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1. Reference

In accordance with current GFSI Benchmarking Requirements and the SQF Food Safety and Quality Codes, SQFI has established this procedure for handling complaints. Complaints may be submitted against any of the following SQF:

- certified sites,
- licensed accreditation bodies,
- licensed certification bodies,
- licensed training centers,
- registered auditors,
- registered consultants,
- registered trainers and/or
- SQF staff or services

Where a complaint is registered about the conduct or behavior of an auditor, certification body personnel or against a certified site, the complaint is first referred to the certification body for investigation and resolution. Where a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the certification body, the matter is resolved by the SQFI Compliance Manager, or designee, with advisement from the SQFI Ethics Committee, as needed.

Comments about the SQF Code or the SQF assessment database can be provided via the website at www.sqfi.com and is outside the scope of this procedure.

SQFI reserves the right to self-submit a complaint or investigate against any of the entities listed above.

2. Source

Complaints are received via the SQFI web-site.

The online complaint form is used to gather general information regarding the complaint and includes at a minimum the following:

- Who the Complaint is against (Name/Category)
- Description of the complaint

Complainant information is included in the complaint form unless the complainant wants to remain anonymous. Directions are provided in the form on how to submit the complaint anonymously.

3. SQFI Policy

3.1 Recording Complaints

3.1.1 All complaint forms received are recorded in HubSpot and relevant information is stored in SharePoint folder.

3.1.2 Complaints are recorded on complaint's log, including the result of investigation. Upon

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completion of investigation the final decision of complaint is communicated in writing, as appropriate, and closed.

3.2 Complaints Against Certified SQF Sites

- 3.2.1 Complaints regarding SQF Certified Sites are directed to and addressed by the Certification Body contracted by the site. Results of the investigation and resolution will be submitted to the SQFI Compliance Manager or designee for closure.
- 3.2.2 SQFI will review the actions taken by the Certification Body and verify that the findings are suitable for the complaint made. If SQFI does not see the actions taken by the Certification Body as being sufficient, SQFI will determine if any additional measures are needed to ensure the integrity of the program is upheld.
- 3.2.3 If upon investigation of a complaint it is determined that there has been a substantiated breakdown of a site's SQF System or any other condition not in accordance with the SQF Code and/or other supporting documents the Certification Body will suspend Certification as outlined in the SQF Food Safety Code Part A.

3.3 Complaints Against Certification Bodies or Other Parties (SQF Consultants, SQF Trainers, SQF Auditors, and other SQF Stakeholders)

- 3.3.1 Complaints about Certification Bodies, SQF auditors, or other SQF stakeholders are referred to the appropriate party for resolution.
- 3.3.2 Where a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the matter is resolved by the SQFI Compliance Manager, or designee, with advisement from the SQFI Ethics Committee, as needed. The SQFI Ethics Committee will determine the resolution that best upholds the values, policies, and procedures of SQFI.

3.4 Complaints Against SQFI Staff or Services

- 3.4.1 Where a complaint is received regarding SQFI's staff or services, the SQFI compliance manager, or designee, presents the complaint to the department for investigation. Where a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the matter is presented to SQFI Senior Vice President (SVP) with advisement from the SQFI Ethics Committee, as appropriate, to determine the resolution that best upholds the values, policies and procedures of SQFI.
- 3.4.2 Where the issue is systemic or cannot be easily fixed within a reasonable timeframe, the issue is raised and discussed at the next SQFI staff meeting and a decision taken on how, when, where, and who will correct or change the procedure to resolve the issue.
- 3.4.3 The issue remains on the agenda of the SQFI staff meetings until the matter has been resolved.

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3.5 Ethics Committee

3.5.1 The ethics committee consists of the following personnel:

- Chief Food Safety Assessment Officer, SQFI
- Vice President, SQFI Technical Affairs
- Chief Science Officer, FMI
- Associate General Counsel, FMI
- Representative, Exemplar Global

3.5.2 Complaints and investigations are referred to the ethics committee by the SQFI compliance team according to the above procedure.