Perry Johnson Registrars Food Safety, Inc.

Food Contamination –
How Do Your Detection Measures Measure Up?

Headlines about bacterial contamination are everywhere, from listeria in refrigerated products to salmonella in eggs and egg-containing products. But what about contaminants that may not be microscopic?

Foreign materials unexpectedly introduced into product during the harvest, processing, or manufacture of food product can not only be upsetting to end-use customers, but potentially dangerous as well if not discovered and removed prior to consumption. Metal shards or filings, wire, and other non-metallics like glass, ceramics, or rocks are all considerable threats to health and safety. Thus every industrial-scale food manufacturing process should include quality control (QC) measures to detect such contaminants and protect both consumers and brand integrity alike.

There are many options that an organization can use to satisfy the need for anti-contaminant QC in their system, such as metal detectors, x-ray systems, and checkweighers. The point (or points) within the production line where the QC platform is implemented may differ based upon the complexity or length of the process in question as well as what type of contaminant is a point of concern.

Metal detectors specifically can be installed almost anywhere along a production line and do not require highly specific conditions to function properly and give reliable results. X-ray systems, on the other hand, are usually only seen at the infeed of raw materials or at the end of the production line. Used in tandem, both options provide thorough coverage for both metallic and non-metallic contaminants that are relatively dense in nature. The quandary posed by non-ferrous, lower-density hazards such as wood, insects, plastics, or insects are less likely to be detected by x-ray; technologies for the detection of such items is surely on the horizon.

Other QC-related systems that a company may consider implementing include automatic checkweighers to help confirm consist, uniform weight across all products as well as specialized infrared cameras to detect leaks in packaging. In concert with the controls and processes of a well-developed food safety system or HACCP plan, the technological tools available today can be key in protecting both your brand and your customers! To learn more about what food safety certification may be best for your company, reach out to PJRFSI today – visit **www.pjrfsi.com** or call **(248) 519-2523** for a free quote.

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