

Why Commitment to Food Safety Matters to Your Business

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A strong commitment to food safety is one of the most important responsibilities in the dairy industry. It protects consumers, preserves trust, and ensures that nutritious products reach the market without causing harm. But the stakes extend far beyond public health. When food safety systems fail, the consequences ripple across the supply chain, triggering recalls, generating food waste, and exposing companies to significant financial and legal risk.

[Dairy recalls](#) remain more common than many realize. Whether driven by pathogen contamination, undeclared allergens, or foreign material incidents, these events are costly. A single recall can easily reach millions of dollars once product retrieval, plant downtime, root-cause investigations, disposal, and lost sales are factored in. Litigation adds another layer of exposure. Lawsuits tied to foodborne illness, mislabeling, or injury from foreign materials can escalate quickly, drawing regulatory scrutiny and eroding brand equity that took decades to build.

Beyond the financial hit, recalls contribute to a growing global challenge: food waste. Every pound of product discarded due to preventable safety lapses represents lost resources, lost revenue, and lost opportunity to nourish consumers. The [2026 ReFED U.S. Food Waste Report](#) indicated that in 2024, the U.S. generated 70 million tons of surplus food and over 1.5 was a result of food safety concerns representing \$8 B in industry losses. For an industry built on efficiency and sustainability, this is a cost no one wants to absorb.

Many of the most frequent food safety failures stem from issues that are entirely avoidable. Gaps in preventive controls, inadequate cleaning and sanitation, and insufficient environmental monitoring can allow hazards to persist undetected. Weak or inconsistent testing and validation programs leave manufacturers without the data needed to verify that their systems are working as intended. Foreign material contamination is often the result of equipment wear, poor maintenance, or weak oversight continues to be a leading cause of recalls across dairy categories. And underlying all of these risks is a common thread: inconsistent or ineffective employee training.

Protecting consumers requires more than compliance. It demands a culture where every employee understands their role, every process is validated, and every decision is grounded in science and vigilance. When companies invest in strong preventive controls, rigorous sanitation, targeted testing, and continuous training, they not only reduce risk, but strengthen their brand, avoid costly recalls and litigation, support sustainability goals, and contribute to a safer, more resilient food system. For more

information and training resources related to dairy food safety, visit www.safecheesemaking.org or www.usdairy.com/foodsafety.