Supplier Approval Documents

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Document Type	Document Description	Why is This Document Important?	Which Facilities Should Collect This Document?	Priority Level
Product Specification/Technical Data Sheet/Nutritional Information	Description of product or packaging that identifies key metrics including: ingredient statement, testing parameters (if applicable), pack size, shelf-life information, nutritional information, allergen declaration, storage and handling requirements.	In order to assess each raw material in your facility, all facilities need to gather information about the product.	This is a necessity of ALL supplier approval programs.	High
Allergen Matrix / Declaration	All allergens must be clearly identified for each food ingredient/product. Many companies will provide an allergen matrix that identifies allergens in the product, processed on the same line, and present in the same processing facility. Allergens of concern must include the major allergens for the country of manufacture as well as the country of sale (if applicable).	Proper identification of allergenic ingredients is the basis of all Allergen Control Programs. Allergen declarations help you design your allergen control program, assess risk for sanitation practices, and declare allergens in product labeling.	All food manufacturers, distributors, handlers, and retailers must be aware of the allergens in their products and facilities.	High
Country of Origin Statement	Statement to identify the country of origin for the product or ingredient(s).	Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) is required for retail packages of certain products: muscle cut/ground meats - lamb, goat, and chicken; wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish; fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables; peanuts, pecans, and macadamia nuts; and ginseng.	Facilities that process any food items that are required to have Country of Origin Labeling or companies importing ingredients under an FSVP program must collect these documents. Other facilities may elect to collect a COO Statement based on risk and ingredients used.	Medium
SDS	Safety Data Sheet or Material Safety Data Sheet that identifies hazardous ingredients and its physical or chemical characteristics. May also provide handling precautions and emergency exposure responses.	Provides safety information about what to do in the event of inhalation, contact with the eyes, etc. and it is imperative to be able to access the information quickly in the event of an exposure. Typically SDS's are available for ingredients/products in the form of fine powders (cinnamon, corn starch) where inhalation is a safety concern.	An SDS must be collected for all chemicals held on site including maintenance and sanitation chemicals, lubricants, processing aids, and ingredients that may pose a safety concern.	High

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GMO/BE Statement	Statement identifying the presence of genetically modified organisms or bioengineered foods.	The National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Law (2016) established mandatory standards for disclosure of foods that are or may be bioengineered.	All food manufacturers, importers, and certain retailers are required to ensure bioengineered foods are adequately disclosed.	High
Identity Preserved Claim certificate: Kosher / Halal / Organic / Non-GMO Project / Fair Trade	Claim program certificate (and audit, if applicable, i.e Organic). Must include a list of products covered under the claim - especially important for Kosher and Organic Certifications.	Items to be used in Identity Preserved Claims program will require documentation for all raw materials that are part of the program.	Suppliers who produce items that will be certified under any identity preserved claims program will need to collect adequate documentation for all raw materials.	Medium
Radiation Statement	Food and food packaging may be processed by ionizing radiation as a control measure for biological hazards or handled on equipment that emits radiation. A radiation statement, or irradiation statement, identifies if food has been subject to ionizing radiation during processing.	Foods treated with ionizing radiation may be subject to FDA labeling rules.	All food and food packaging materials should be assessed for radiological hazards.	High
Certificate of Analysis / Certificate of Conformance	Certificate of Analysis or Conformance is a lot-specific document that provides results from any tests conducted on product. This shows proof of identity or proof of conformance to agreed upon standards established in the product specification.	COA or COC serves as verification that raw materials received are provided as described in the Product Specification. In the absence of a COA or COC, material sampling and testing may be required.	Any facility who does not perform sampling and testing on incoming raw materials should request COA's from suppliers whenever possible. Certain high-risk ingredients (such as raw liquid eggs) may require COA with each lot delivered.	Medium
Hazard Analysis for Product, Process Flow	HACCP plan, HARPC plan, or process flow diagram with hazard analysis which identifies any control measures implemented by the supplier or manufacturer.	It is important to understand what hazards are identified by your suppliers and what control measures, if any, are in place when conducting your own hazard analysis. Any hazards that have not been controlled by the supplier will need to be taken into consideration in your process.	Some suppliers may consider their Hazard Analysis to be proprietary information and choose to provide a summary or flow diagram only. An attempt should be made to gather as much information as is available. In the event a supplier cannot or will not provide Hazard Analysis information, the product should be assessed with higher risk.	High

