Coles Supplier Requirements – Food

Supplier Standard – CSR-FV3

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About this document

Who is it for?
This document is for use by Suppliers of Coles Brands products, Coles approved Training Bodies, Coles approved Certification Bodies and Coles approved Food Safety Auditors only. This document outlines the areas and activities where Coles requires either particular actions or particular focus. Where the external Food Safety Standards have been considered too generic to address some areas specific to Coles’ requirements, additional elements have been developed which suppliers are required to meet and which will be included as part of a 3rd party audit for Coles Supermarkets.

Who do these requirements apply to?
Coles Brands suppliers are defined as any supplier who provides a product which is manufactured and packed with a brand owned by Coles, including but not limited to, SmartBuy, Coles, Finest, Coles Butcher, Coles Market Place. This also includes supply of bulk products which are sold loose or unbranded in a display case or open carton (such as fresh produce), bulk produce which is packed into Returnable Plastic Crates, bulk product which is packaged at store (such as bulk olives which are sold and packaged over the Deli counter) and ingredients/raw materials for our in-store bakery or meat rooms.

How to use this Document:
Suppliers need to ensure that all the additional elements outlined below are incorporated and implemented as part of their in-house Food Safety / Quality Assurance Programs. Suppliers will be audited against these additional elements, and in order to achieve approval as a Coles Brands supplier, they will need to obtain certification against the relevant external standard (eg: BRC-Food, SQF2000L3, SQF1000L3, Freshcare) AND against the Coles Supermarkets additional requirements. In addition to this, Coles will impose close-out timeframes and actions for non-conformances, over and above those set by the BRC, SQF and Freshcare standards.
1) Coles Brands Policies and Guidelines

1.1 Suppliers shall adhere to relevant Coles Brands Policies and be aware of the related Coles Brands Guidelines. Current copies of the relevant Coles Brand Policies shall be available.

1.2 A current copy of the Coles Supplier Requirements shall be held in the Quality / Food Safety manual.

2) The use of Sub-contracted or Indirect Suppliers

General Suppliers – Sub-contractors:

2.1 Suppliers are not to sub-contract any manufacturing, processing or packing operations of Coles products without written approval from the relevant Product Technologist.

2.2 Where a supplier contracts out any part of manufacturing/packing/processing of Coles branded products, it is a requirement that these indirect suppliers participate directly on the Coles Supplier Approval Program. It is the responsibility of the Coles ‘direct’ supplier’s to inform Coles of these sub-contracted suppliers.

2.3 Where sub-contractors are used, the direct supplier to Coles shall ensure that the sub-contracted supplier has access to current Coles specifications.

2.4 Manufacturers of product "components", such as inner sachets of flavouring, are not considered to be sub-contractors unless the component is exclusive to Coles.

Industry Category Specific Requirements – Indirect suppliers:

Produce:

2.5 Indirect suppliers must be managed by the direct Coles supplier.

2.6 Where indirect suppliers are used, the direct supplier shall ensure that the sub contractor has access to current Coles specifications.

2.7 For Produce suppliers sourcing product externally to themselves (e.g.: from external growers, wholesalers or brokers) evidence of second or third party certification by a JAS-ANZ (or equivalent) accredited Certification Body to a HACCP based food safety program is required for the external supplier. Examples of acceptable standards include Freshcare, SQF 1000, SQF 2000, or at a minimum Codex HACCP, NZGAP and GlobalGAP.

2.8 Where produce is sourced from an International supply base, the agent shall ensure that the suppliers meet the Coles specified standards for fresh produce suppliers. It is the responsibility of the agents to inform Coles of these suppliers.

2.9 Suppliers of Value-Added fruit and leafy salads/mixes shall ensure that all their growers are certified to SQF 1000 or Freshcare.

Eggs:

2.10 Suppliers of Shell Eggs shall ensure that all indirect suppliers (i.e. egg producers) are certified under the Egg Corp Assured program.

Beef:

2.11 Suppliers of fresh Beef products (including value-added lines) must ensure that all Australian-grown Beef is sourced from livestock which has not been treated with Hormone Growth Promotants (i.e. Australian-grown beef must be classified as HGP-Free).

2.12 Suppliers shall ensure that Australian Beef producers meet the requirements in the Coles Beef Production Standard for Hormone Growth Promotant Free Beef.
3) **Product Specifications**

3.1 A current list of all Coles Brands products and corresponding finished product specifications are required to be available during the audit (either electronically or in hard copy).

3.2 Current supporting and validation data for product specification information shall be maintained (e.g. NIP test results, shelf-life test results, raw material specifications, packing material specifications).

3.3 Changes to Coles’ finished product specifications shall not be undertaken without the knowledge and written approval of the relevant Coles Product Technologist. This includes, but is not limited to, changes to the product formulation/recipe, changes to process/es, changes to NIP data, changes to the ingredient declaration, changes to allergen status, changes in raw materials and changes to the Country of Origin statement.

3.4 Finished Product Specifications for processed or manufactured foods including value added produce, seafood, meat and poultry shall be loaded into the ColesPLUS website.

