



# The SALSA Scheme

## **Audit Standard** *and User Guide*

*Issue 1, March 2007*



**Food and Drink  
Federation**



**BRITISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM**

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## Scheme Introduction

The SALSA, or Safe and Local Supplier Approval, scheme has been developed to help local and regional food and drink producers improve their businesses and supply their products to national and regional buyers who have introduced their own local sourcing initiatives. It is based upon an audit standard, the fundamentals of which are product safety, legality and quality and the provision of demonstrable legal defence for the buyer (the due diligence defence).

The scheme, which is endorsed by DEFRA and the Food Standards Agency, is widely supported by many of the UK's leading food buyers from the retail and foodservice sectors.

SALSA is a joint venture between four main trade associations representing the UK food chain:

- The British Retail Consortium (BRC)
- The British Hospitality Association (BHA)
- The Food and Drink Federation (FDF)
- The National Farmers Union (NFU)

The joint venture organisations govern the scheme and work in close partnership with other organisations that have specific expertise in the day to day operations to ensure scheme members' interests are met. The Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) will administer and operate the SALSA scheme on behalf of the joint venture members, with support from Scottish Food Quality Certification (SFQC) in Scotland.

The scheme was set up by the trade associations in recognition that, in many instances, smaller companies were finding currently recognised industry quality assurance standards overly expensive or having disproportionate requirements. The need for the development of this scheme has been highlighted by an increasing drive for locally sourced food, particularly from foodservice companies and some supermarkets. The scheme is self funding and founded on not-for-profit principles; it has received start up funding and support from DEFRA, Highland and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Enterprise.

The scheme is based upon an audit which is appropriate and proportionate to the size of the business, without compromising food safety and will utilise the expertise of locally based auditors and mentors. The work will be carried out within a defined commercial framework to ensure costs and disruption to business are kept to an absolute minimum, but more importantly adding value to business.

Suppliers who should consider registering with SALSA are those who typically;

- Already supply national buyers on a local or regional level
- Supply to a defined locality, area or region – 'locality food'
- Produce specialist or artisan products under their own company brand
- Are of a size where local or regional supply is the best option for sustainability of the business

Buyers will typically ask companies to use, or in some cases consider the use of, the SALSA scheme, as part of their purchasing arrangements. Each buyer will decide how best to utilise SALSA within its own purchasing and due-diligence policy. It is expected that a buyer will not ask a company currently holding or seeking certification of a 'higher' food safety management Standard, such as BRC, to apply to the SALSA scheme.

The scheme offers valuable benefits to local suppliers. It can:

- enable companies to supply a wide range of buyers, who require a recognised food safety assurance standard
- enable scheme members to promote their company details and approval status on an open database, used as a local sourcing tool by national and regional buyers
- provide an independent technical overview of your business by locally based, professionally qualified and trained auditors
- provide access to professionally qualified and trained mentors to advise and support the approval process
- encourage technical networking and the provision of knowledge exchange on a local and regional level
- provide a mechanism by which funding for activities such as training, further technical or commercial advice, purchase of publications and technical support can be sought
- provide a stepping stone to further quality certification such as BRC, should this be required at a future date

This document is designed to provide you with an overview of the requirements of the SALSA scheme and where to find further information. It includes the Audit Standard and information on the system that supports the scheme. To meet the requirements of the Standard, there are detailed guidelines to explain in detail how best to meet the Standard's requirements, which are provided upon joining with the scheme. A range of other useful documents and valuable advice will be provided by SALSA via its website or through auditors and mentors to ensure you have the support you need in meeting your business objectives.

For more information about the SALSA scheme we would refer you to the SALSA website: **[www.salsafood.co.uk](http://www.salsafood.co.uk)**

Alternatively in England, Wales or Ireland you can contact us Monday to Friday 9am to 5 pm

**Telephone: 01295 724 248 Fax: 01295 722 821**

For companies based in Scotland you can contact us Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5 pm

**Telephone: 0131 335 6600 Fax: 0131 335 6601**

## The SALSA Audit Standard

### SECTION 1 - CONTROLS

Prior to conducting a hazard analysis, the Business shall ensure that food safety controls are in place and are adhered to. These controls shall include, but are not limited to the requirements identified in section 1. All controls shall detail monitoring & review frequencies as well as guidance for corrective actions to be taken in the event of failure to meet the requirement.

#### 1.1 Training and Supervision

The business shall ensure that all employees are adequately trained, instructed and supervised commensurate with their activity and can demonstrate that staff are competent to carry out their activity.

