

## **IFS Newsletter – Update Coronavirus March 25<sup>th</sup> 2020**

Dear reader,

We are experiencing challenging times as the coronavirus continues to spread globally impacting both society and the economy. Here at IFS we recognize the challenges companies are facing to maintain their production and have been working diligently to find solutions to manage the situation. We assure you that our whole team is working hard to support you to develop the best possible solution for all affected parties. We take all your concerns seriously. The highest priority is your well-being and the stability of the supply chain to guarantee food production and provision.

### **Audit where possible**

Our mission is to deliver trusted products. On-site observation, the key to ensuring the production of safe products, is how the auditors confirm the integrity of the products, manufacturing processes, employee hygiene, and employee competency. Currently, there are different situations around the world, where in some regions it is still, or again possible, to carry out IFS audits. In other regions, this is not the case so there is not one solution for all. If possible, an upcoming IFS audit should be carried out.

### **Our recommendation**

The IFS recommend that all companies carry out a risk analysis and consider whether external persons should be allowed into the facility. In the event it is necessary to move an IFS audit to a later date, the certification body responsible for the IFS certificate must tick the Corona tick box now available in the IFS database and fill in the associated Corona comment field with a brief justification.

An expiring certificate, especially in these challenging times does not mean that the company is suddenly no longer working according to the established processes. It only indicates that the intended audit by an independent certification body could not be performed due to the current corona pandemic. No business partner will terminate the delivery relationship because of a missing IFS certificate.

### **What our partners say**

In conversation with our partners, they have indicated that the supply of food to the population is the highest priority and that it is not in their interest to discontinue relations with suppliers even if their IFS certificate expires. They understand and share the position of IFS not to prolong or issue certificates to producing companies without an on-site check by an auditor. Since we know that this has a huge impact on businesses, we encourage retailers, brand owners, and suppliers to communicate to find suitable solutions that ensure the continued production of safe, reliable products.

### **Our solution**

At IFS, we are working on methods to enable remote solutions for businesses. With this test, IFS-certified companies can document that they continue to produce according to their established processes. This allows companies to show customers that their management support processes work smoothly even during the Corona pandemic. We expect these remote solutions to be available soon.

### **Preparing for the future**

The IFS is also working on a pragmatic solution for the Post-Corona Crisis–Time in the form of unannounced GMP Checks to ensure rapid baseline protection for those involved in the supply chain. This also serves to de-ecipiate the higher demand for IFS audits expected after the Corona crisis.

In all solutions, however, the principle applies that only what can be assessed is confirmed. This applies to remote solutions as well as unannounced GMP checks. The IFS Board decided that these solutions only applicable during the corona crisis. After the crisis, IFS will go back to normal auditing practices and certifications according to IFS Standards and Programs.

At the end of the day, this is about the credibility of all of us in the food supply chain. We remain committed to supporting the highest level of certification integrity and to providing trusted products. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@ifs-certification.com](mailto:info@ifs-certification.com) if you have any questions.

Your IFS Team