

History of the JFS scheme, program and standards

Japan has unique traditional food culture, “Washoku”. Most of traditional foods are manufactured or processed by small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). According to the national survey in 2014, the total number of food manufacturing and processing companies was approximately 50,000, which meant 99% of them were SMEs in Japan. Companies with more than 100 employees were only 1,600 (3%).

Such food business operators (FBOs) have been individually developing best practices to ensure food safety as well as its quality on their own. Today, FBOs, regardless of its business scale, are required to ensure food safety and make it harmonize with the international standards. In 2014, major FBOs in Japan started, based on their best practice, to discuss the development of the requirements for food safety management systems and issued a proposal document as the result of their discussion.

This document included the following proposals for food related industries:

- (1) a new internationally harmonized certification program to be established for food safety management,
- (2) capacity building to be accelerated to operate food safety management,
- (3) knowledge and best practices of food safety management to be shared with worldwide based on science-based evidence.

According to the above proposals, a committee was organized for open discussions with a number of stakeholders including food manufacturers, service providers, retailers and food safety experts over two years and came up with establishing a certification program of food safety management adopting their food safety culture and harmonizing with the international standards as well.

In 2016, the Japan Food Safety Management Association (JFSM), a general incorporated foundation formed under Japanese law, was established. JFSM published a certification program for food safety management systems called the “JFS-C scheme”.

The JFS-C scheme is an internationally harmonized certification program referring to ISO/IEC 17011:2017, ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, and ISO/TS 22003:2013 and the related standard consists of the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system and the Food Safety Management System (FSMS).

In addition to the JFS-C scheme, JFSM has the JFS-A/B program and the related standards include each step-wise process for FBOs including SMEs to improve their food safety management systems effectively and efficiently. Making good use of the JFS-A/B

program and its standards, FBOs can start from the implementation of the GMP, step up to the HACCP system and reach to the level of FSMS.

The JFS standards cover the certification scopes including "Processing Sector (E)" and "Production of (Bio) Chemicals Sector (L)". JFSM is now working for the expansion of sectors, aiming to cover the whole food supply chain.

(as of September 10, 2018)

The JFSM missions are as follows:

- 1) to support food business operators to ensure food safety, improve quality controls, and build consumer confidence,
- 2) to develop the certification scheme and standards for food safety management to rationalize social costs for food safety,
- 3) to ensure transparency of food supply chains to build consumer confidence and to help consumer's choice by providing information on food safety.