

## **Unannounced audits: with the right technology you'll always be prepared**

For food manufacturers, the pressure never eases to meet complex legislative and customer demands. But when onsite audits are switching from planned to impromptu visits, this creates another level of complexity to achieve compliance. Take Co-op's recent move to impose unannounced BRC audits from July.

The ethical retailer's decision follows Asda's initiation of this approach back in 2013. And the BRC itself has acknowledged that unannounced food safety audits are increasing, with around 900 sites now part of its unannounced scheme.

This will become the norm, according to a leading food safety certification expert. Richard Werran predicts a "sea change" set to occur over the next 18 months, with all the major UK supermarkets following suit\*. It looks like what was once the realm of voluntary schemes is set to become business as usual...

BRC audits are demanding enough, due to the need to readily access data. Without the right systems in place unannounced visits can be disastrous, with staff unable, or taking too long, to find information for auditors. This is something that's particularly problematic when the data is paper based.

### **Preparing for the future**

It's essential that food manufacturers are able to demonstrate complete forward and backward traceability. Forget hunting through reams of paperwork though, automated data capture means it's easy to meet any audit requests can be fulfilled with ease with instant information.

You will readily be able to demonstrate data across all your operations, by time, date, product range or individual item. The unannounced audit is no longer a problem.

### **It's not just about legislation...**

While automated data eases your compliance issues, it will also help you to both win and retain customers more easily. From shop floor to back office, customers will be reassured by automated data capture and how it can improve their operations, through error reduction and live visibility across production - any problems can be immediately addressed. And with benefit of real-time data, trends can easily be identified and management information can be determined to enable informed business decisions.