

# Keeping Pathogens Out Perspectives Shared... Rising Up After a Recall

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SARGENTO FOODS INC.

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# What's Inside

- Who We Are
- What We Do
- 2017 Recall
- Corrective Actions
- Strengths and Opportunities
- Rising Up



# Who We Are

- Family owned – 3<sup>rd</sup> Gen
- Mission Statement
- “Hire Good People and Treat Them Like Family”
- Our 5 Corporate Strategies
- Corporate Social Responsibility



# Statement of Values and Purpose

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*“Sargento Foods is a family-owned cheese company dedicated to enhancing long-term stakeholder value. Sustained by an insatiable winning spirit, we are guided by our faith in God. Our central purpose is to be the best at responding to customer and consumer needs for cheese and cheese-based solutions. We will achieve this goal by exceeding expectations for innovation, service, quality, value, taste, and convenience. We share the results of our success with those that contribute to that success.”*

# “Cheese workers cheer \$208 Million Dollar Lottery Win”





# What We Do

- “We don’t make cheese...but we do make it easy to eat!”

- Leader in Natural Cheese and Packaging Innovation
  - 1958 first to market shredded cheese
- CPD and FSI
- \$1.4 Billion in Sales
- 1900+ employees
- On-site State of WI Licensed Cheese Graders



# Recall

- February 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bp24qjgk5ME>

# Recall events

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- FDA Inspectors in Tennessee conducted random sampling and testing in a retail deli
- Cheese tested from the deli during this FDA sampling was found to be positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*
  - *Colby and Colby-Jack Longhorns*
- Cheese was produced by Deutsch Kase Haus LLC of Middleburg, IN
- FDA posted a consumer alert and began their investigation
- DKH notified us via e-mail that we had purchased implicated cheese and they were “voluntarily recalling” their products
- Production at DKH was suspended indefinitely
- The potential root cause was communicated to FDA along with Corrective Action Plan
- No illnesses had been reported



# Recall events

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- A variety of brands, stores, and food service and food ingredients customers were affected by this recall
- Corporate Communications
  - Calls and letters to follow-up
  - FSI product and customers
  - Retailers
- Dates and scope expanded

# Corrective Actions

- FDA
- FSMA
- GFSI/BRC
- Projects
- Consultants



# Corrective Actions

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- Supplier was terminated immediately even though we still needed to work with them through the investigation
- Cut off flow of materials between conversion plants - rules
- Contracted outside Legal Expertise
  - Formerly with the FDA
- Updated our Supplier Risk Assessment
  - Communication of Supplier expectations
  - Initiated Program for Verification of Supplier Testing
- Contracted 3<sup>rd</sup> party Food Safety Consultants

# Project Phoenix/Project Sun

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- Unbiased 3<sup>rd</sup> party review of our FS and Quality Systems, processes and procedures
- Identified gaps vs. industry best practices
- Included a FSMA evaluation
  - Reviewed 3 months of Production and FS Records
  - Viewed Production and Sanitation practices
- Capital investments for FS and facility upgrades as part of the long range plan
- Six workstreams identified

# Strengths and Opportunities

- Practice Recalls/Crisis Drills
- Assess your vulnerabilities
- Know your business risks
- Communication is key



# Enhanced EMP and testing models

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- Z1 swabs – validation of new lines, new equipment
- Z1 swabs as verification activity
- Overhead swabs (TBD)
- Product pathogen testing models
- Positive Release and Hold Controls
- COA expectations suppliers and customers
- Scientific literature and research of *Lm* in certain types of cheese –survival vs. growth

# Food Safety Culture

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- Executive Team/Food Safety Steering Team/Plant Food Safety Teams/Food Safety Near Miss Program
- World Class, Best in Class, Best in Dairy – which strategy are you targeting for your organization?
- GFSI/BRC – Management Commitment
- Food Safety is everyone's job
- Quality Improvement Plan and Metrics – for accountability
- Food Safety STRONG – employee focused commitment
- Proactive and comprehensive
- Mitigate and minimize risk
- Protect and grow the brand



# Supplier and Internal Education

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- Suppliers – auditing, expectations, education, raising our standards
- Pathogen Equation
- Environmental Monitoring Program
  - Defined Escalation Protocol



# Rising Up

- Power of WE
- Food Safety Culture

- To protect the consumer
- To protect the brand
- To protect the industry
- Everyone in the organization is responsible for Food Safety

# Resources/References

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- FDA “Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in RTE Foods: Guidance for Industry”, Draft Guidance
- Innovation Center for US Dairy – “Control of *Listeria monocytogenes*: Guidance for the US Dairy Industry”
- Innovation Center for US Dairy – Dairy Plant Food Safety Workshops
- Listeria Research – Food Safety Operating Committee, *Listeria* Research Consortium
- IAFP/State Associations for Food Protection
- FSMA-PCQI Training
- Environmental Monitoring Program/Swabbing Training
- Customer Technical Teams