

**IFS Food questionnaire
for certification bodies,
to define, under exceptional
circumstances, product
exclusions in audit scope**

Introduction

By definition, all food processes which are managed by the company/legal entity, on the same site, and which are under their responsibility shall be included in the scope of an IFS Food audit.

This means that, for companies managing the whole supply chain under the same legal entity and location (like e. g. slaughtering, deboning, meat cutting, meat processing, etc.), IFS Food certification shall apply to full activity.

All processes and products shall be included in the audit scope*. The identification of exclusions shall only be an exceptional situation and can only be related to **product** exclusions**.

Only in those exceptional situations where the IFS Food audited company would like to exclude product(s) from the IFS Food audit scope, the following questionnaire shall be filled in by the certification body.

Exclusions, when defined and validated by the certification body (after application of this questionnaire), shall always be explained in the company profile of the audit report and shall be clearly specified in the audit scope of the audit report and certificate.

If product exclusions are defined (under exceptional circumstances and application of this questionnaire), they will always have to be re-defined and reviewed each year by the certification body, to ensure that the product exclusion is still valid and that the audit scope is still up-to-date.

Moreover, in case the company processes new products/private labels during the IFS certification cycle, the company shall contact its certification body to ensure that defined exclusions are still valid and that no further actions are necessary.

The auditor shall always check on-site if defined exclusions are relevant and in line with the questionnaire, by assessing the risks which may arise from excluded products (e.g. contaminants, allergens).

Any exclusion which would have not been justified and noticed by the auditor during the audit shall be assessed either directly during the audit (with a necessary review of audit scope and maybe audit duration) or through a later extension audit.

All activities included in the scope of the audit shall be assessed while working. If a product is not processed during the audit, see question n° 2 of the questionnaire.

In any cases (if some exclusions are defined or not), the number of employees to be taken into consideration to calculate audit duration shall always be the total number of employees (and not only the number of employees involved in the activity which is not excluded).

This current document can be applied from its publication date and its application will be mandatory from 1st January 2015.

* Note 1: only exception to this rule is seasonal process(es), which can be excluded, as long as the scope of the certification is unambiguous and only takes into account the process audited in functioning.

** Note 2: By definition, all by-products from the processing (feed grade/tech. grade) which are not specified in the IFS Food Annex 3, Part 1 are excluded from the scope of the IFS Food audit. Those products shall not be specified on the IFS certificate as exclusions and shall just be described in the company profile of the audit report.

IFS Food questionnaire for certification bodies, to define, under exceptional circumstances, product exclusions in audit scope

If, under exceptional circumstances, the company decides to exclude specific product ranges from the scope of the IFS Food audit, following questionnaire has to be filled in by the certification body, to check if exclusion is allowed. The filled in questionnaire shall then be part of the audit plan.

Name of company: **COID:**

Planned audit scope: **Planned audit date:**

Date of questionnaire validation:

Name of the certification body person who filled in the questionnaire:

Name of the company person who requested the exclusion:

1) Is the exclusion related to product or process?

Product Regular process → Exclusion is NOT possible

2) Is the product seasonal/ sporadic?

No Yes

Are the product/tech scopes and/or HACCP study (incl. allergens, contaminants, etc.) identical for seasonal/sporadic products and regular products?

No Yes → Product can be included with a documentary on-site audit or can be excluded

3) Is the product to be excluded a private label (retail/wholesale branded) product?

No Yes → Exclusion is NOT possible

4) Is the product to be excluded clearly differentiable from the product(s) which is/are included in the audit scope?

Yes No → Exclusion is NOT possible

5) Is/are the initial step(s) of production of the product to be excluded common with the one of the included product(s)?

Yes No → Exclusion is possible (e.g. where area/processing line is fully independent since the beginning, without any contamination risk)

6) Does the product to be excluded go to a different area than the one related to the product included in the audit scope?

Yes No → Exclusion is NOT possible

7) Is the contamination risk controlled between included and excluded product?

(The manufacturer shall demonstrate the control of contamination risk between excluded and included products (allergens, chemical, physical, microbiological hazards). Process flow chart related to the product to be excluded shall be sent to the certification body.)

Yes No → Exclusion is NOT possible

Exclusion is possible
Note: the auditor will always check on-site if defined exclusions are relevant and in line with the questionnaire, by assessing the risks which may arise from excluded products (e.g. contaminants, allergens).

Glossary

Different area	<p>Different location or zone of the company, with or without physical segregation.</p> <p>Examples of different area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a winery, part of the wine goes to bottling section and another part of the wine goes to a specific line for packing in huge bag-in-boxes, located in the same workshop but not on the same line • In an egg processing company, part of the eggs goes to packing station, another part goes to a specific workshop for processing egg products • In a bakery company, sweet cookies are produced in one workshop and salty puff pastry products are produced in a different specific workshop.
Differentiable	<p>Being subjected to different product characteristics, like e.g. different product kind/type, different name, different packaging material, etc.</p> <p>Products which are fully equivalent but only having – as different characteristics – a different label is not enough to differentiate a product.</p> <p>Examples of differentiable products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee grains in glass jars and coffee grains in plastic containers • Sliced cooked ham packed in 250 g packages and smoked ham (bacon) in 500 g packages.
Documentary audit	<p>Can only be performed if the product/tech scopes and/or HACCP study (incl. allergens, contaminants, etc.) are identical for seasonal/sporadic products and regular products.</p> <p>This audit shall address, at least, HACCP, production records, traceability test, client specifications and complaints.</p>
Common initial steps	<p>Applies to upstream processing steps or same raw materials which are common between included and excluded products.</p> <p>Examples of common initial steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cakes are coming from common initial steps (i.e. common processing), going then either on a packing line or on a freezing line • In a milk processing factory: milk is commonly used, then one part of the milk goes to a different workshop to process milk powder.
Regular product	<p>Product which is processed all year long, in opposite to seasonal or sporadic product.</p>
Seasonal process	<p>Process which is only done during a defined and limited period, due e.g. to seasonal availability of raw materials (e.g. freezing of strawberries, only after strawberries harvesting).</p>
Seasonal product	<p>Product which is only fully processed during a defined and limited period, due to e.g. specific events (e.g. Christmas chocolates).</p>
Sporadic product	<p>Product which is irregularly processed (on order/tailor made), whose process cannot be scheduled in advance.</p>