



Perry Johnson Registrars Food Safety, Inc.

Food Fraud: A Complex Issue for Complex Supply Chains



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Food fraud is a growing issue throughout the global food industry as supply chains grow longer and more complex. As consumer demand grows, often outstripping supply or production capacity, the potential of counterfeit or otherwise fraudulent supply grows alongside; not only do some counterfeit or otherwise adulterated products pose a threat to consumer health, but the brand and reputational damage for an organization can be significant.

More than ever, trends of consequences for food fraud are falling upon corporate leaders in the form of criminal liability. The combination of health hazards and financial reporting, as well as the growing scale of some food fraud schemes means that this brunt of responsibility is unlikely to shift anytime soon.

How, then, to detect, rectify – and most importantly, *prevent* – food fraud?

Defined in the most basic terms, food fraud is the act of *intentional* deception for economic gain using food, from counterfeit ingredients to stolen goods on the marketplace. This also includes the sub-category of “Economically Motivated Adulteration” (EMA). A key aspect of food fraud is that while it may not always lead to a public health vulnerability, there will always be some form of economic threat involved. Some examples of food fraud can include: dilution of products such as oils, unauthorized or unsanitary repackaging, cargo theft, or even expired date code tampering/“refreshing”.

Prevention of food fraud relies first upon understanding the motivations behind the fraud, or in other words, the root cause. As previously mentioned, economic gain, rather than harm to public health is the primary motivator to those engaged in food fraud. These are intentional actions made in such a way as to avoid detection by regulators or those looking to stop such activities. After all, it makes perfect logical sense to want to make economic gains for as long as possible without interference.





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