

## **Some Experiences in Organizing, Planning and Applying the Quality Management Program Based on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in Vietnam**

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### **Background**

Fishery products have been exported from Vietnam since 1970s. In the process of developing our exports, the quality of the products have been improving. Till 1995, however, quality management has been mainly performed through the control of final products.

In expanding into markets where customers require even better quality products, the old style of quality management must be changed. Many processing enterprises would like to implement the HACCP program if they could satisfy the stringent conditions. Therefore only a few fishery processing establishments could apply quality management programs based on HACCP concepts.

The National Fisheries Inspection and Quality Assurance Center (NAFIQACEN) took note of the status of Vietnamese fishery processing industry and decided that in order to satisfy export quality requirements, we must encourage the fishery processing establishments to implement quality management programs based on good manufacturing practices (abbreviated as GMP program). NAFIQACEN selected a plant under the responsibility of NAFIQACEN Branch II to implement GMP on an experimental basis.

### **Principles**

As mentioned above, the NAFIQACEN Branch II chose a suitable fishery processing establishment to organize, plan and draft a GMP program together with experts of NAFIQACEN Branch.

After implementing the trial GMP program, experts of NAFIQACEN Branch II will continue to implement the GMP program in other fishery processing establishments, modifying some differences collected from real conditions in those fishery processing establishments. Whenever necessary, modifications can be made to suit the

conditions of each establishment without sacrificing quality practices.

### **Preparations**

#### **1. Seminars.**

NAFIQACEN Branch II organized seminars on GMP for fishery processing establishments in the locality to introduce this program ahead of time.

The main purpose of these seminars is to change the view of managers of fishery processing establishments in quality control activities and to give them the basic knowledge about GMP program. The main contents of these seminars are as follows :

- Introduce GMP as a total quality management program based on HACCP concepts. GMP is a means by which managers can ensure the safety and hygienic quality of their products with the least possible expenditure.
- By implementing the GMP program, managers can also reduce expenses for checking their final products; it also prevents defects to their products because the fishery processing establishments can control all important points in the processing lines.
- Introducing legal documents to establish GMP program. In accordance with the Governmental Ordinance on Commodities Quality, producers are responsible for the quality of their commodities. The competent authority for inspecting fishery products is NAFIQACEN, a center under the Ministry of Fisheries, and for setting Vietnamese standards of fishery products and conditions of fishery processing establishments, etc.
- Introducing some GMP programs practiced in the world, especially in the ASEAN countries. For example, in USA there are Quality Management Programs based on HACCP concepts. There is QMP in Canada. In European countries such as Denmark, there are enterprises practicing HACCP programs or "Own control system" which are

similar to GMP programs. In ASEAN countries, such as Thailand and Indonesia, there are also GMP programs.

- Introducing the participants to the basic conditions for implementing a GMP program in a fishery processing establishment.
2. Provision of guidelines to fishery processing establishments.

Sending guidelines to fishery processing establishments. The managers of these enterprises must personally check to ensure that their plants have the necessary conditions so that they can apply the GMP program. Only if they are sure that they have the basic conditions will they have the right to register for establishing a GMP program.

### 3. GMP program.

After a careful check of the fishery processing establishments, NAFIQACEN makes a list of those with good processing conditions or equivalent requirements for the EU, USA markets, etc. NAFIQACEN will then organize, plan and draft the GMP program for the fishery processing establishment to help them qualify for export status.

### Operation

1. Drafting GMP program in a selected fishery processing establishment.
  - Experts of NAFIQACEN Branch II personally visit and assess all items submitted by the fishery processing establishment.
  - Legal documents to which the fishery processing establishment refers as authority for their processing activities are filed.
  - Assessment of items in the documents and problem areas of the plant which should be modified or rebuilt. The experts focus on technical procedures, regulations and files kept on quality control.
  - Choosing the staff who will directly work in drafting and operating the GMP program (abbreviated as "GMP staff"). This GMP staff consists of two experienced experts of NAFIQACEN Branch II, who are trained and qualified in establishing GMP program, and three persons from the fishery processing establishment who have experience and qualifications in managing, fishery processing and quality control activities.

