



On listerias, dangers and sustainability

Sustainability is much more than recycling and minimizing waste. A sustainable business project will always pursue excellence, and will be able to endure over time with the aim of creating value. To achieve this, it is essential that each industry precisely defines its approach, and follows a routine model of self-discipline that ensures performance: the supply of products and/or services that meet consumer expectations.

Business self-discipline is based on following habits with the goal that things go well (self-control). In the 21st century it is not feasible (or legal in the food industry) to wait until the end of a process to verify analytically if specifications are met, as it would be wasting resources and losing effectiveness.

There is nothing more sustainable than a proactive attitude: detecting process deviations as soon as possible and establishing the necessary measures to correct them, and also to avoid the repetition of the incidence.

But effective proactivity is not spontaneous – you must train. When a company has an in-depth knowledge of its raw materials, ingredients and processes, it can determine what hazards (classic and emerging) are a threat, and what checks it must perform to detect them as soon as possible. It will never be possible to guarantee zero risk. However, the detailed analysis of hazards and the application of appropriate obstacles minimize risks. This is especially relevant in the case of the food industry, as hazards can affect people's health.

No company wants to suffer a fire or a computer attack, but these threats exist. With anti-virus and fire programmes, risks are minimized, although it is also necessary to have action protocols so that, for example, in case of fire, it shuts down as quickly as possible and with the least damage.

There has been much talk about cases of listeriosis in recent weeks. The presence of listeria is a real danger to the food industry and can cause serious health alerts like the ones we have seen recently.



It would be irresponsible and unsustainable by companies in the sector to limit their control to the search for the bacteria in the finished product. It is necessary to establish checks throughout the entire production process and, in case all checks fail, to have established action protocols that ensure efficient product removal and destruction. Nobody wants a fire and all measures are put in place so that it does not occur, but a sustainable company will also ensure that fire extinguishers are at hand in case they are needed.

It is curious to note that sustainable companies do not risk working without antivirus nor do they consider not applying preventive checks where a threat has been detected. Zero risk is unattainable but sustainable companies are clear that you always have to work towards it. The improvement and updating of checks, as well as the constant updating of prevention and containment protocols are essential to carry out adequate risk management.

It is worth mentioning that the economic cost of maintaining all these checks and protocols is high, involves a large investment for a company and ends up having an impact on the final price of the product. In any case, sustainable companies know that the peace of mind of their customers comes first and we are convinced that the way to last over time is always working in an excellent way (whatever the cost).