

Successful US FDA Audit in Ecuador

Successful US FDA Audit for Inspicio's Inspectorate in Ecuador

The purpose of the audit was to review the organization, experience, know-how, procedures and laboratory capabilities of Inspicio's Inspectorate Food Safety services in Ecuador as support to the FDA Shrimp Certification Pilot Project. The team audited the GlobalGap and BRC (British Retail Consortium) certification programs currently being offered by Inspectorate to food clients by accompanying our auditors while performing field audits of two shrimp processing plants and two shrimp farms in Ecuador.

The FDA team also audited Inspicio and Insoectorate's Food Testing Laboratory in Guayaquil, focusing on the lab's accreditations, quality systems, instrumentation, test methodologies and staff. The FDA auditors' visit to our laboratory was positive and confirmed that Inspectorate Ecuador has the necessary technical and professional capability to continue performing analyses in accordance to USA regulations.

Inspicio and Inspectorate's Guayaquil Food Testing Laboratory has ISO17025 accreditation by A2LA and is being used as an official laboratory by the governments of Ecuador, Costa Rica and Panama for their aquaculture product exports to the European Union.

Phase II, which will run through September 2009, will help the FDA develop the process for evaluating third-party certification programs. The pilot will allow the FDA to identify and address technical and operational issues in assessing certification programs and processing certifications. This information will assist the agency in moving towards broader recognition of voluntary third-party certification programs.

The pilot program responds to a recommendation in the President's Action Plan for Import Safety, issued in November 2007, which called for the development of voluntary third-party certification programs for foreign producers who export to the United States. The FDA's Food Protection Plan, also issued last November, emphasizes qualified and legitimate third party certification as a way to help verify the safety of products from both foreign and domestic food companies.

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