



# Perry Johnson Registrars Food Safety, Inc.



## Supplier Approval

Food supply chains have faced significant challenges over the past couple of years. From worker shortages and reduced capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its public health mandates to the overwhelming shipping delays and shortages felt worldwide, the strain has been immense. But an aspect of supply chain that hasn't been in the headlines can be just as important – supplier approval.

No matter where in the food supply chain they fall, everyone with a role in the production, packaging, and delivery of goods has a responsibility to the consumer. That includes everyone from those working in the field and packhouse workers to retailers or food service employees in close contact with those ultimately receiving the product in question. Ensuring that every “link” in the chain is reliable can be facilitated by thorough vetting and the development of an approved supplier program.

While required by the Food Safety Modernization Act's (FSMA) Preventive Controls portion, even organizations not within the scope of FSMA can utilize approved supplier programs to help mitigate risk and have a more proactive approach to possible threats. By certifying suppliers, regular and frequent analysis, and monitoring both internal and external risk factors, the best supplier approval processes are dynamic and predictive, with regular improvements and updates to handle a changing industry landscape.

Typically based upon a standardized checklist, successful programs strive to address every foreseeable risk, including supply chain disruptions/shortages to recalls. Integrating questions that focus on points such as food safety certificates, proper documentation, quality assurance programs, HACCP programs and the results of third-party audits are common in these checklists. Supplier information and documentation should be kept well organized in a centrally located database to increase efficiency and help maintain compliance.

Developing the initial program is only the first step, however – once policies and documentation are in place, regular maintenance and monitoring are key. Improving and further streamlining the supplier approval program is an ongoing process and an investment into protecting both the company's reputation and consumers' health.

For more information on certification programs that may assist in protecting your company's supply chain, such as supplier audits, reach out to PJRFSI today – visit [www.pjrfsi.com](http://www.pjrfsi.com) or call (248) 519-2523.