done through documentation such as policies, standard operating procedures, plans and work instructions.

One of the challenges for Sahyadri Farms to implement the Standard was that standards are intended and designed to cover a wide range of food products. Sometimes it can be difficult to justify whether a particular clause or sub-clause is applicable to a particular product, as the system is all based on the risk associated with a certain product, processing and end use of the product. Some clauses can be very important considering the nature of a product, while a few may be less significant and not require implementation for a particular product. (To address this, BRC Global Standards has developed a suite of industry-specific guidelines for products such as fresh produce and raw meats, and voluntary modules that add on to the main BRC Global Standards audit.)

In the end, the effort paid off and achieved Sahyadri Farms a Grade ‘A’ on their first audit in February 2015. Shrikant Kulkarni, Operations Manager, says, ‘Of course, there is always room for improvement and we take every finding positively. We try our best to improve continuously by learning from the audits, technical literature and our customers. This is where our journey started and it is always continuing.’

**BENEFITS OF BRC GLOBAL STANDARDS CERTIFICATION**

Sahyadri Farms’ motto is ‘Seeding goodness’. They strive to enact this in every aspect of their business, including ensuring quality, traceability and safety for all their products. The BRC Global Standard for Food Safety supports these efforts by providing a framework for food safety management that encompasses these aims. In this case, it also provided better process control and consistency.

Having a GFSI recognised scheme is important, as Sahyadri Farms are a leading supplier of produce to a global market. GFSI recognition reinforces the global nature of commitment to food safety, and shows that the BRC Global Standards are benchmarked to the highest international level of food safety recognition. As such, certification to the BRC Global Standard helped open up new market opportunities, particularly in Europe. Overall, certification helps ensure that Sahyadri Farms’ unofficial motto, ‘We grow safe food so you can eat safe food’, is backed by an assurance of quality and safety.

See how BRC Global Standards can help your business reach its full potential www.brcglobalstandards.com