An Introduction to **Acceptance of Raw Materials**

(Goods-In and Raw Material Receipt)

BRC Global Standards. **Trust in Quality**
Acceptance of Raw Materials (Goods-In and Raw Material Receipt)

Raw materials are a source of potential hazards, so their correct manufacture and control is vital to the safety and quality of the products they’re used to produce.

How these raw materials are received on to a site is an important part of the process. You need to ensure ingredients are only accepted from approved suppliers and meet agreed specifications, which include appropriate safety and quality standards.

1.0 Requirements of the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety

In the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety, clause 3.5.2.1 states:

The company shall have a documented procedure for the acceptance of raw materials and packaging on receipt based on the risk assessment (3.5.1). Raw material acceptance and its release for use shall be based on one or a combination of:

- visual inspection on receipt
- certificates of conformance – specific to each consignment
- certificates of analysis
- product sampling and testing

A list of raw materials and the requirements to be met for the acceptance shall be available. The parameters for acceptance and frequency of testing shall be clearly defined.

Clause 3.5.2.2 states:

The procedures shall be fully implemented and records maintained to demonstrate the basis for acceptance of each batch of raw materials.

2.0 How this short guide can help

This short guide will help you put verification procedures in place to ensure incoming materials are from approved suppliers and meet agreed specifications.

The aim of this verification is to ensure your delivery:

- Contains the correct quantity of goods
- Is of the expected quality
- Was not damaged during transit (e.g. physical damage, pest ingress, water damage)
- Was stored in an appropriate condition (e.g. temperature control)
- Meets the required safety parameters appropriate to the ingredient (e.g. micro-organisms of concern, potential allergens, physical or chemical contaminants)
- Maintains traceability
- Meets any specific parameters identified in the specification
- Is added to stock control and release systems

As part of this verification process any non-conforming raw materials are effectively prevented from entering production.
3.0 Setting up acceptance procedures

Acceptance procedures must be documented to ensure they are completed thoroughly and consistently.

Your procedure(s) should include:

- Identification of the staff authorised/responsible for receiving raw materials
- The checks or controls required for each ingredient
- The management of non-conforming product (this should also include ingredients that are ‘on hold’ pending further testing or investigation)
- Systems for maintaining traceability and the application of any site specific labelling
- Storage instructions, for example, chilled or frozen storage and requirements for segregation (e.g. allergens)
- Sampling procedure which should include the timing, method and responsibility for completion
- Instructions for retained samples (where required)

3.1 Approved raw materials

Sites must have a list of approved raw materials, which should be available at goods-in (i.e. where it will be used). It will usually contain:

- A list of approved suppliers
- A list of ingredients from each supplier
- The checks/controls required on receipt of each ingredient, complete with acceptance criteria (i.e. acceptable/unacceptable is defined)
- Frequency of tests

3.2 Assessing the level of checks needed

Whilst some checks will be applicable to all deliveries (e.g. the state of the delivery vehicle), the risk assessment (completed as part of requirement 3.5.1) should be used to establish the level of control required for each ingredient, with higher risk ingredients needing more checks before they’re accepted. For example, you’ll need to assess whether a Certificate of Conformity is sufficient or whether a more rigorous assessment is needed such as a Certificate of Analysis or product testing.

Where a certificate or other documentation is required, it’s important that the critical data is clearly defined and checked, i.e. the specific tests and acceptable limits are documented. For example, if the risk assessment highlights a potential microbiological risk then the Certificate of Analysis must show the relevant organism(s). But if the risk is an allergen then there needs to be an allergen result. On receipt of a batch of ingredients the certificate will be checked for the relevant tests as well as ensuring the value(s) is within defined critical limits.

Where a control is applied to a percentage of batches (for example a monthly QA test rather than every delivery), it is particularly important that mechanisms are in place to ensure this works effectively as it is much easier to miss a test if it’s not applied to every delivery.

An example of an approved supplier list is shown in Appendix 1.
4.0 Maintaining your records

Records of each delivery and the checks that have been carried out must be carefully maintained.

Typically the records will indicate:

• Date/time of delivery
• Identification of the raw material and quantity delivered
• List of checks completed:
  - Transport status (e.g. visual inspection of hygiene of vehicle)
  - Raw material packaging (e.g. damage, spillages, packaging integrity)
  - Accuracy/acceptability of product delivery (e.g. correct ingredient from an approved supplier including the quantity delivered, grade/quality of the ingredient, date/lot coding i.e. is shelf life acceptable)
  - Paperwork associated with the batch of ingredients (e.g. is the appropriate CoA available for this specific batch and are the relevant tests listed and the value(s) within the defined acceptance limits?)
  - Additional or Product Specific checks completed on receipt (e.g. product temperature)
• Requirements for further testing
• Identification of the staff completing the checks

An example of a goods-in acceptance sheet is shown in Appendix 2.

