

F FOOD & BEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

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FOOD SAFETY EDITION



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**COMPANY
OF THE YEAR**

Artisan Food Solutions



*The annual listing of 10 companies that are at the
forefront of tackling customer challenges*

Artisan Food Solutions

Food Safety Consulting Services Empowering Small-Scale Producers

Artisan Food Solutions (AFS) is a full-service agricultural business specializing in providing food safety and food system consulting services for fresh produce operations in the wholesale food distribution supply chain, focusing in high-risk commodities and small-scale operations.

AFS aims to solve the ambiguity around The Food Safety Modernization Act. Producers often don't have the necessary resources to comply with strict food safety requirements. AFS supports them in navigating the complex food safety landscape.

There is no limit to the suite of food safety services available. Navigating the fast-paced world of food safety is what AFS is passionate about. Its suite of services ranges from on-farm food safety practices to quality management systems such as: ISO 9001 and 22000. AFS encourages farmers and packers to implement good agricultural practices (GAP) and good manufacturing practices (GMP) for preventing contamination of produce from farm to distribution.

Its affordable services assist a wide range of clients, including food manufacturers, processors, farmers, storage and distribution facilities, and buyers, with FSMS development and implementation, FSMA compliance and risk management throughout the food supply chain.

"We envision a positive change within the food system through education, advocacy, influence, and collaborative networking to create a food safety culture that benefits all



PATRICIA TRIPP,
FOUNDER & CEO

food stakeholders. We are committed to promoting sustainable practices that are environmentally, socially, and economically responsible," says Patricia Tripp, founder and CEO of Artisan Food Solutions.

Building a Stronger Food Safety Culture through Knowledge Sharing

AFS believes education is the key component in creating a food safety culture within any organization.



Without proper education, it is not possible to maintain an effective food safety management system.

The company imparts this necessary education through one-on-one consultations and training programs to help clients increase their understanding and implementation of food safety measures.

The consulting process starts with a phone interview. It is followed by a virtual or on-farm risk assessment to understand the operations processes and buyer requirements before developing a training program. AFS then creates a scalable food safety program that can be easily understood and effectively implemented.

These cost-effective one-on-one consultations and training programs help those looking to improve their food quality, develop new products, improve post-harvest handling, and prepare for wholesale operations. Growers learn the proper ways of packing and storing produce for larger markets through hands-on workshops. These programs create a solid foundation to access new wholesale markets, enhance food quality, and extend the shelf-life of produce.

To support this, AFS creates customizable food safety management system templates, including standard operating procedures and record-keeping which provide a structured and standardized approach to managing food safety. Using these templates, clients can easily monitor and manage all aspects of food hygiene and safety and ensure they fully comply with all food safety regulations.

AFS also provides guidance manuals with practical advice on how to prevent food safety

hazards at every stage of the food supply chain, and resources that cover good manufacturing and agricultural practices. It holds webinars and workshops to prepare clients for any upcoming standards and changes in regulations to keep them ahead of the curve.

Practical training is also provided in the form of farm audits. This is a crucial aspect of the educational program as it enables learners to gain knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience on how to monitor and interact with auditors during the audit process.

AFS conducts internal audits to maintain audit readiness for the possibility of unannounced audits. It provides internal audits for GFSI benchmarked schemes like Primus GFS, SQF, and Global GAP to ensure compliance with regulations.



Strengthening Local Food Systems

In addition to its food safety focus, AFS works with school districts to source and process local food. It is committed to overcome the challenges of putting local food into the school system by building strong relationships with school districts to continue promoting local food in schools.

It also collaborates with partner hub networks to ensure food produced in specific regions is consumed locally and not wasted. This approach creates a more sustainable and efficient food system, which is beneficial for producers and consumers alike.

Its buyer-driven food safety workshops and one-on-one technical support enable growers and food hubs to understand the liability and marketing benefits of having a food safety program in place.

Forging Partnerships with Industry Stakeholders

AFS recognizes the importance of collaboration in achieving success and driving innovation throughout the agricultural value chain.

COMPANY OF THE YEAR



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Its partnership with Provision Analytics, a cloud-based food safety software company, is a testament to this. Provision's user-friendly platform enables growers, packers and processors to be audit-ready in less time while mitigating risks. Provision's clients utilize simple reminders, alerts and reports to ensure all process data is compliant in real time for the food safety system team. Provision is fully configurable to suit any commodity process and food safety standard.

AFS's food safety management systems are available to use within Provisions platform creating an intuitive and cost effective virtual experience. The partnership brings value to farmers challenged with time consuming record-keeping and document management tasks. This digital solution eliminates the need to

manage critical compliance processes on paper and in cumbersome binders.

A real world example is Rose Hill, NC-based Cottle Organics. Cottle has a strong 12 year relationship with AFS. As buyer-driven food safety requirements increased, Cottle knew they needed a food safety audit and chose the USDA Harmonized GAP standard at the recommendation of AFS. The farm grew from 25 to 250+ acres and the food safety program evolved with it. They transitioned to USDA Harmonized GAP + Plus, a government GFSI equivalent audit. By implementing standard operating procedures and developing a food safety culture on the farm, Cottle successfully built on their program every couple of years and now have unlimited potential for growth and market expansion now certified under the PrimusGFS Standard. Cottle

Organics recently streamlined their compliance processes even more by adopting AFS's digital food safety templates within Provision.

Expanding into New Terrains

Addressing the shortage of food safety professionals at the farm level, AFS is partnering with local organizations to implement a training program that provides career opportunities for minority and indigenous farmers who may not have the resources to pursue a college degree. The regional program will also help reduce the small-scale producer costs associated with food safety certification.

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AFS is also expanding into the cannabis industry, demonstrating its commitment to adapting to emerging markets and meeting evolving food safety needs.

Prioritizing continued education, relationship building, and a focus on innovation, AFS will continue to deliver top-notch results for its customers. Collaboration and commitment will remain key factors in its ongoing success. 