No	Requirement
1.1.1	The business shall have training procedures and documented training records to demonstrate that the training is appropriate and effective.
1.1.2	Temporary personnel and contractors shall be trained commensurate with their activity prior to commencing work. This training will be documented.
1.1.3	A programme of refresher training shall be in place for key staff.
1.1.4	All personnel shall be adequately supervised throughout the working period.

#### 1.2 Personal Hygiene

The business's personal hygiene standards shall be documented and adopted by all personnel, including visitors to the factory. These standards shall be formulated with due regard to risk of product contamination.

No	Requirement
1.2.1.	Where a need for protective clothing has been identified, the clothing shall not pose a contamination risk to the product. Disposable protective clothing, if used, shall be subject to adequate control to avoid product contamination.
1.2.2	Where protective clothing is required, designated changing facilities shall be provided for all personnel, whether staff, visitor or contractor, prior to entry to all food handling areas.
1.2.3	For the production of high risk/ high care products, all protective clothing shall be removed, in the designated changing area, before visiting the toilet and controls shall be in place to ensure product safety is not compromised before returning to food handling areas.
1.2.4	Where there is risk of product contamination, all hair shall be fully contained to prevent product contamination.
1.2.5	The business shall detail how to control jewellery, so that it poses no risk of product contamination.
1.2.6	Hand cleaning shall be performed at a frequency that is appropriate to product risk.
1.2.7	All cuts and grazes on exposed skin shall be covered by a contrasting coloured plaster that is business issued and monitored.
1.2.8	Fingernails shall be kept short, clean and unvarnished. False fingernails shall not be permitted.
1.2.9	The business shall have a procedure for the notification, by employees, including temporary employees, of any relevant infectious disease or condition with which they may be suffering, or have been in contact.

#### 1.3 Cleaning

Housekeeping and cleaning systems shall be in place which ensure appropriate standards of hygiene are maintained at all times and that risk of contamination is minimised.

No	Requirement
1.3.1	Documented cleaning schedules shall be in place and maintained for the building, services, plant and all equipment in direct contact with food.
1.3.2	Disinfecting processes, where applicable, shall be in place to effectively control microbiological risk.
1.3.3	Cleaning chemicals shall be fit for purpose, suitably labelled, secured in closed containers and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

**1.4 Contamination / Cross Contamination Prevention** (see also internal premises requirements).  
Facilities and procedures shall be in place to control the risk of physical, chemical or microbiological contamination of product.

No	Requirement
1.4.1	The business shall identify all potential contamination risks associated with raw materials at each process step, and have in place systems of working and process flow to reduce any potential physical, chemical or microbiological contamination risks.
1.4.2	There shall be effective segregation in place to minimise the risk of product cross contamination.
1.4.3	Procedures shall be in place to prevent direct or indirect cross contamination of product by micro-organisms.
1.4.4	During all stages of storage, processing and handling, particular consideration shall be given to the avoidance of cross contamination by ingredients which would constitute a safety issue (e.g. recognised allergens, such as peanut), or which would cause significant consumer dissatisfaction (e.g. meat in a vegetarian product).
1.4.5	Written procedures for handling all glass and brittle breakages in raw material handling, preparation, processing, packing and storage areas shall be in place to ensure the necessary precautions are taken.
1.4.6	Procedures shall be in place to prevent cross contamination of product by cleaning chemicals or pest control measures.
1.4.7	The use of wood within preparation, processing and packing areas shall, where appropriate, be eliminated.

**1.5 Temperature Control**  
Where environmental control of product (e.g. temperature, controlled atmosphere) is critical to product safety, legality and quality, this shall be adequately controlled, monitored, recorded and verified.

No	Requirement
1.5.1	Monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with product specification requirements and/or specified operating procedures.
1.5.2	Facilities shall be adequate to maintain products within the temperature range specified for the product specification or operating procedures.
1.5.3	In the case of equipment failure, procedures shall be in place to establish the safety status of the product prior to release.
1.5.4	Temperature monitoring devices shall be adjusted or calibrated to ensure accuracy within agreed parameters at a predetermined frequency.

