Seafood Processing Standard - Ready to Eat Module

Issue 1.0

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Global Seafood Alliance Certification Standard

Contents

A Introduction

The purpose of the Ready to Eat module is to provide clauses that facilities shall be audited against if ready to eat products are part of the facility's production process and scope. The intent of this module is to minimize potential cross contamination during the production process that could cause food borne illnesses. The clauses stated within this module reflect global industry best practices, international scientific data, and global regulatory guidance. This module shall be audited in combination with the Core Seafood Processing Standard 6.0.

B Scope

The scope of this module is all raw or cooked fishery products that are intended to be consumed without further cooking or processing. Examples of products covered in the module are ready-to-eat (RTE) raw, chilled, or frozen fish (sashimi), pasteurized crab, surimi, hot and cold smoked salmon, acidified, and cured products.

C Clause Requirements

RTE1	Facilities producing cured, salted, and smoked products and cooked products shall apply the guidelines for such products as specified in the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) Cured, Salted, and Smoked Fish Establishments Good Manufacturing Practices - 2019 or equivalent in both country of origin and the countries of export.
RTE2	For thermal pasteurization processes, the validity of the process shall be established by a scientific study in writing that shall be provided to the auditor.
RTE3	Container cooling water shall be chlorinated or otherwise sanitized as necessary. Monitoring records of sanitizer residue levels in cooling water discharge shall be kept.
RTE4	There shall be filtered positive air flow in any high risk processing areas.
RTE5	Process wastewater shall drain away from high risk areas (cooking and ready-to-eat) to lower risk areas. A map of the drainage system shall be available.
RTE6	Foods that support the growth of L. monocytogenes shall have validated antimicrobial control measures implemented and related process control records kept.
RTE7	Low risk/high risk areas, cleaning gear, and PPE, shall be identified within the facility and high risk shall be effectively separated from low risk areas.
RTE8	Wood pallets shall be inspected, cleaned, and sanitized prior to entry into the RTE areas.
RTE9	There shall be dedicated and accessible hands-free handwashing stations located at each entrance to the RTE areas and throughout the food production areas which shall be equipped with hygiene supplies, hand sanitizer stations and hands-free dryer stations. Mechanical air-drying devices shall be tested based on manufacturer's recommendation or risk assessment for microbiological contamination. Handwashing signage shall be posted at each handwashing station that demonstrates the handwashing and sanitizing process.
RTE10	If the facility uses disposable gloves within the RTE area, the gloves shall be discarded and replaced and new gloves shall be sanitized each time a worker touches their face, leaves the

RTE room, removes any item from the floor, touches unsanitary surfaces, or if the gloves become torn or damaged.

RTE11 PPE used in the RTE areas shall be dedicated to the RTE areas. In addition to other protective clothing, face masks shall be worn in RTE areas. Protective clothing shall be replaced at a frequency based on risk or at a minimum once per shift.

RTE12 Laundry services may be conducted by an outside approved 3rd party contractor or internally by the facility. Validation of the cleaning process is required for both internal or external services. Smocks/uniforms shall be protected before use.

RTE13 Footwear in the RTE area shall be controlled to prevent or minimize cross contamination.

RTE14 All items, including cleaning equipment and PPE used in RTE areas shall be identifiable and kept separate from those used in low risk areas. The cleaning and sanitation procedures shall be documented and verified.

RTE15 Maintenance Personnel shall receive documented training before working on the RTE production floor on how to prevent cross contamination. This training shall occur at a minimum frequency of annually and upon assignment to the maintenance department.

RTE16 A documented risk based Environmental Monitoring Plan (EMP) shall be implemented to target Listeria spp. The EMP plan shall contain the following elements at a minimum:

- Hygienic Zoning swab sites identified in plan
- High risk zones shall be swabbed at a minimum frequency of weekly
- Periodic changing of sample site locations for all zones shall be conducted
- Corrective action plan
- Training of plant employees on Listeria control
- Raw material controls
- Operational swabbing that occurs during operations shall be incorporated into the EMP plan

RTE17 The results of the EMP program shall be tracked and trended to identify potential Listeria spp. in the ready to eat area.

RTE18 Sanitation verification activities shall occur at a minimum prior to the start of each production shift. Verification activities shall include ATP Swabbing and/or protein residue test, and pre-operational visual inspections.

RTE19 The facility shall have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that defines what measures shall be taken to prevent potential pathogen introduction during machinery installations, repairs, construction, or renovations.

RTE20 There shall be a personal hygiene policy to prevent all workers contacting exposed RTE food with their bare hands unless the facility can demonstrate through risk assessment that controls are in place to prevent cross contamination.