

HACCP manual developed for casings industry

International Natural Sausage Casing Association to care for practical and scientific support for all members

The International Natural Sausage Casing Association, INSCA, a unique global organisation, was established in 1965 and has continued to grow and enhance the natural sausage casings industry through scientific research and studies as well as business expansions and market penetrations. INSCA does everything from monitoring international trade issues and industry scientific research to providing sausage recipes on its website.

By Hans-Martin Kersting

INSCA is governed by an eleven member Board of Directors who are elected by the membership of the association. The administration of the organisation is handled by a Marketing and Management firm based in Alexandria, Egypt. The association's main function is to bring members up to date on all issues concerning the casings industry as well as provide a forum of networking and nurturing business dealings and cooperation.

INSCA continuously disseminates information and maintains public relations to protect the interest of the natural sausage casings industry throughout the world.

INSCA and science

The casings industry did not have enough scientific data and information. At the same time, governments were moving along the same line imposing new health and safety regulations that needed understanding before implementation. This has led INSCA to invest time, money and efforts into science and scientific research. The idea was that the industry as a whole needed to enhance the public and government awareness of natural casings and emphasise that they are safe and healthy ingredients of sausages. At the same

time the industry needed to come up with arguments based on sound scientific research results to cope with the increasing public awareness and governmental interventions.

Therefore INSCA formed its Research and Development Committee that started studying the histology of the intestine and the casings along with other projects. As science and scientific research is the property of all stakeholders and all participants in the industry, INSCA joined forces with the European and North American Natural Sausage Casing Associations (ENSCA, NANCA) and later on with the Japanese and the Chinese associations to build up the ISWG, International Scientific Working Group.

HACCP history

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) is a systematic preventive approach to food safety that addresses physical, chemical and biological hazards as a means of prevention rather than finished product inspection. HACCP is used in the food industry to identify potential food safety hazards, so that key actions, known as Critical Control Points (CCP's) can be identified to reduce or eliminate the risk of the hazards being realised. The system is used at all stages of food production and preparation processes including packaging, distribution, etc. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) was conceived in the 1960s when the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) asked Pillsbury to design and manufacture the first foods for space flights. Since then, HACCP has been recognised internationally as a logical tool for adapting traditional inspection methods to a modern, science-based food safety system. Based on risk-assessment, HACCP plans allow both


industry and government to allocate their resources efficiently in establishing and auditing safe food production practices. In 1994, the organisation of International HACCP Alliance was established initially for the U.S. meat and poultry industries to mandatory implementing HACCP and now its membership has been spread over other professional/industrial areas.

INSCA and HACCP

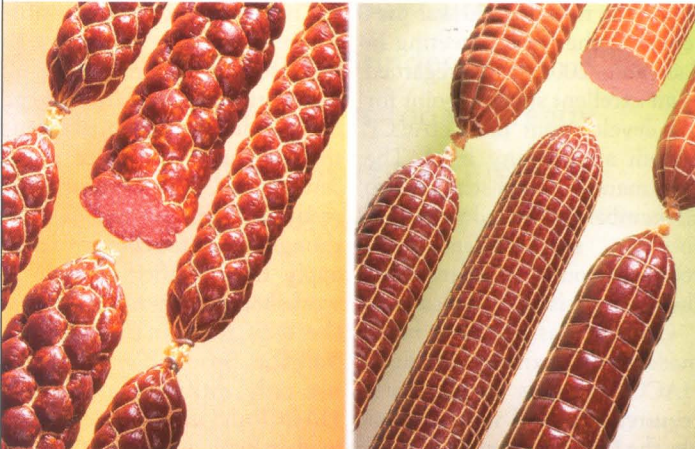
One of the most important accomplishments of INSCA and the ISWG is the HACCP manual which was developed for the casings industry in 1997. As food production standards evolved over the years this HACCP manual needed to be updated ac-

ording to new regulations and this is what the ISWG along with TNO have done last year. The updated HACCP manual was then distributed to all casings associations to become an industry reference and placed on the INSCA website for all members to download and use.

Several European research institutes with known expertise and excellent reputations in this area were contacted in preparation of the ISWG meeting which was to be held in Cairo, May 2005. Based on the information provided, it was decided unanimously by the ISWG delegates to finalise the contract with TNO Quality of Life in the Netherlands. Dr. Joris Wijnker, ISWG's project coordinator, was to serve as liaison with TNO and to mon-



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