3.5 Suppliers who provide whole produce or non value-added seafood, poultry and meat must demonstrate access to the Controlled Product Specifications available on the Coles supplier website.

4) **Retention Sampling**

4.1 Unless specific written exemption has been obtained from the relevant Coles Product Technologist, batch specific retention samples of each flavour, or formulation variant, shall be retained for the duration of shelf life and assessed before discarding.

   **Example of a flavour or formulation variant:**
   - Chocolate Ice-Cream
   - Strawberry Ice-Cream
   - Vanilla Ice-Cream
   - Neapolitan Ice-Cream
   
   These are four flavour variants of the same product, even though the Neapolitan Ice-Cream is made up of the other three flavours.

4.2 Unless specific written exemption has been obtained from the relevant Coles Product Technologist, the retention samples shall be in each form/type/size/volume/weight of retail and bulk packaging that the product is being sold in.

   **Example of each form of retail packaging:**
   - Skim Milk 600ml
   - Skim Milk 1lt
   - Skim Milk 2lt
   
   These are three packaging variants of the same product, even though the actual content is the same product.

4.3 Unless specific instructions have been provide in writing by the relevant Coles Product Technologist, retention samples shall be held at the following temperatures (Frozen : -18°C +/- 1°C, Chilled : +4°C +/- 1°C, Ambient : average room temperature)

5) **Shelf Life Validation & Verification**

5.1 Shelf Life validation of finished products shall occur on all new products and whenever the formulation, unit size or packaging material or format of a finished product is altered, or a significant change to the process has occurred.

5.2 When conducting Shelf Life validation, relevant product challenge testing shall also be undertaken, including such elements as elevated temperatures and transport.

5.3 If no alterations have been made, Shelf Life verification shall be conducted at least annually for products with less than 2 years Shelf Life.

**Note:** Product inoculation should only be conducted where applicable to product type and risk level. Suppliers should contact their Coles Product Technologist for clarification and agreement on relevant challenge testing per product.
6) **Finished Product Assessment against Specification**

6.1 Completed and authorised finished product specifications are required to be available during audit (either electronically or hard copy).

6.2 The supplier shall ensure that they are carrying out the assessments for Microbiological, Chemical, Physical and Sensory parameters as per the criteria and frequency stated in the approved/validated specification on ColesPLUS or Controlled Product Specification. Records of these assessments shall be maintained.

6.3 Where the agreed specification does not include a product assessment frequency, suppliers must conduct quality assessments at a minimum of twice per product per production day. At a minimum, these product quality assessments must be undertaken at the start and at the end of each product run. Records of these product assessments shall be maintained.

6.4 The supplier shall ensure that they are carrying out assessments / checks of the packaging, labelling and date-coding per product per production day. At a minimum, these assessments / checks must be undertaken at the start and end of each product per variant or pack size run. Records of the packaging assessments / checks shall be maintained.

6.5 A full Finished Product label verification (i.e. label content and ingredient declaration comparison against formulation and Raw Material specifications etc) shall be conducted at least annually and whenever product changes occur.

7) **Weights and Measures**

**General Packaged Foods:**

7.1 All finished products shall be equal to or above the minimum net stated label weight/volume at the time of production, and allowance shall be made for any weight loss during shelf life to ensure the stated net weight is maintained (NB: Coles is not adopting the average weight or AQS weight system for Coles Brands.)

7.2 Where products are sold by number, the count shall be correct.

7.3 Where relevant to the process, if a manual weighing system is in use, finished products shall be manually weighed at a frequency of no less than one unit every 15 minutes or one unit every 30 products. Records of weight checks shall be maintained.

7.4 Where relevant to the process, if in-line / automated check weighers of finished product are in use, records of weight checks shall be maintained for the start, middle and end of every production run for every product pack size.

7.5 Scales and check-weighers used for finished product weight checks shall be verified for accuracy prior to the commencement of each day's packing of finished product. Records of the daily verification checks shall be maintained.

7.6 Certified test weights shall be used to verify scale and check-weigher accuracy. If in-line scales or check-weighers do not allow for the use of test weights, the certified test weights must be used as part of a cross-reference method.

**Bulk Foods:**

7.7 Bulk products, such as chicken fillets sold through the Deli or loose apples sold in the Produce Department, shall equal the weight or count as stated on the Product Specification and the shipper carton/crate. Records of weight checks shall be maintained for the start, middle and end of every production run of each bulk carton size.

7.8 Scales and check-weighers used for bulk product weight checks shall be verified for accuracy prior to the commencement of each day's packing of finished product. Records of the daily verification checks shall be maintained.

7.9 Certified test weights shall be used to verify scale and check-weigher accuracy. If in-line scales or check-weighers do not allow for the use of test weights, the certified test weights must be used as part of a cross-reference method.

8) **Sale of Coles Branded Product**

8.1 Coles branded products shall not be sold through staff, factory or other retail outlets unless all Coles branding and packaging has been completely removed.

