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# Reducing Risk of Food Fraud

**Food manufacturers are increasingly subjected to economically motivated adulteration. A mitigation plan to reduce fraud increases protection and helps meet today's new certification standards.**

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*Presented by Kim Knoll*

Experts define food fraud as deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, misrepresentation of food, or misleading statements made about a product for economic gain that could impact consumer health. This issue has been brought into focus by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), which has released its new benchmarking requirements document emphasizing the importance of having a food fraud mitigation plan. GFSI Benchmarked Certified Program Owners have added food fraud vulnerability assessments and mitigation plans into their certification standards.

Food manufacturers are subjected to a number of business risks in their operations. Prudent operators should be most concerned about accidental or incidental food contamination and the potential for intentional contamination. Such concern is exacerbated when processors are beholden to sole-source ingredient suppliers. Anti-product or anti-ingredient campaigns (Figure 1) are increasingly becoming a risk forcing manufacturers to reformulate products to meet consumer advocacy group demands.

Economically motivated adulteration, also known as food fraud, is also a business risk. Examples of food fraud headlines culled from 2017 issues of *Food Safety* magazine are shown in Figure 2.

## **DEFINING FOOD FRAUD**

By simple definition, food fraud involves illegal deception for economic gain using food. There are a number of terms used in connection with food fraud.

- Economically motivated fraud
- Food integrity
- Food authenticity
- Food crime

GFSI defines food fraud as a collective term encompassing the deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, tampering or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients or food packaging, labeling, product information or false or misleading statements made about a product for economic gain that could impact consumer health.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defines economically motivated adulteration as fraudulent, intentional substitution or addition of a substance in a product for the purpose of increasing the apparent value of the product or reducing the cost of its production, i.e., for economic gain.

Conversely, the *Elliott Review* defines food authenticity as ensuring that food offered for sale or sold is of the nature, substance and quality expected by the purchaser. Food integrity can be seen as ensuring that food which is offered for sale or sold is not only safe and of the nature, substance and quality expected by the purchaser, but also captures ➤



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