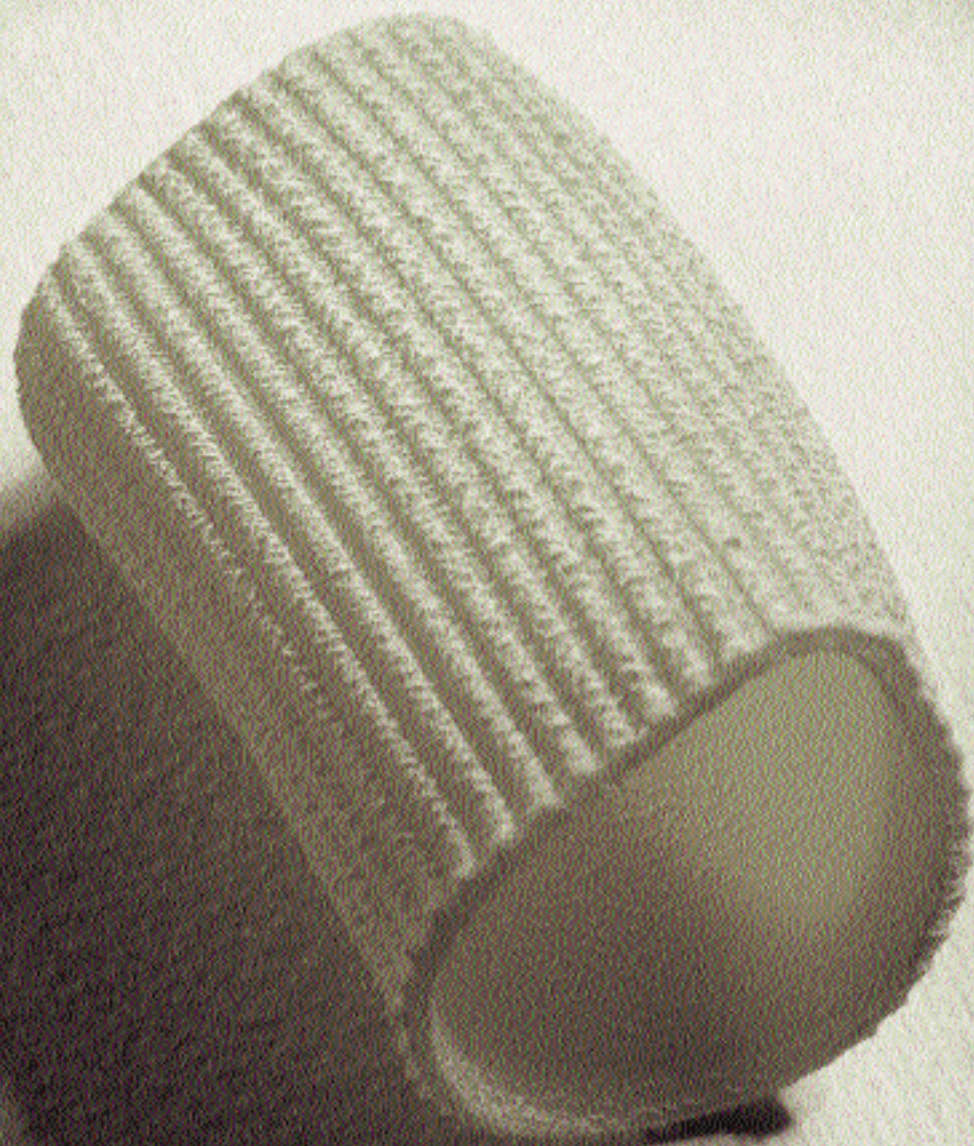


LA CITTÀ DELLA QUALITÀ



**IMQFOOD**  
LA SICUREZZA CHE ALIMENTA LA QUALITÀ

VOLUNTARY PRODUCT CERTIFICATIONS

## VOLUNTARY PRODUCT CERTIFICATIONS

The quality, variety and authenticity of Italian food products are renowned throughout the world and undoubtedly represent one of our major export groups. This uniqueness must be capitalised on, while always trying to increase its value in the best possible way. This is possible thanks to one instrument: voluntary product certification.

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Certification consists of a formal act in which a third, independent body, audits conformity to specific requirements that are set voluntarily and this audit is carried out so that its reliability is reasonably ensured. In particular, voluntary product certification is appropriate for companies that are interested in diversifying or promoting one or more product lines, through a process that allows organisations to define the requirements of the certification while ensuring that they produce a specific added value and, if required as part of a compulsory measure, to set the stringency levels thereof.

