Unit 207: Food safety

Handout 1: HACCP

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points is a well-known and used food safety management system. It can be used effectively in all sizes and types of food business.

Its main aim is to focus attention on critical control points in the food business operation to ensure that situations do not occur which could make the food unsafe to eat.

Each step in the food production process must be analysed to identify points at which something could go wrong and then procedures must be put in place accordingly.

The HACCP seven principles

Principle 1: Conduct a hazard analysis
Plans determine the food safety hazards and identify the preventive measures that the plan can apply to control these hazards. A food safety hazard is any biological, chemical, or physical property that may cause a food to be unsafe for human consumption.

Principle 2: Identify critical control points
A Critical Control Point (CCP) is a point, step, or procedure in a food manufacturing process at which control can be applied and, as a result, a food safety hazard can be prevented, eliminated, or reduced to an acceptable level.

Principle 3: Establish critical limits for each critical control point
A critical limit is the maximum or minimum value to which a physical, biological, or chemical hazard must be controlled at a critical control point to prevent, eliminate, or reduce to an acceptable level.

Principle 4: Establish critical control point monitoring requirements
Monitoring activities are necessary to ensure that the process is under control at each critical control point.

Principle 5: Establish corrective actions
These are actions to be taken when monitoring indicates a deviation from an established critical limit. The final rule requires a plant's HACCP plan to identify the corrective actions to be taken if a critical limit is not met. Corrective actions are intended to ensure that no product injurious to health or otherwise adulterated as a result of the deviation enters commerce.

Principle 6: Establish record keeping procedures
The HACCP regulation requires that all establishments maintain certain documents, including its hazard analysis and written HACCP plan, and records documenting the monitoring of critical control points, critical limits, verification activities, and the handling of processing deviations.

Principle 7: Establish procedures for ensuring the HACCP system is working as intended
Validation ensures that the plants do what they were designed to do; that is, they are successful in ensuring the production of safe product. Establishments will be required to validate their own HACCP plans.