**1.6 Control of Raw Materials**  
The business shall have in place effective systems to control the safety legality and quality of all raw materials

No	Requirement
1.6.1	The business shall ensure that appropriate specifications exist, and are regularly reviewed, for all raw materials including packaging materials.
1.6.2	The business shall be fully aware of the controls carried out by the supplier of raw material (in this case the supplier means the actual source of production) and can request information from these suppliers.
1.6.3	The business shall carry out checks to ensure raw materials are manufactured to best practice standards.
1.6.4	All water supplies used for equipment or plant cleaning, or in the manufacture of processed food or the preparation of primary product, shall be potable or pose no risk of contamination, either being drawn from mains supply or suitably treated according to its source. Where water is used for primary washing of raw materials prior to the manufacture of processed food and where potable water is not be used, procedures shall be in place to minimise the risk of contamination of semi-processed or processed product.

**1.7 Stock Control**  
Procedures shall be in place to ensure products are used in the correct order and within the allocated shelf life.

No	Requirement
1.7.1	Receipt documents and/or product labelling shall be used to facilitate correct stock rotation.

<b>1.8 Waste Control</b>	
There shall be adequate systems for the collection, collation and disposal of waste material.	
<b>No</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
1.8.1	Systems shall be in place to minimise the accumulation of waste in handling and storage areas.
1.8.2	External waste collection containers and compactors shall be managed in such a manner as to minimise risk.
1.8.3	Products that require specific conditions for disposal shall be separated and disposed of using licensed contractors.

<b>1.9 Pest Control</b>	
The business shall be responsible for minimising the risk of pest infestation on the site.	
<b>No</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
1.9.1	The business shall either contract the services of a competent pest control organisation, or shall have trained personnel, for the regular inspection and treatment of premises to deter and eradicate infestation. Where the services of a pest control contractor are employed, the service contract shall be clearly defined and reflect the activities of the site.
1.9.2	The location of all pest control measures shall be identified on a plan/diagram of the site.
1.9.3	Results of pest control inspections shall, on a regular basis, be assessed and analysed for trends. When trends are identified, corrective action shall be taken to eliminate further risk to product safety.
1.9.4	Detailed records of the pest control inspections, recommendations and necessary action undertaken shall be kept.
1.9.5	Incoming goods shall, where appropriate, be thoroughly checked on arrival for the absence of pest infestation.
1.9.6	All products shall be stored so as to minimise the risk of infestation. Where stored product pests are considered a risk, appropriate measures shall be included in the control programme.
1.9.7	Documentation shall detail the safe use and application of baits and other materials such as insecticide sprays or fumigants.

<b>1.10 Equipment</b>	
Equipment shall be suitably designed for the intended purpose and shall be used so as to minimise the risk of damage to or contamination of product.	
<b>No</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
1.10.1	Equipment shall be positioned so as to give access under, inside and around it for ease of cleaning and servicing, or where permanently sited shall be properly sealed to the floor.

<b>1.11 Maintenance</b>	
A system of maintenance shall be in place for premises and equipment.	
<b>No</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
1.11.1	Planned maintenance systems shall be in place for premises and equipment critical to product safety, legality and quality.
1.11.2	The business shall ensure that the safety, legality or quality of product is not jeopardised during maintenance operations.
1.11.3	Cleaning or replacing light fittings and glass shall be done in a manner to minimise the potential for product contamination

No	Requirement
1.12	<b>Labelling Control</b> There shall be a system in place to ensure the labelling of product fully conforms to legislative requirements.
1.13	<b>Quantity Control</b> There shall be a system of quantity control in place to ensure the product complies with weights and measures legislative requirements.
1.14	<b>Distribution Control</b> There shall be a system in place to ensure the integrity and safety of the product is not compromised during intermediate storage and/or distribution to the customer.

## SECTION 2 - HACCP and Management Systems

The business shall establish an appropriate hazard and risk management process to ensure that all hazards to product safety and legality are identified and appropriate controls documented, implemented and maintained. With respect to food, the hazard and risk management process is known as HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point), but there shall be a proportionate and flexible approach to its application with respect to size and complexity of the operation. Prior to conducting a hazard analysis, the controls in Section 1 should be in place.