### Certification

The certification process is based on the following elements:

- A technical reference document that contains the elements that enhance and distinguish the products in question, i.e., the requirements of the certification
- Definition of procedures and audits that the organisation intends to carry out, based on the specific products to be certified, so as to ensure that the objectives of the certification are satisfied and maintained over time
- An on site audit carried out by the certification organisation aiming to confirm compliance with the requirements. This audit also includes system and product audits with samplings and analyses.
- Evaluation of the results of the audit by the IMQ Committee for final assessment of compliance and issuing of the certificate – periodic post-certification inspections

### Advantages

- Recognisability and increased value of company products as perceived by the market thanks to certification by an independent body that confers added value to certified products
- Certification is a significant element of communication which can help producers or distributors of the product promote to consumers the reliability of the company, given its voluntary cooperation with an independent body, thereby offering proof of the features declared by the producers.
- Integrating the system with certification systems that are already in existence or being implemented while also having the possibility of carrying out combined inspections, thereby acquiring benefits in terms of organisation as well as economy.

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TRACEABILITY CERTIFICATION

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## TRACEABILITY CERTIFICATION

The terms “chain” and “traceability” are key terms in the food “chain” which indicate the guarantees that document a product’s history, from farm to fork and vice-versa, throughout all phases of production, processing and distribution.

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The UNI EN ISO 22005 standard has been transposed into national law since January 2008 and replaces standards UNI 10939 and UNI 11020, while providing uniform terms, contents and objectives. The standard applies to individual companies that produce, process and distribute products as well as to complex organisations (chains). In this case, the basic concept set forth in the standard is based on the definition of contractual relations which must be defined among the different players within the chain so as to provide proof of the shared desire to ensure traceability between companies and to make it possible to trace all elements that are part of the process along the food chain (e.g., raw materials, semi-processed and finished goods, packaging, etc.). This system is an instrument that proves transparency to the market, thanks to the relations that are set up between the members that constitute the chain, while it is also a significant element for food safety that facilitates compliance with compulsory regulatory requirements (Reg. 178:2002).

The UNI EN ISO 22005:2008 standard is also applicable to individual companies and is a natural complement to a course that the various members of a chain should follow: indeed, this document defines the requirement that must be satisfied by an organisation to ensure correct management of traceability within the organisation itself (origin of raw materials, status of semi-finished goods, destination of finished product lots).

### Certification

The certification process provides for an initial on site inspection and post-certification inspections carried out by the certification organisation at the various members of the chain according to an established sampling criterion. The certificate which is issued to the head company within the chain must correctly indicate the chain that has been traced as well as all involved entities.

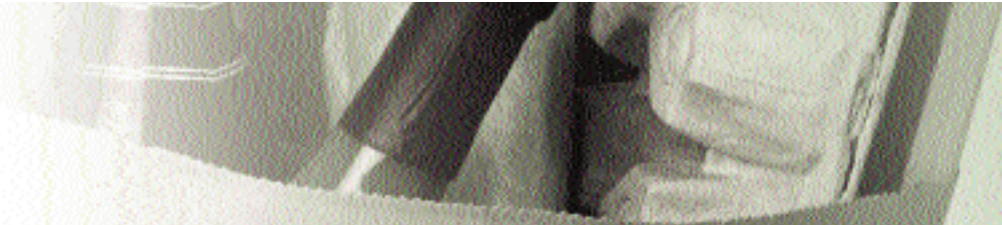
### Benefits

- Transparency of the organisation vis à vis the market through a clear policy of shared intents between the head of the chain and other players that is based on subscription to a formal chain agreement.
- Possibility of communicating the certification obtained to final consumers and commercial partners.
- Facilitation insofar as adhering to compulsory requirements insofar as traceability.
- Opportunity of emphasizing the origin of a product by linking it to a very specific territory.

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**BRC AND IFS STANDARDS**



## INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED STANDARDS COVERING THE REQUIREMENTS OF EUROPEAN AND ITALIAN CLIENTS

The food sector is one of Italy's main exporting sectors. Pasta and tomatoes, wine and cheese are now exported everywhere. Together with its preference for our products, the market appears to pay more and more attention to the selection of suppliers, particularly on account of the following two phenomena:

1. the behaviour of consumers who are more and more sensitive to food safety issues
2. the role of retailers which is more and more identifiable as the major producer (with private label products).

