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Review of the Audit Process Workshop: 1 December 2020 – Workshop Outcomes

The Fresh Produce Safety Centre held an industry workshop on 1 December 2020 with approximately 40 invited industry representatives.

Presentations at the workshop included:

Technology Panel:

- *Use of technology to offer blended or remote audits*, **Todd Redwood** Global Food and Retail Supply Chain Operations and Compliance Director, BSI Group
- *AI and audit integrity algorithms*, **Jochen Kleboth**, Head of Data and Business Analytics, Intact (not able to present at the workshop but made his slides available)
- *End-to-end automation of the audit process*, **Dr Harry van Enckevort**, Science and Technology Advisor, AsureQuality

Risk and Culture Panel:

- *Unannounced audits – value and challenges*, **Fiona Grime**, Freshcare
- *Food safety culture*, **Dr Sharon Jones**, OneHarvest

PowerPoint presentations available [here](#).

After these presentations, participants broke into two breakout groups: one on **Technology** and one on **Risk and Culture**. Each group was asked to consider priorities for action and required next steps.

Breakout Group - Technology:

This group focused on technology within the audit process, identifying priority areas and what needs to happen for these to be achieved. Much of the discussion focused on data, and **the digitisation of data** in an end-to-end process. There was discussion around the concept of the '**digital twin**', referring to the creation of a digital replica of potential and actual physical assets, processes, people, places, systems and devices. Another area of focus was people engagement, developing a narrative and approach to help key stakeholders feel comfortable working with technology, including **technology training**. A further area highlighted was the need to conduct a robust analysis of the **costs and benefits of technology** in the audit process, including the cost of doing nothing. Priority areas were identified as determining Wi-FI/broadband coverage, engaging stakeholders on technology adoption and use ('**tech comfort**', including the narrative to bring people on the journey), mapping the end-to-end digitisation process and identifying what that means in practice.

The following summarises the technology breakout group discussions:

What areas of the audit process can technology improve and what needs to be automated at grower level and scheme/auditor level?

- Audit data needs to move from paper-based to digital:
  - Audit questions pre-populated
  - Records recorded remotely on a central database
  - Real-time recording so auditor can access remotely
- Exchange of documents up and down the supply chain

- Digital twinning (digital replica of potential and actual physical assets, processes, people, places, systems and devices)
- Common language but no one solution provider
- Digitisation across multiple platforms, with information capable of analysis
- To cover more than just food safety
- Critical factors:
    - Mobile data coverage
    - Auditors, growers, technical personnel being comfortable with using technology
    - Training on technology usage
    - Data security
    - Cost-effective.

What are the top priorities?

- Digitisation of data – digital twin
- Engagement with people in the audit process around technology (opportunities and challenges)
- Building 'tech comfort'
- Data standards for interoperability.

What needs to happen next for this to be achieved?

- Better understand the limitations of Wi-Fi, access to broadband etc across all sectors of the supply chain
- Map out what the digitisation process actually means and what is involved
- Identify what people skills are needed and how they can be brought on the journey
- Understand costs and benefits involved
- Determine what is the 'end game' – spell out the vision and what use of technology in the audit process is trying to achieve.

Breakout Group – Risk and Culture:

This breakout group considered the top priority areas in risk and culture in audits in Australia and New Zealand. Three key areas were identified. **Education** was identified as a priority, particularly around the benefits to industry of audits as an avenue to showcase excellence and for improving brand and reputation – and moving away from audits perceived as being done solely for 'tick the box' or customer compliance reasons. **Language and communications** was another area highlighted, particularly language on the purpose of audits, and moving the focus to a positive lens of confirming business compliance. Another area discussed was the priority to promote improved contact points for communications with key stakeholders. A further discussion topic, within language and communications, was the need for ownership of audits (and food safety) across the whole business, through CEO engagement (with food safety being seen as owned by all in the business, not just falling to the QA or technical roles). The final area of priority was promoting **consistency of audits**, including through auditor professional development, career development, and the encouragement of younger auditors into the profession.

The following summarises the risk and culture breakout group discussions:

What can we agree are the top three priorities for culture and risk in audits in Australia and NZ?

1. **Education:**
    a. Benefits for industry (brand and reputation protection)
    b. Continual improvement

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    c. Changing mind-set

    d. Dealing with high labour turnover and labour shortages

    e. Ensure training consistency, particularly in light of labour turnover.

2. **Language/Communication:**

    a. Meaning and purpose of audit (across industries)

    b. Confirming compliance, not looking for non-conformances

    c. Producing food ready-to-eat

    d. Grower interaction and engagement (newsletters, grower organisations, more contact points, CEO engagement)

3. **Consistency of audits / auditors:**

    a. professional development

    b. career development (youth)

    c. time within organisations - inviting auditors into our businesses not just for the day or days they are auditing.

Next steps:

Technology:
- FPSC to work with key industry stakeholders to investigate/promote a project to develop a roadmap for the end-to-end process of digitisation of audits in the fresh produce industry, to determine the practical implications (what does it mean in practice) and what would be involved.
- FPSC to communicate with key industry players on the need to support work to gather further data, and access existing data, mapping the internet connectivity of major growing areas of Australia/NZ, and connectivity throughout key supply chain players.
- FPSC to work with key industry groups to conduct a needs analysis on the people skills required to reach a required level of 'tech comfort' for key stakeholders in the audit process.

Risk and Culture:
- FPSC to work with key industry stakeholders to develop/promote a project to enhance the education and language around, and perception of, food safety audits across the fresh produce industry.
- FPSC to communicate with key industry players in auditor training and development ways to promote audit consistency, professional development and improved career pathways for auditors.

Fresh Produce Safety Centre
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