

## Case study

### LRQA Business Assurance helps ACP group drive a food safety culture with FSSC 22000



#### The journey to FSSC 22000

ACP Europe was one of the first companies to receive FSSC 22000 certification from LRQA. FSSC 22000 is a complete certification scheme for food safety management systems and is endorsed by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI). It is based on ISO 22000, the global food safety management system standard and PAS 220, a standard developed to address prerequisite programme (PRP) requirements for food product and ingredient manufacturers.

Holding both HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) and ISO 22000 certification, ACP Europe could see the role of certification in helping them meet the growing demands of their operations as Stefan Speelmans, Health and Safety, Environmental and Quality Manager, ACP Europe explained; "for ACP, as our organisation continued to grow, both HACCP and ISO 22000 became quite limited for us. HACCP allowed us to perform risk analysis, but it was simply a case of 'following the embedded principles'. Whilst ISO 22000 provides add-ons to make it a management system, the specific prerequisite programmes (PRPs) for our operations were missing."

ACP Europe acknowledged that whilst PAS 220 added enormously to ISO 22000, for ACP they felt that there needed to be a greater emphasis on the specific areas of the food industry to drive food safety. Being already ISO 22000:2010 certified ACP's transition to and implementation of FSSC 22000 was trouble-free and seamless. ACP's only requirement was an additional and typically shorter audit to verify compliance of their system to the requirements of PAS 220:2008.

"It was a natural step for us to move to FSSC 22000 certification. ACP was one of the first organisations in Belgium to be FSSC 22000 certified. LRQA's assessors understand our business and our supply chain and add real value to our business."

#### Stefan Speelmans

ACP Europe  
Health and Safety, Environmental and Quality Manager

#### Organisational drivers for FSSC 22000 certification

For ACP Europe, food safety is embedded in their culture. As a specialist in the provision of carbon dioxide, ACP cannot afford any food safety issues. "FSSC 22000 delivers a whole new approach to risk management and quality assurance," explained Mr Speelmans. "Through LRQA Business Assurance, the whole network of interacting processes is assessed and monitored thus providing greater assurance to both internal and external stakeholders and protecting our brand reputation."

ACP's strong reputation saw them being approached to share their expertise in mitigating risks following a serious food crisis with a major drinks manufacturer in the 1990s. Although they were not an ACP client, ACP's commitment to food safety best practice and risk mitigation were called upon which culminated in the scare being resolved thanks in part to ACP's involvement.

#### About ACP

ACP Europe is one of Europe's leading purifiers of carbon dioxide for the food industry and has plants in Belgium, The Netherlands, France and Poland. They produce in bulk, mini-bulk and cylinders, dry ice and dry ice blasting equipment. Subsidiary companies include Eurocylinder and Cardigas. ACP's origins are in the chemical sector, out of which emerged the CO<sub>2</sub> gas industry. ACP's clients include major beverage manufacturers around the world.

#### The numbers

Founded in 1897  
Global turnover of 35 million Euros  
Over 100 employees  
Headquartered in Belgium

Website [www.acpco2.com](http://www.acpco2.com)

**Standards achieved** Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) has awarded ACP Europe with certification to the following standards:

#### FSSC 22000

Global Food Safety Scheme which replaced ACP's earlier certification to:

#### ISO 22000

International Food Safety Standard

#### PAS 220

Used in conjunction with ISO 22000

#### HACCP

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points  
ISO 9001  
Quality Management System Standard

## Why LRQA?

For ACP, LRQA provides an external viewpoint to help them to protect their brand reputation and their consumers by addressing the many risks, up and down the supply chain, and assuring food safety and sustainability. ACP needs to know that their supply chain is risk-free, secure and sustainable. LRQA works with the world's top brands within the food sector to help optimise their management systems.

ACP also confirmed that they selected LRQA because of their strong international reputation coupled with the technical and sector specific expertise of LRQA's assessors. For ACP, external audits by third-party assessors are vital; independent validation of the effectiveness of ACP's processes delivers confidence among stakeholders - from supply-chain partners to consumers and regulators. Accredited, independent, third-party assessors help companies to build and maintain trust by giving the process integrity and credibility.



ACP Europe places great emphasis on the importance of continual improvement within the certification process as Mr Speelmans explained. "LRQA Business Assurance helps us to drive continuous improvement of our system and reduces our risk therefore leading to an overall cost reduction throughout the process." ACP commented that for them, the certification process results in a leaner system based on detailed risk analysis.

## Organisational benefits of FSSC 22000 certification

As a specialist organisation with a suite of trusted products focused on excellence and supplier reliability, it was very important for ACP Europe to be one of the first companies to be certified to FSSC 22000.



FSSC 22000 certification with LRQA Business Assurance delivers credibility to ACP as an organisation and provides their customers with greater confidence. Given LRQA's international reputation, ACP's external stakeholders understand the positive signal that certification delivers. "When we say ACP is the best, the best at quality control and with the best products, our clients will believe it," said ACP's Stefan Speelmans.

ACP also explained that one of the key advantages of the FSSC 22000 scheme is the focus on risk analysis. "With FSSC 22000, we have to look in more depth at our processes and controls and as a result, certification with LRQA enables us to learn more about our organisation."

FSSC 22000 takes a systematic approach to managing the various processes involved in any kind of food-safety management system. As Mr Speelmans explained; "Things that you would 'pay attention to' in the past, now ask for 'meticulous control' under FSSC 22000 which in turn improves our process knowledge enormously, and allows ACP to have better risk management."

In response to food scares, major manufacturers and retailers have introduced bespoke standards. These can now be harmonised by using FSSC 22000 as a base, and adding company or supply chain specific additional requirements as necessary.

As Mr Speelman summarised, "FSSC 22000 certification through LRQA Business Assurance will make it much easier for producers and suppliers like ACP to sell to a varied range of clients. We have greater control over our processes, and as a result, a more holistic view of our organisation."

## Credible audit programmes

To support certification to FSSC 22000, ACP Europe worked closely with LRQA to develop an effective internal audit programme capitalising on the sector and technical expertise of LRQA Assessors.

This is a crucial element on the path to FSSC 22000 certification in being able to assess the process based on the system's ability to control all hazards in an effective and efficient manner.



### Summary

Commenting on ACP's achievement, Cor Groenveld, LRQA's Global Head of Food Supply Chain Services and one of the world's leading food-safety experts said, "across the food supply chain, organisations are facing tougher stakeholder demands, rapidly changing business conditions and increased competition. As a result, they are seeking more effective control of operations, improved performance and better management of risk throughout their business. FSSC 22000 certification with LRQA Business Assurance will help to add further value to ACP Europe and organisations as a whole across the food sector."