In this context, it is easy to discern the reason why in recent years major retailers have adopted international food safety standards such as BRC Food and IFS which have been developed to consolidate the basic criteria according to which organisations involved in large scale distribution and therefore also certification bodies, carry out compliance audits and select their product suppliers, whether for private or own labels.

Compliance with BRC and IFS standards, though voluntary, aims to assist retailers in selecting their suppliers, by ensuring that certified suppliers produce according to precisely defined qualitative standards.

### **BRC Global Standard for Food Safety**

BRC Global Standard for Food Safety has been drawn up by the BRC (British Retail Consortium), the group of organisations representing the main interests of large scale distributors in the U.K.

### **IFS - International Food Standard**

IFS - International Food Standard Has been developed by the BDH (which represents German retailers) and the FCD (which represents the interests of retailers in France). In its last issue, the standard was further developed with the contribution of Federdistribuzione, ANCC and ANCD (which represent the interest of Italian retailers and the cooperative world).

### **Contents**

The BRC and IFS standards are applicable to companies that produce, process and package foodstuffs. The structure of the standards is very similar, particularly insofar as the subdivision of the sections covering the following aspects:

1. Implementation of a quality system and HACCP
2. Minimum structural/functional requirements
3. Product audits
4. Process audits
5. Staff training

### **Certification**

The standards are managed under product accreditation, as per the will of their owners and therefore, particular attention is paid to the production process, in addition to management of the quality system. They can be adapted to any production concern without any limitations insofar as the product or the country in which the processing takes place.

### **Benefits**

- Possibility to access new markets. Compliance with the requirements set by the BRC and IFS standards is not mandatory, but it does provide an excellent commercial instrument as it is an element that is required by Italian and European chains.
- Possibility of adhering to single standards of reference, thus reducing the number of audits received by retailers.
- Possibility of using existing synergies with other certification schemes (ISO 9001 ISO 22000; HACCP, product certifications), and of integrating the various requirements.

### **Other BRC family standards**

The IMQ group can carry out certifications on BRC IOP standards (certification for companies that produce packaging materials and materials that come into contact with foodstuffs), BRC Storage & Distribution and IFS Logistic (certification of companies that carry out activities linked to logistics and distribution).

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ISO 22000: FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

## ISO 22000: FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The need for safety in the food field has resulted in the publication of numerous standards and procedures regulating the sector, over the years.

The latest is ISO 22000:2005, a voluntary standard that aims to harmonise the requirements of a company insofar as food safety, on a global level.

The ISO 22000:2005 standard allows all companies, whether large or small, with more or less complicated management structures, to dispose of a more focused food safety management system which is in line with the nature of each company's particular operations, compared to what these companies already had in place in order to comply with applicable regulations.

The ISO 22000 standard has the significant advantage of integrating and harmonising at an international level the approach to safety along the entire food chain.

### Contents

The standard has been developed by one of ISO's technical committees in cooperation with experts in the food industry, the Codex Alimentarius, the FAO and the World Health Organisation. The standard has a very large field of application so that all entities involved in the food chain can adhere to it: the main merit of this document is the way in which it has organised different management philosophies applying to health risks so that it has become a valid instrument for companies that wish to implement a system that is focused on health issues,

The ISO 22000 standard is based on the following 4 key elements:

- the implementation of an active, efficient health safety system
- application of HACCP principles, starting from the Codex Alimentarius.
- application of prerequisite programs - basic activities throughout the entire activity that focus on health safety, which differ depending on the company's position along the chain
- interactive communication: management of the information flow regarding health safety to and from the organisation.

### Certification

Though it can be applied on its own, the ISO 22000 standard is completely compatible with the ISO 9001:2000 standard. The companies that already have ISO 9001 certification can therefore extend their certification to include ISO 22000. The numerous common aspects with the BRC and IFS standards can also make it possible to conduct joint audits, thereby resulting in savings of time and expenses.

### Benefits

- Adherence to a standard that is well known internationally and certifiable
- Acquisition of a method that allows the organisation to manage different risk philosophies by placing a company's focus on a systemic approach that is based on prevention rather than an ex-post examination of the product
- Organisation and finalisation of a communications system that is applicable between the various commercial partners
- Optimisation of resource both within individual companies as well as along the entire food chain