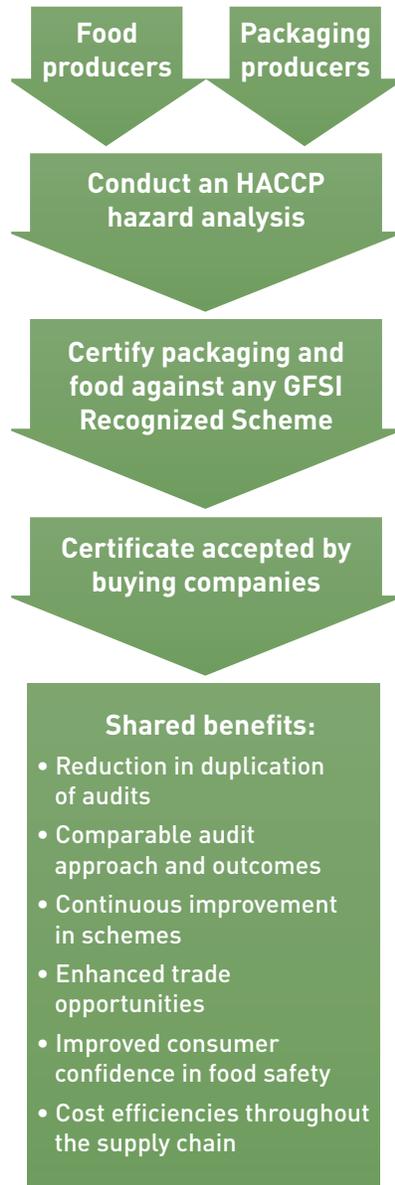


## Meeting the Packaging Demands of the Global Food Safety Initiative

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), founded in 2000, was created in response to worldwide concerns for food safety and in the absence of any global standards. The group's mission is to address the continuous improvement of food safety systems encompassing all key components of the supply chain, including food packaging.

Packaging, of course, is an integral part of delivering food safely to consumers. Historically considered a food additive, packaging once was required to comply with appropriately referenced sections of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations. Recently, several key issues, such as BPA, have arisen that affect the manufacture of packaging designed to hold food products. With the heightened focus on food safety worldwide, the design and manufacture of food packaging has become as an important factor in the supply chain.

GFSI does not establish standards, but rather is a benchmarking organization that has recognized several food safety management schemes. Food packaging manufacturers rely on third-party audits under a GFSI recognized scheme that utilizes current good manufacturing practices and prerequisite programs to achieve certification. The so-called road map to achieving GFSI recognized certification is known as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). The HACCP is defined by the FDA as a management system in which food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of biological, physical and chemical hazards from raw material production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution and consumption of



the finished product. This includes the manufacturer of food packaging and components.

The Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011 (FSMA) was enacted in response to several instances of severe food poisoning or adulteration in the food supply chain. In 2013, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that, each year, some 48 million people get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized and 300 or more die from foodborne illnesses. The FSMA equipped regulators with the tools to prevent, rather than react to, food contamination in the supply chain.

With a heightened awareness of safety management, many North American retailers and food processors increasingly require food safety management certification from their suppliers, with GFSI certification also likely required. Once the HACCP, prerequisite programs and management systems are in place, the packaging or component manufacturer is ready for a third-party audit for one of the GFSI benchmarked schemes. Certification will allow the packaging manufacturer to meet the requirements of its customers for compliance with regard to food safety management. Obtaining this certification allows the packaging manufacturer to assure its customers that it meets the key requirements for packaging food safety.

For further information, see:

- GFSI-benchmarked standards: <http://www.mygfsi.com/contact-us/gfsi-recognised-scheme-owners.html>
- CDC prevention estimates: <http://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/estimates-overview.html>