Following the goods receipt checks the site will need to take appropriate action to manage the ingredient. Typically this will be one of the following:

• Accept the batch of ingredient, enter into the site’s systems for traceability and stock control and move into the appropriate storage area until it is required for production. It is important that temperature sensitive ingredients are moved in a timely fashion and not left sitting in goods receipt for a prolonged period.

• The batch of raw material is put on hold awaiting further paperwork from the supplier, product testing or QA release. The site will need to have a clear policy on labelling and taking action to ensure materials that are on hold are not accidentally used.

• The site rejects the batch of raw material as it does not meet the required standards. The appropriate site representative will need to contact the raw material supplier to agree next steps. Again, a clear procedure is needed to ensure the ingredient is either segregated and labelled to ensure that it is not accidentally used, or is not off loaded from the delivery vehicle.

5.0 The importance of good communication

Effective communication systems are vital to ensure that relevant information flows effectively between the teams involved in raw material management.

For example:

• The goods-in team need to know the quantities of material ordered
• The QA department need to know when ingredients which require testing or releasing into production are received
• The technical, QA and buying teams need to know if a non-conforming product has been received
Quick Tips

• Ensure relevant staff are trained in the correct procedures

• Ensure that documents (e.g. approved supplier lists, copy of orders) are readily available in the goods receipt area

• Have a clear on-hold/reject system in force

• Leave temperature sensitive ingredients at goods receipt for a prolonged period – process and store appropriately within defined timescales

These short guides are designed for companies involved in the enrolment program and aim to help you interpret the Standard, and design robust systems and procedures that meet the requirements. Examples are given to explain the types of documents and procedures and the level of detail typically required. However, you’ll need to consider the context relevant to your business. The implementation of the Standard, and whether a resulting system is considered to be conforming or non-conforming by an auditor, is an objective judgement which can only be based on the evidence collected and observations made during the audit.

Further details regarding the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety can be obtained from enquiries@brcglobalstandards.com
## Appendix 1: Example of an Approved Raw Material List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product(s) Supplied</th>
<th>Supplier</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Frequency of Checks</th>
<th>Acceptance Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsalted Butter</td>
<td>A Browns</td>
<td>CoC</td>
<td>All deliveries</td>
<td>CoC to confirm compliance with specification (BrownsButter V1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salted Butter</td>
<td>A Browns</td>
<td>CoC &amp; CoA</td>
<td>All deliveries</td>
<td>CoC to confirm compliance with specification (BrownsButter V2) &amp; CoA to confirm compliance with specification (BrownsButter V2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gluten Free Rice Flour 123 Grade X</td>
<td>A Smiths</td>
<td>CoC &amp; QA</td>
<td>All deliveries</td>
<td>CoC to confirm compliance with specification (SmithsMaize V1) &amp; QA to confirm compliance with specification (SmithsMaize V1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize Flour (&lt;500 micron)</td>
<td>A Smiths</td>
<td>CoC &amp; QA</td>
<td>All deliveries</td>
<td>CoC to confirm compliance with specification (SmithsMaize V1) &amp; QA to confirm compliance with specification (SmithsMaize V1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the tests listed above all deliveries will be checked for:

- Cleanliness of delivery vehicle — no spillages permitted, no odours likely to taint materials
- Integrity of packaging — damaged packs to be rejected
- Pest Control — no evidence of pest ingress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Supplier</th>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>BBE/UB</th>
<th>Checks Required</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Acceptable/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24/1/13 9am</td>
<td>A Browns</td>
<td>Unsalted Butter</td>
<td>ABB1301</td>
<td>1/3/13</td>
<td>Vehicle, Pest, Packaging</td>
<td>COA OK</td>
<td>Chill store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/1/13 3.30pm</td>
<td>A Smiths</td>
<td>Gluten Free Rice Flour 123 Grade X</td>
<td>123X_01_13</td>
<td>31/12/13</td>
<td>Vehicle, Pest, Packaging, COA</td>
<td>Gluten OK</td>
<td>On-hold awaiting gluten test results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the latter example (Gluten Free Rice Flour) the QA department need to update the record when the results become available and ensure ingredient is either released into production (acceptable results) or disposed of (unacceptable results) e.g. Gluten results <10ppm received 31/1/13 signed QA.