- Experts of NAFIQACEN Branch II preside over the GMP staff and plan the schedule for establishing the GMP program step by step as follows :

- a. Drafting regulations of the fishery processing establishment to satisfy legal requirements on the safety and hygiene of products.
- b. Drafting technical procedures and manufacturing standards based on Vietnamese standards and requirements. Attention is also paid to provide equivalence with target markets.
- c. Drafting GMPs for each kind of product of the fishery processing establishment.
- d. Drafting quality management files or forms to ensure that all critical points will be controlled. These files are also drafted to ensure that GMP programs are operating comprehensively.
- e. Submitting related reports to the related authorities for audit; verifying the GMP program.

- After finishing each part of GMP program (a to e), the GMP staff send all drafts to quality managers in the fishery processing establishment and experienced experts in related authorities for their comments and recommendations.

In anticipation of receiving feedback information, the GMP staff organizes the first training course for related managers and chiefs of sections in the fishery processing establishment to familiarise them with the draft GMP program.

The GMP staff assesses the operation and records the feedback information from responsible persons in the fishery processing establishment.

- After collecting all necessary information, the GMP staff submits the final draft of the GMP program to the Director of that fishery processing establishment for approval of the documents.
  - The final report is then submitted to the authorities (e) for auditing and verifying.
2. Routine operations of GMP program is as follows:
    - GMP staff organizes the second training course on approval of the GMP program.
    - In operation of GMP program, GMP staff continue to control the efficiency of the program through related documents and files.

- Periodically, the GMP staff will submit reports as required to NAFIQACEN on this program.
3. Authorities audit and verify the efficiency of the GMP program.  
The auditing and verifying activities are performed as follows :
    - NAFIQACEN staff who were not involved in establishing the GMP program will audit and verify the efficiency of this operation.
    - NAFIQACEN organizes a council of experienced experts for accrediting the GMP program in that fishery processing establishment and submits related reports to the Minister of Fisheries for certifying the program.

#### **Extending of Activities to Other Establishments**

1. Organize a seminar to announce the successful implementation of GMP program in the pilot fishery processing establishment.
2. Organize GMP staff from other fishery processing establishments.
3. Drafting GMP programs and related documents. GMP staff mainly use the pilot GMP program with modifications as necessary to suit other fishery processing establishments. One GMP staff of NAFIQACEN Branch II will preside over all GMP staff of registered enterprises to carry out the schedule as in the pilot program.

#### **Results And Experiences**

1. Time for establishing GMP program in experimental fishery processing establishment.

We saved a lot of down-time. In anticipation of receiving feedback information, we organized the first training course in the fishery processing establishment to further experiment with the draft GMP program. This activity helped us introduce the GMP program to persons in the establishment while we are waiting for approval. By this activity, we can assess the operation and record feedback information from responsible persons in the fishery processing establishment.

2. Time for establishing GMP program in other fishery processing establishments.

We also save time a lot. Due to experiences from pilot GMP program, we can establish other

GMP program faster and in a more practical way. In this way, we established GMP program for many fishery processing establishments at the same time.

3. The GMP programs of fishery processing establishments was identified in all the country.

This program helped NAFIQACEN to audit, verify and manage the quality of fishery products more easily.

4. Economic efficiency.

By the above plan, fishery processing establishments reduced losses due to defects, contamination or unsafe products to a minimum.

By receiving many valuable opinions from experienced experts, GMP staff were very efficient in their use of resources in drafting documents.

The quality of products improved to the extent that the fishery processing establishments can negotiate with customers to get better prices for their products.

5. Social significance.

The prestige of Vietnamese fishery products has been enhanced in the international market.

The GMP staff of NAFIQACEN Branch II gained much experience in organizing, planning and applying quality management based on the GMP program. Subsequently, they are prepared to establish QMP based on HACCP concepts for other fishery processing establishments in the future.

The prestige of NAFIQACEN in consulting on quality management is enhanced.

The export of Vietnamese fishery products has been increasing. The exports to the EU and USA markets have also increased proportionately. In 1995, Vietnamese fishery products exported to these markets was 8% of the total quantity of exported fishery products. These exports have reached 11% of the total quantity of exported fishery products in the first 6 months of 1996.

#### **Discussion**

The representative from FAO, while noting the progress made by Vietnam in just a short period of time as far as fish processing is concerned, informed the Seminar that Vietnam could become the next tiger in Asia. He opined that the GMP used

by Vietnam as indicated in Dr Phuong's paper might be misleading for this may have referred to quality management program as a pre-requisite to HACCP program, instead of GMP. In response, Dr Phuong said that Vietnam is now developing its GMP program. He added that NAFIQACEN staff assist the government in the development of a codex for safe products.