Piloting of a support package to enable small food manufacturing businesses in Wales to obtain food safety certification

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Food safety schemes provide the framework for compliance and assist food and drink manufacturing businesses in the production of safe and legal food. Over recent years, UK manufacturers have moved away from generic ISO certified food safety schemes towards bespoke 3rd party accredited schemes, specifically developed to closely match the requirements of the industry and retailer-specific schemes. Compliance with a privately operated scheme is often a prerequisite to supply.

The Welsh Government aims to increase the Welsh food and drink sector and has identified, that to enable growth of the sector, there is a need to support food manufacturers to obtain food safety certification. Many food manufacturers in Wales do not have food safety certification and the barriers to obtaining certification relate to:
• knowledge and skills
• time, cost and resources
• access to information

Consequently, the Welsh Government wants to determine the most appropriate way to support food manufacturers in Wales to overcome barriers and obtain food safety certification. In 2015 a research study was completed to identify the barriers to accreditation which made 25 recommendations which this study has addressed and has implemented with industry partners.

SALSA (Safe and Local Supplier Approval) is a robust and effective food safety certification scheme for smaller food manufacturers which is seen as a precursor to obtaining more complex, international certification such as BRC (British Retail Consortium) Global Standard for food safety.

Introduction

The aim of the research was to develop and pilot a bespoke support package for small food and drink manufacturing businesses in Wales to obtain food safety certification. The SALSA scheme was selected as being most appropriate standard for micro and small businesses.

Methods

Welsh food-manufacturers (n=62) expressed an interest in joining the support programme, eligible businesses (n=9) joined the programme.

Businesses evaluated each mechanism by completing a questionnaire. The data were analysed using SPSS.

Interviews were completed with business on completion of all interventions to gain insight and feedback on the effectiveness of the support mechanisms.

Ethical Approval was obtained from the Health Care and Food, Ethics Panel at Cardiff Metropolitan University, reference number 9954.

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References


Figure 1. Food safety scheme accreditation pathway support package

Figure 2. Business comments regarding the support package

Conclusion

• This pilot study has successfully designed, developed, delivered and evaluated a support-package that has resulted in 100% of small food manufacturing businesses that completed the support package obtaining food safety certification. The launch of the support package will assist to accelerate food industry sector growth in-line with Welsh Government aspirations.

• There is also a need to explore if the accreditation pathway can be utilised to support food and drink manufacturing businesses to obtain more complex safety certification scheme such as BRC Global Standards.