



Reser's and the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)

Food safety remains the number one imperative at Reser's Fine Foods, and with the number of recalls in the news and the recent changes in food regulations there has never been more interest in this topic. Our customers are continually looking for assurances that Reser's products are produced to world class standards of safety and quality, and because of this our production facilities have been required to undergo multiple third party audits that have been redundant and expensive for the company. Fortunately a world-wide standard of food safety control systems is emerging, and Reser's has become an industry leader in adapting one of several Global Food Safety Initiative programs, a food safety and quality standard called Safe Quality Foods, or SQF. The stated mission of SQF is to deliver consistent, globally recognized food safety and quality certification programs based on sound scientific principals, consistently applied across all industry sectors, and valued by all stakeholders. Many of our customers in both the retail and food service segments have now made this sort of certification a requirement. The SQF program has three levels of certification, Level 1, which is basic food safety, Level 2, which is food safety employing the principals of HACCP, and Level 3, which adds food quality attributes formatted in a HACCP like structure. Reser's major plants are currently certified to SQF Level 2 and are working on Level 3, which has been referred to as 'HACCP on Steroids'.

Reser's embraced the SQF program early on, and we can be proud that we were a leader in achieving Level 2 certification, a major project requiring over 6 months of work involving all of Operations Departments, and cumulating in a 5 day certification audit by a highly trained SQF auditor. Maintaining certification requires a lot of program upkeep and a similar annual audit, and one advantage to the program is that many of our customers accept SQF certification in lieu of other previously required audits, so the total number of audit we need has decreased. An example of one of the actual SQF Certificates we have earned is attached for your review. We are now embarking on a program to require SQF certification from all of our ingredient and even packaging suppliers.

Hopefully this information will familiarize you with the basics of GFSI and SQF so that you can discuss them and present Reser's involvement in these programs with customers or others that may be interested. Please contact me if you have questions or require further information on these important food safety and quality systems.

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