### 2.1 HACCP

The business shall have undertaken a hazard analysis process by

No	Requirement
2.1.1	Ensuring the person responsible for undertaking the hazard analysis is able to demonstrate competence in the understanding of HACCP principles and their application
2.1.2	Identifying any hazards that must be prevented, eliminated or reduced to acceptable levels
2.1.3	Identifying the critical control points at the step or steps at which control is essential to prevent or eliminate a hazard or to reduce it to acceptable levels
2.1.4	Establishing critical limits at critical control points which separate acceptability from unacceptability for the prevention, elimination or reduction of identified hazards
2.1.5	Establishing and implementing effective monitoring procedures at critical control points
2.1.6	Establishing corrective actions when monitoring indicates that a critical control point is not under control
2.1.7	Establishing procedures, which shall be carried out regularly, to verify that the measures outlined in subparagraphs 2.1.2 to 2.1.6 are working effectively
2.1.8	Establishing documents and records commensurate with the nature and size of the food business to demonstrate the effective application of the measures in sections 2.1.2 to 2.1.7

### 2.2 Internal Systems Review

The business will carry out and document an internal systems review on a regular basis.

No	Requirement
2.2.1	The systems review shall be carried out by appropriate personnel who shall not review their own work.
2.2.2	Results of the systems review shall include any action taken, and if appropriate, a timetable for correction of any non-compliances found.

No	Requirement
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Corrective Action</b> The business shall ensure that procedures exist to investigate and remedy the cause of any non-compliance.
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Traceability</b> The business shall have a system of traceability with the ability to trace and follow all raw materials from source to distribution of product.
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Managing Problems</b> The business shall have written guidance for staff in the event of any incident which may compromise the safety of a product. This shall include customer notification; product withdrawal and product recall procedures.
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Complaint Handling</b> The business shall have a system for the management of product complaints. This shall include recording of actions taken in response to complaints.

### SECTION 3 - Documentation

The business shall ensure that all documents, records and data critical to the management of product safety, legality and quality are in place and effectively controlled.

No	Requirement
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Document Control.</b> All documents in use shall be clearly legible and be able to be used by the appropriate personnel and the control of documents and records essential for product safety and legality shall be the responsibility of a dedicated senior member of staff. The control shall ensure the documents are stored safely for a defined period of time which relates to the use and possible increased shelf life of the product (e.g. the possible freezing of product by the consumer).
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Specifications</b> Specifications for raw materials and packaging shall be adequate, accurate and regularly reviewed.
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Procedures and Working Instructions</b> Procedures and working instructions shall be clearly legible, easy to understand by staff and readily accessible at all times.
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Records</b> All records appropriate to the safety, legality and quality of products shall be legible and retained in good condition in line with the requirement specified in 3.1.

### SECTION: 4 Premises

External and Internal premises shall be maintained so as to prevent contamination and enable the production of safe and legal products.

No	Requirement
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Location</b> Consideration shall be given to any external factors which may contaminate products.
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Perimeter and Grounds</b> External areas shall be maintained in good order and drainage shall be adequate and effective.
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Hand Washing Facilities</b> Suitable and sufficient hand cleaning facilities shall be provided.
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Equipment Cleaning Facilities</b> Facilities for tray and utensil washing and general purpose cleaning shall, where appropriate, be adequately segregated from product handling and storage.
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Location of Toilets and Staff Facilities</b> Toilets shall not open directly into handling or storage areas.
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Condition of Building Structure and Services</b> The premises and services shall be fit for purpose and be maintained to ensure product safety and legality.