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Security Assessment / Questionnaire	Documented security controls demonstrate that a supplier is capable of protecting the integrity of food products under their control at all times so that you as a purchaser of their products can feel confident that the food products are safe and are what they claim to be. Suppliers may provide documentation of their own Food Defense / Food Security plan or return a completed questionnaire.	Documentation should provide information for you to assess safety measures implemented by the supplier such as trailer seals, facility security systems, cameras, employee background checks, etc. and ultimately identify mitigation strategies to implement in your own program.	Following the FSMA Final Rule, food facilities are required to create a Food Defense Plan and conduct a vulnerability assessment to assess potential risks to food at all steps of processing.	Med-High
Batch / Lot Coding Interpretation	Interpretation guide to read supplier lot codes identified on raw materials and packaging, especially to connect deliveries with COA's and COC's.	Lot code interpretation guides are useful for interpreting partial or blurred lot codes of ingredients that are recorded for internal traceability and/or communicating with the supplier in the event of a recall or non-conforming product.	All facilities must be able to correctly identify and communicate ingredient lot code information for traceability purposes.	Medium
Letter of Guarantee / Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement Section 303 (c) (2) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act	Statement provided by suppliers to guarantee compliance with federal food safety legislation and that product provided will be pure and not adulterated or misbranded. In simple terms, what you order is what you will get. Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement tends to be a part of this LOG - states if the purchaser handled the products properly, the seller agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the purchaser from any suits alleging claims of adulteration or misbranding.	Letters of Guarantee can protect your company if suppliers provide a product that does not conform to specifications or in the event of an ingredient recall.	Every supplier of raw materials and packaging **must** provide a Letter of Guarantee to be updated annually.	High
Third Party Audit Certificate	Audit certificate (full audit report with certificate is even better but not all suppliers are willing to share this, may also request the corrective action report in place of a full audit report) for an accredited third-party audit. GFSI audits are the gold standard including: SQF, BRCGS, FSSC 22000, GlobalGAP, Primus GFS, etc. In the absence of a GFSI audit, GMP audit certificates may also be deemed acceptable with additional risk assessment.	Third Party Audit certificates provide a level of confidence in a supplier who has been inspected by an independent party (auditor) who is qualified to review food safety, food defense, quality, and prerequisite programs for compliance to globally recognized industry standards.	Suppliers who are able to provide a valid GFSI audit certificate can be approved with the greatest confidence. Other suppliers may be approved but will require additional risk assessments and may need to be audited by a member of your staff to confirm compliance.	Medium

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FDA Warning Letter Search	Search results conducted by your staff using FDA online resources to identify if suppliers have been served Warning Letters by the FDA. https://www.fda.gov/inspections-compliance-enforcement-and-criminal-investigations/compliance-actions-and-activities/warning-letters	Understanding any history of non-compliance will help you to assess the risk of working with certain suppliers. Response to FDA Warning Letters can also be used to assess supplier's commitment to food safety and reflect on their ability and willingness to address non-conformances. A supplier search supports a valid supplier approval program by supplier's compliance with regulations.	All suppliers must be assessed at initial approval and during annual reevaluation to ensure continued compliance with food safety regulations.	Med-High
Recall Search	Online search results using USDA/FDA resources, search engines, and supplier websites/press releases of past product recalls. FDA Link: https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts USDA Link: https://www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls	A history of recalls is important to understand the risk of working with potential suppliers as well as new ingredients. A supplier search supports a valid supplier approval program by supplier's compliance with regulations.	All suppliers must be assessed at initial approval and during annual reevaluation to ensure continued compliance with food safety regulations.	Med-High
Proposition 65 Compliance Statement	Identification of ingredients or chemicals that must be declared for sale to consumers in the State of California. Additional product labeling may be required.	Proposition 65 requires products sold to consumers in the State of California to provide adequate warning of the presence of chemicals identified in Prop 65 as being known to cause cancer, birth defects, or reproductive harm.	Suppliers who sell retail products in the State of California or to distributors that may sell to consumers in California.	Medium
Other documents to consider:	Insurance Coverage	Supplier Emergency Contact Information	Proof of FSVP Plan	Lower
	GRAS Statement	FDA Registration		Lower

Priority Levels		
High	*Medium*	*Lower*
Mandatory for Most Facilities	Dependent on Facility Programs in Place	May be Requested Based on Risk Assessment