**AIB CERTIFICATION EXPLAINED**

**AIB Background:** AIB International is a pioneer and leader in food safety auditing and education. We started in the United States some 60 years ago. Business has grown steadily to the extent that every year inspections and audits are conducted in over 10,000 facilities in 120 countries by 130 highly trained and qualified, full-time field staff. Through its inspection and audit activities, AIB also provides a valuable educational service to all of its clients.

AIB International is highly committed to investment in training of its staff. New hires are required to have extensive knowledge of food science and experience in operating divisions of food companies. They are trained for several months before being allowed to audit sites unaccompanied. All audit staff undergo several days of training each year as well as additional training required by various certification schemes.

In regards to certification and accreditation, AIB GMP management systems are ISO 9000:2008 certified. In addition we are certification bodies for SQF, BRC, FS22000 and ISO 22000. In order to conduct certifications, we are accredited either by UKAS or by ANSI.

**Inspection vs. Audit:** AIB makes a careful distinction between a food safety inspection and a food safety audit. An inspection is a thorough physical review of a food facility to assess what is actually happening at a moment in time. This snapshot gives a realistic assessment of conditions that can be both positive and negative for food processing. An inspection focuses on physical review. The AIB GMP inspection is more inspection based than audit-based. An audit is a systematic evaluation of food facility documentation to determine if programs and related activities achieve planned expectations. An auditor looks at data over time to see if positive or negative trends are developing. An audit focuses on documentation review. The
The physical inspection occurs first on the AIB inspection and then the records and other documentation are reviewed. Ideally, the AIB inspector divides their time between inspecting and auditing 60/40. The entire process takes on average two days to complete and is repeated annually.

**The AIB Consolidated Standards:** All AIB food safety inspections are conducted according to the AIB International Consolidated Standards. The Standards include foundational elements from Codex, ISO, FDA, global regulatory agencies and a compilation of industry best practice, accumulated and refined over the years. The Standards consist of five Categories for Inspection. Each Category is allocated 200 points for scoring purposes, to a total of 1,000 points. A passing score is 700 and above. Facilities scoring in the top 25% of all scores for their business category are awarded a Recognition of High Achievement – Superior.

The five Categories for Inspection are:

- Operational Methods and Personnel Practices
- Maintenance for Food Safety
- Cleaning Practices
- Integrated Pest Management
- Adequacy of Prerequisite Programs and Food Safety Programs

**What happens at an AIB Inspection:** The AIB Inspection will typically start with the inspector arriving at the site and conducting a brief introductory meeting. He or she will then quickly change into work clothing uniform. Because the requirement is that an inspection will thorough and may well include the climbing of ladders to access silos and roofs and getting under equipment, a uniform is needed for ease of movement and without concern of becoming soiled. The inspector continues throughout the entire facility, typically accompanied by staff members. Deficiencies are noted and discussed as they are found and so are best practices noted and congratulated.

Once the physical inspection is complete, the inspector will then correlate the specific issues to the written program which allowed the issue to occur. Simply stated, a dirty piece of equipment would lead the inspector to the cleaning schedules, cleaning procedure and training program. A damaged piece of equipment would lead the inspector to the preventive maintenance program and so on. The process of correlating the issues back to the program is the “audit” portion of the AIB Inspection. Again, this represents 40% of the entire inspection.

When all is completed, the inspector will then assign a score to the facility based on the AIB Standards. The inspector will typically write a draft report before they leave and will use this report – or their detailed notes if the draft could not be written in time – to debrief management of the facility and discuss critical findings, positive and negative.

**Conclusion:** Without a doubt, the AIB Inspection is a comprehensive inspection with an audit component included. It allows for a very accurate and fair assessment of your facility and also allows for training, education and dialogue throughout the process. It is indeed a “robust deep dive at a point in time” and as such is a uniquely different and valuable management tool compared with other third party audits.