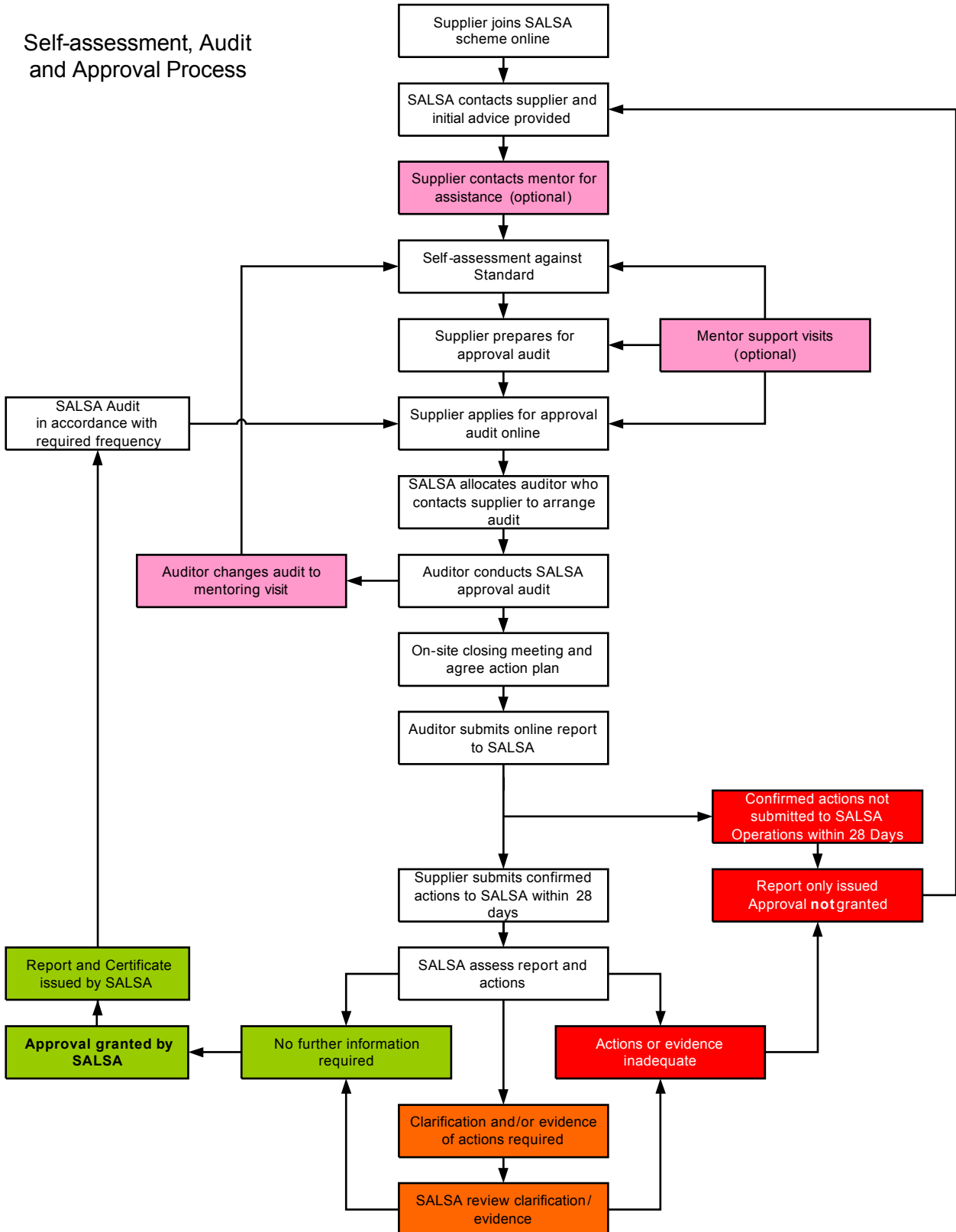
**User Guide**

The SALSA scheme is based upon self-assessment, mentoring, audit against the SALSA Standard and continued compliance with the requirements of the Standard.

Approval will only be granted to suppliers that demonstrate they are able to produce safe food and are committed to continually meeting the requirements of the Standard.

The diagram below illustrates the key steps within the self-assessment, audit and approval process.

**Self-assessment, Audit and Approval Process**



Along with the flow diagram above, the step-by-step table below will guide you through everything you and the other parties involved need to do in order to achieve SALSA approval and your certificate.

