

Silliker Australia – assuring ‘Product Quality & Brand Protection’



▼ Silliker Australia Managing Director, Wayne Hammermeister.

As the retail market continues to evolve, new suppliers and retailers are entering the sector, with consumer's preferences moving towards private label products. Together with a strong Australian dollar driving private label imports and consumers perceiving private labels to be the clever choice, major Australian retailers expect up to 30 per cent of revenue to come from private label products by 2012.

Silliker Australia Managing Director, Wayne Hammermeister, answers some questions on Silliker assuring Product Quality & Brand Protection' for retailers and their suppliers.

What is Silliker Australia's background and history with the Retail Industry in Australia?

Silliker Australia is part of the global Silliker network of leading internationally accredited food testing and consultancy services, for providers that form part of Merieux NutriSciences. In Australia, Silliker has facilities in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth offering NATA-accredited microbiology and chemistry laboratory services, global certification and technical services, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

International capability and expertise enables Silliker Australia to provide local retailers and distributors with a service encompassing not only food products but just about everything sold by retailers. These include due diligence reviews of miscellaneous non-food items including electrical products.

What are the challenges Retailers in Australia face in the management of the quality and control of the products they sell?

In today's Australian retail market an increasing amount of products are sourced locally and from around the world. It is imperative to ensure that the brands retailers market and sell to consumers, in particular food, meet food quality safety standards and comply with the Australian and New

Zealand Food Standards Code. All these are necessary prerequisites for due diligence and brand management.

Silliker Australia has a Technical Services team dedicated to understanding and providing compliance advice to the Food Standards Code and other mandatory labelling requirements. This Technical Services Team is supported by in-house consultants, chemists, microbiologists and auditors.

Leading global retailers including ALDI Australia choose Silliker to manage this aspect of their business. These retailers utilise the expertise of Silliker to validate their own risk management and due diligence responsibilities thereby ensuring the quality and safety of their products as well as protecting their brands.

How do manufacturers and suppliers share responsibility for the products they supply to retailers, or is the responsibility solely on the retailer?

Retailers are seeking greater assurance in the safety of all products they purchase, so increasingly suppliers are required to adhere to product safety management systems that are independently audited. Silliker Global Certification Services is an independent Certification Body accrediting predominantly to SQF, BRC, ISO 22000 etc (i.e. The Global Food Safety Initiative Program). This Food Safety system ensures manufacturers are adhering to internationally accepted standards that include HACCP principles, pre-requisite programs and product traceability requirements.

Certification is a key element for all retailers committed to strengthening consumer confidence in the products they sell, and minimising the risk of expensive recalls.

What is Surveillance Testing and what does it achieve?

Leading retailers conduct Surveillance Testing programs where independent experts such as Silliker visit retail outlets, purchase product and then conduct a variety of quality and safety checks.

The object of these programs is to have an independent party confirm the product quality & safety of their range of products. The frequency of testing depends upon the risk of the product, for example deli meats are high risk and canned foods are low risk.

Purchasing product at point of sale is replicating what the customer is actually receiving and takes into account any handling issues that may be unaccounted for along the supply chain.

These Surveillance programs also demonstrate retailer's commitment to ongoing quality and safety checks at the point of purchase by the customer.

How can retailers, manufacturers and suppliers rest assured that Silliker is a key partner in guaranteeing product quality, risk management and most importantly, brand protection?

Silliker has been successfully delivering a variety of services to retailers in Australia and their suppliers now for many years. Silliker Australia has a proven track record of meeting, and in many instances, exceeding partners' expectations.

With experience gained over many years we are always up to date with changing food trends and legal compliances.

We also offer a comprehensive range of due diligence services to hardware retailers. Over the past 10 years we have developed in-house technical competency in quality, safety and import requirements for products sold in retail hardware.

Silliker provides the most comprehensive solutions to help guarantee product quality and safety, individual brand protection and reduction of risk from financial loss for manufacturers, suppliers and retailers.

If you are interested in learning more about Silliker Australia and receiving free fortnightly comprehensive reports on food & product safety, science and regulatory news, email info@silliker.com.au or visit www.silliker.com.au. ■

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