8.2 Any products sold through discount or staff outlets shall comply with relevant Federal and State legislation.
8.3 Where product is given freely to staff (not sold) the Coles branded packaging shall be completely removed, or where packaging/branding cannot be removed from staff give-aways, the Coles branding shall be defaced and/or marked as ‘Factory Second – Not For Sale’.

8.4 Any products given freely to staff shall comply with relevant State and Federal legislation.

8.5 Where suppliers wish to donate Coles branded products to Foodbank, written authorisation must be obtained from the relevant Coles Product Technologist prior to the donation, and a log book maintained by the supplier which clearly records the date of the donation, product details, batch numbers, Use-By / Best Before dates, quantities, reason for donation and a copy of the written Coles approval. Donations for Foodbank which have been approved by Coles and entered into the log do not need to have the Coles branding removed or defaced.

Foodbank contact details may be found at: www.Foodbank.com.au

9) External Laboratories

9.1 When outsourcing to external laboratories, suppliers shall ensure that the external laboratory is accredited by NATA (or an international equivalent) for the product category and testing being undertaken.

Note: In-house laboratories are not required to be NATA accredited, although it is highly recommended.

10) HACCP Training

10.1 Initial HACCP training: The HACCP Champion/Team Leader shall have successfully completed formal HACCP training (of no less than 16 hours duration) delivered in a class-room environment by a recognised industry training body that is RTO / TPECS certified (or an international equivalent). A Statement of Competency must be attained to confirm successful completion of the training.

Note: If undertaken prior to 01/09/2011, Initial HACCP Training conducted as an on-line course is still acceptable for this element.

10.2 Refresher HACCP training: The HACCP Champion/Team Leader shall undertake refresher HACCP training at minimum of every three years. Refresher HACCP training may be conducted by internal or external training providers as long as it is conducted by an RTO or TPECS training body or certified trainer (e.g. Cert IV Training and Development) and evidence of training is provided. Refresher training may be conducted in a class-room environment or as an on-line course.

Note: Additional Key members of the HACCP Team are strongly recommended to also undergo formal HACCP training. Additional Key members of the HACCP Team include, but are not limited to, the Production Manager, the Quality Manager, the Purchasing Manager, the Warehouse Manager and Production Floor Leading Hands.

11) Metal Detectors

11.1 If metal detectors are in use, unless written advice from the metal detector manufacturer states otherwise, test pieces for metal detectors shall be placed inside the centre of the product when passed through the detector. It is not acceptable to pass test pieces through the detector on their own.

12) Disposable Clothing / Plastic Liners

12.1 Where disposable gloves and other disposable protective clothing items are in use, they must be in a contrasting colour to the ingredients and finished product/s (e.g.: blue gloves in a bakery facility).

12.2 Plastic liner-bags used during production (e.g. for temporary storage of Ingredient Preparation/Batching, Work In Progress or Re-work), must be in a contrasting colour to the product/s.

Note: Ideally, disposable gloves should be made of “latex free” material
13) **Soil Additives**

13.1 Growers / producers of fresh produce (fruit and vegetables) which are supplied to Coles are not permitted to use soil additives and/or fertilisers made from composted or un-composted human effluent or biosolids.

14) **Animal Welfare**


15) **Timelines for CAR / Non-Conformance closure**

15.1 Over and above any Corrective Action Requests or Non-Conformances raised against external standards, Coles requires that the suppliers adhere to the following time frames:

**CRITICAL** - If a Critical non-conformance is raised during an audit, the Coles Supplier Management Team will be advised immediately by the auditor, while the auditor is still on site.

Close out timelines and potential suspension of trade will be determined by the Coles Supplier Management Team in conjunction with the relevant Product Technologist and Category Technical Manager.

The auditor in conjunction with the supplier and Coles shall ensure that all Critical non-conformances are actioned as per the determined timeline.

**MAJOR** - To attain Coles certification any MAJOR non-conformance against any of the selected standards shall be downgraded or closed out within 14 days of the audit date.

Suspension of trade may be initiated if Major non-conformances are not addressed within the 14 days.

**MINOR** - To attain Coles certification, Minor non-conformances shall be closed out within 30 days from the date of audit.

15.2 A non-compliance to any component of the Coles Supplier Requirements will be considered as a Major non-conformance (14 day close-out time frame).

*Note: Certification under the Coles Brand Supplier Approval Program will only be granted when all non-conformances raised against the Coles Supplier Requirements and the external standard have been closed out.*

16) **General Requirements**

16.1 Audits conducted on behalf of Coles must be undertaken when manufacturing is being conducted and ideally when Coles products are being produced.

16.2 The Coles Supplier Management Team are to be notified within 30 days if there has been any change in the premises location or business ownership.

16.3 Should a supplier wish to change their selected Certification Body, all outstanding Non-Conformances shall be closed-out prior to the change over.

16.4 The Supplier will ensure that the Coles Supplier Management Team is advised in writing of the change in Certification Body at least two Months prior to the next scheduled audit date.

16.5 Where the external standard owner maintains an on-line database (e.g. SQF-Quickfire) the supplier shall grant Coles access to their audit file.

*The Supplier Management Team can be contacted via the Quality Team mailbox: Coles.QC@coles.com.au*