<b>Step</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Parties involved</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Document(s)</b>
<b>1</b>	Supplier joins SALSA scheme online	Supplier – applies SALSA – receives application	<b>Supplier</b>	SALSA registration form (online)
<b>2</b>	SALSA contacts supplier and initial advice provided	SALSA- provides advice Supplier - receives advice	<b>SALSA</b>	E mail
<b>3</b>	Supplier contacts mentor for assistance (OPTIONAL)	Supplier - contacts mentor Mentor - receives information	<b>Supplier</b>	1. SALSA website 2. Email
<b>4</b>	Self-assessment against Standard	Supplier (Mentor- if appointed)	<b>Supplier</b>	1. SALSA Audit Standard 2. SALSA Guidelines 3. Self-assessment Checklist
<b>5</b>	Supplier prepares for approval audit	Supplier (Mentor- if appointed)	<b>Supplier</b>	1. SALSA Audit Standard 2. SALSA Guidelines
<b>6</b>	Supplier applies for approval audit online	Supplier - applies (Mentor- if appointed)- assists SALSA - receives information	<b>Supplier</b>	Email
<b>7</b>	SALSA allocates auditor who contacts supplier to arrange audit	SALSA - contacts auditor Auditor - contacts supplier	<b>SALSA</b>	Email
<b>8</b>	Auditor conducts SALSA approval audit	Auditor - carries out audit Supplier - co-operates with auditor	<b>Auditor</b>	1. SALSA Audit Standard 2. SALSA Guidelines 3. Audit Checklist
<b>9</b>	On site closing meeting and agree action plan	Auditor - provides feed back on audit findings and provides audit summary and action plan Supplier - receives feedback	<b>Auditor</b>	1. Audit Summary and Action Plan
<b>10</b>	Auditor submits online report to SALSA	Auditor – completes and sends audit report SALSA - receives audit report	<b>Auditor</b>	SALSA Audit Report
<b>11</b>	Supplier submits confirmed actions to SALSA within 28 days	Supplier - carries out actions arising from the audit and confirms these to SALSA by submitting the completed Audit Summary and Action Plan with evidence. SALSA- receives Audit Summary and Action Plan Auditor - receives copy of Audit Summary and Action Plan	<b>Supplier</b>	1. Audit Summary and Action Plan 2. Documented evidence
<b>12</b>	SALSA assesses report and actions	SALSA - carries out assessment of all documents	<b>SALSA</b>	1. Audit Summary and Action Plan 2. Documented evidence
<b>13</b>	Evidence assessed with no clarification required	SALSA - assessment confirms no further action	<b>SALSA</b>	None
<b>14</b>	Clarification and/or evidence of action required	SALSA - request for further evidence and/or clarification of evidence Supplier to provide further evidence and/or clarification of evidence	<b>Supplier</b>	1. Email 2. Documented evidence
<b>15</b>	SALSA reviews clarification and/or evidence	SALSA - carries out assessment of information provided	<b>SALSA</b>	Documented evidence
<b>16</b>	Approval granted by SALSA	SALSA - grants approval	<b>SALSA</b>	None
<b>17</b>	Report and Certificate issued by SALSA	SALSA - issue Audit Report and Certificate Supplier - receives Audit report and Certificate	<b>SALSA</b>	1. Audit Report 2. Certificate
<b>18</b>	SALSA Audit in accordance with required frequency	Supplier- plans next audit	<b>Supplier</b>	None

## **Scheme Rules**

### **Complaints**

The supplier has the right of complaint against any SALSA registered Auditor or Mentor. In the event that the supplier wishes to complain about an Auditor or Mentor, they shall do so in writing to:

SALSA  
c/o Bloxham Mill  
Barford Road  
Bloxham  
**Banbury**  
OX15 4FF

### **Appeals**

The supplier has a right of appeal against the decision of SALSA to not grant approval to the SALSA Standard. In the event that the supplier wishes to appeal against the decision made by SALSA, they shall do so in writing to the address above. The appeals procedure will be taken forward by the SALSA Governance Council, who will ensure independence in the review process.

### **Suspension of the SALSA Certificate**

SALSA has the right to suspend the Approval Certificate at any time, if there is evidence that a supplier does not or has not conformed to the SALSA Standard during the period of certification. Suspension would typically occur if there is evidence of problems or complaints from customers, consumers or Government Authorities that might bring the SALSA scheme into disrepute.

### **Legal Challenges**

In the event that the supplier becomes aware of possible legal proceedings against them i.e. the issue of a summons in relation to food safety or legality, they shall make SALSA aware **as soon as possible** in writing to the address above or by email to: [info@salsafood.co.uk](mailto:info@salsafood.co.uk)

### **Changes in Circumstances**

It is important for the supplier to make SALSA aware if their circumstances change or there is change to the products they supply under the scope of their certification. The supplier shall inform SALSA where:

- there is a change of premises
- there is a change in company ownership
- there is significant change to existing premises e.g. extension, major building work
- there is a change in technology in relation to the product e.g. frozen to chilled or 'high acid' to 'low acid'
- there is a significant increase in production (>50%) from the date of the last audit
- the supplier commences the production of a buyer's own-label products
- there is the suspension of production for more than three months
- there is any other change which may impact upon the safety and legality of the products made

In the event that any of the situations specified above occur, or are likely to occur, the supplier shall inform SALSA as soon as possible by email to [info@salsafood.co.uk](mailto:info@salsafood.co.uk) or by telephone to 01295 724 248 and full guidance on how to proceed will be provided.

This Audit Standard and User Guide have been developed to inform you about the SALSA scheme and are not designed to be definitive in nature. The scheme website contains many detailed documents to help you achieve your business objectives and SALSA is there to guide you when you need help. Most of the information you will need to help you through to first approval and ongoing approval can be found on the SALSA website: [www.salsafood.co.uk](http://www.salsafood.co.uk)

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