



# Small company builds big ambitions on ISO 22000

by Mura Rajah and  
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*Bramfood, a Canadian SME employing 20 people has achieved what is believed to be the first North American certification to ISO 22000 – particularly appropriate given the World Standards Day 2006 message “Standards: big benefits for small business”.*



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Bramfood Manufacturers and Distributors of Ontario, Canada, recently earned the distinction of first North American company successfully certified in accordance with ISO 22000:2005,

*Food safety management systems – Requirements for any organization in the food chain* (see also “Canadian food sector SME’s ISO 22000 scoop”, pages 5-6). The audit and certification award was carried out in September 2006.

The company produces and markets a range of seafood chowders, salads, pasta and vegetable products to major retail supermarkets, independent stores and food service distributors in Canada and the USA, under the “Antica Roma” brand.

Bramfood, which has been in business since 1995 and currently employs 20 people, is recognized as implement-



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ing the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system and registered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and US Food and Drug Administra-

tion (FDA). It prides itself on using 100 % natural ingredients with no added chemicals or artificial ingredients.

## Finding out about ISO 22000:2005

But how did we find out about the new food safety standard in the first place? Our starting point was ISO. When considering the highest standards, ISO came to mind in the first instance – the name itself gives one confidence.

We previewed ISO 22000:2005 on the ISO Web site. Then, detailed information on the standard from QMI, the certification body that we selected, convinced us to begin the implementation process and aim at certification as soon as possible.

Bramfood had already implemented a CFIA quality management programme (QMP) including a Pre Requisite Plan, Regulatory Action Point

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plan and HACCP principles. The regulatory-based CFIA system requires all federally registered fish processing plants in Canada to develop and implement an in-plant quality control programme.

### Voluntary, so why certify?

ISO 22000:2005 is not a compulsory industry standard – you can implement it without being certified – and voluntary requirements tend not to be widely adopted. However, with food safety being a big issue, agencies and organizations are debating making most food safety requirements mandatory, no matter what food product you make.



will cover QMP, interactive communication, management commitment, opportunities for improvement and many other areas that can significantly enhance food safety management systems.

*North America's first ISO 22000:2005 certification: at Bramfood's certification award ceremony were (from left to right) Baljinder Singh, QA & Regulatory Affairs Supervisor; Wendy Tifford, President of QMI, which carried out the certification; Muru Rajah, Bramfood CEO, and Franco Sgro, Director of Sales.*



*'ISO 22000:2005 is of benefit to everyone in the food chain, whether a large corporation or a small food business like Bramfood.'*

Customers look for verifiable activities. So we see our certification as testimony of our conformity to international food safety requirements.

ISO 22000:2005 provides a broader umbrella than existing food sector standards that

So if you are planning to sell your products internationally, we suggest you look at ISO 22000:2005 as the first tool you need to make life easier.

For Bramfood, the potential benefits of ISO 22000:2005

ty management system to the requirements, identifying and eliminating gaps step by step.

For an SME, the main resource would be the person capable of leading and managing the project. In our case, Baljinder Singh, Bramfood's Quality and Regulatory Affairs Supervisor, led the ISO 22000:2005 implementation and certification process. Most of the other resources necessary were already in place.

### Let's do it!

We believe that ISO 22000:2005 is of benefit to everyone in the food chain, whether a large corporation or a small food business like Bramfood. It will enable SMEs to gain wider acceptance of their products and compete with the "bigger fish". So our recommendation to all food industry SMEs is "let's do it!"

We have already received very positive comments from all our customers. They know about ISO 22000:2005 and recognize it as a very high standard, and that makes them proud to deal with us. We believe this will bring us more business in the future, particularly as we plan to enter the European market next year. In addition, and because of our very positive experience with ISO 22000, we are now considering implementing ISO 9001:2000.

implementation certainly motivated us, although we knew the high quality of work expected from implementing any ISO standard would be a challenge. But once we had reviewed its requirements, we knew we could do it.

However, the key challenge turned out to be the very short timeline, although this was somewhat self-imposed since we wanted to finish the project in time to be among the first early adopters in North America – or even the first. We made a big effort to be accurate to ensure success at the first shot.

### The implementation process

The first stage was to understand ISO 22000:2005 requirements and convince ourselves that it would be really worth the effort. Next, we tried to relate our existing food safe-