Recall Preparedness Company offers food recall plan templates.

According to Michael Benedick, director of sales and marketing for Toronto-based Food Decision Software (FDS), a surprising majority of small food distributors and manufacturers do not have food recall plans.

Since the U.S. Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act was signed June 12, 2002, companies that manufacture, process, pack, transport, distribute, receive, hold, or import food in the U.S. have been required to create and maintain records that are needed to identify the immediate previous sources and the immediate subsequent recipients of food. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) estimates the number of facilities required to comply with this act to be approximately 420,000 worldwide.

Although Canadian food facilities are not regulated by the FDA, unless they are exporting food into the U.S., the Canadian

> **"...none of the distributors we called – and we called around 50 – actually had a food recall plan."**
>
> – Michael Benedick,
> Food Decision Software

Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), has its own set of regulations that are very similar to those of their southern counter-part, essentially requiring North America to keep track of food products from the time they are received to when and where they are distributed.

Benedick said an informal survey by FDS of its customer base show that distributors in particular have not taken this compliance seriously enough.

FDS created templates that it offer free to food companies that can help them get a plan into place. The template is based on information from various North American regulatory bodies, including the FDA, U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Health Canada and Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. FDS has been given the approval by these agencies to use their information in regenerating and distributing the process and templates created.

FDS, formerly Mulvany Attard Associates, has been in the food industry software business for over 30 years.

Benedick noted that the templates will work for any small-to-medium size food company, not just those that use the FDS software. In fact, he added, any company with or without software to help them trace their products, can become compliant with the regulations set out by their own regulating agency.

"Even if they want to do it manually, we can help them do that," he said.

He noted that knowing how to properly manage a recall can save a company a lot of money.

"A lot of smaller companies, they don't worry about lot control or traceability," he said. "For small companies this could be a huge scenario. They could have huge problems with regards to pulling thousands of dollars worth of cases off the shelves when they don't have to."

For more information on the templates, visit *fooddecisionsoftware.com*. M

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