

# Quality System Brochure

## Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V

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*Enjoy great taste*

Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V., Industrieweg 161, 3044 AS Rotterdam, P.O. Box 11041, 3004 EA  
Rotterdam, The Netherlands, T: +31 (0)10 24 55 100, E: [info@verstegen.nl](mailto:info@verstegen.nl) I: [www.verstegen.eu](http://www.verstegen.eu)

## **Foreword.**

Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V. has been a specialist in mixed seasoning, single herbs and spices, marinades and sauces since 1886. Verstegen Spices & Sauces is a production company that focuses on the development, production, distribution and sales of herbs (mixed), spices (mixed), marinades and sauces for the food industry and the consumer. To this end, Verstegen Spices & Sauces has, amongst other things, various production divisions (“dry” and “liquid”), storage and distribution facilities, a sale and purchasing organisation, a laboratory and a quality assurance department. Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V. employs approximately 400 staff.

The production facilities at Verstegen Spices & Sauces are flexible and extensive. In addition to an ultramodern plant for processing dry products, the facilities for producing sauces and other liquid products are also fitted with high-tech equipment.

The key strategy of Verstegen Spices & Sauces is: “To provide one quality, namely always the best and consistent quality available, to offer high-class service and continually set trends through innovative product development. Everywhere where food is served, Verstegen wants to make the taste”.

The quality system adopted by Verstegen Spices & Sauces manages and controls everyday operations. Quality in terms of raw materials, packaging, end products, production processes, the environment and working conditions plays a key role here. Through the years, our organisation has been awarded the following certificates:

- BRC (Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance)
- IFS (Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance)
- EKO / Skal (Skal Organic Certification)
- Halal (Halal Correct)
- RiskPlaza (Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance)
- MVO prestatieladder (Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance)  
(The CSR Performance Ladder)

In response to requests from customers to provide extensive information on our quality system, this brochure has been compiled.

It is a pleasure for us to present you with this Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V. Quality System brochure and we trust that it will answer the most frequently asked questions on how our quality system works.

Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V.

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## **1. Quality policy.**

Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V. is focused continually on the control and improvement of product safety and product quality and the reduction or prevention of harm to the environment. Satisfied customers and high, consistent product quality and service are at the heart of this.

The quality level is evaluated on an ongoing basis and, if necessary, improved in terms of:

- Raw materials, semi-finished products and end products
- Production processes (including environmental aspects)
- Production areas and machines
- Organisational processes (consultative structures, communication)
- Departments
- Staff and working conditions (including ethical aspects)

For a large part, the control and improvement of product safety and product quality is achieved by all relevant departments implementing the quality system. Basic elements of the quality system include the BRC-Food and IFS-Food standards, legal requirements and customer demands.

The key strategy of Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V. when it comes to the environment consists of several spearheads, i.e.:

- Continually endeavouring to reduce or prevent harm to the environment.
- Complying with the relevant environmental permits during operations.
- Drafting environmental objectives and striving to achieve these.

Important means of monitoring and improving the quality is to draft objectives. In the open communication with our customers, we emphasise our quality objectives, which focus e.g. on the rapid, efficient, tailored (if required) and primarily meticulous delivery of various products and services. Mutual trust is at the heart of this. Also, the objectives incorporate elements relating to the environment and to staff (including ethical aspects) too.

Thanks to constant quality checks in combination with the know-how that the company has accumulated, Verstegen can guarantee high-class products and service. This high-level quality is extremely important for the continued existence of Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V.. Therefore we expect all our employees to make an active contribution to the maintenance and improvement of our quality level. The management makes the necessary resources available.

## **2. Range.**

Spices, herbs, blends, tailor-made mixes, marinades, sauces, dressings, gravy and additives; the full range contains more than 4000 products. Some of these products can be considered convenience items, which make things very easy for both the professional processor and the home user. The range is continually being modified to suit the changing demands of the food market. This is achieved by developing products and services which make the preparation and presentation of food and food components as optimal and pleasant as possible. The range can be found on the Verstegen website: [www.verstegen.eu](http://www.verstegen.eu).

Either directly or indirectly, every consumer is a customer of Verstegen. Directly if they consciously choose to buy Verstegen consumer products, indirectly because Verstegen is a supplier to the food industry, the foodservice and the retailer selling fresh produce. The activities of Verstegen Spices & Sauces can therefore be divided roughly into 3 markets: the consumer, the bulk user and industry. Within these markets, several sectors are served.

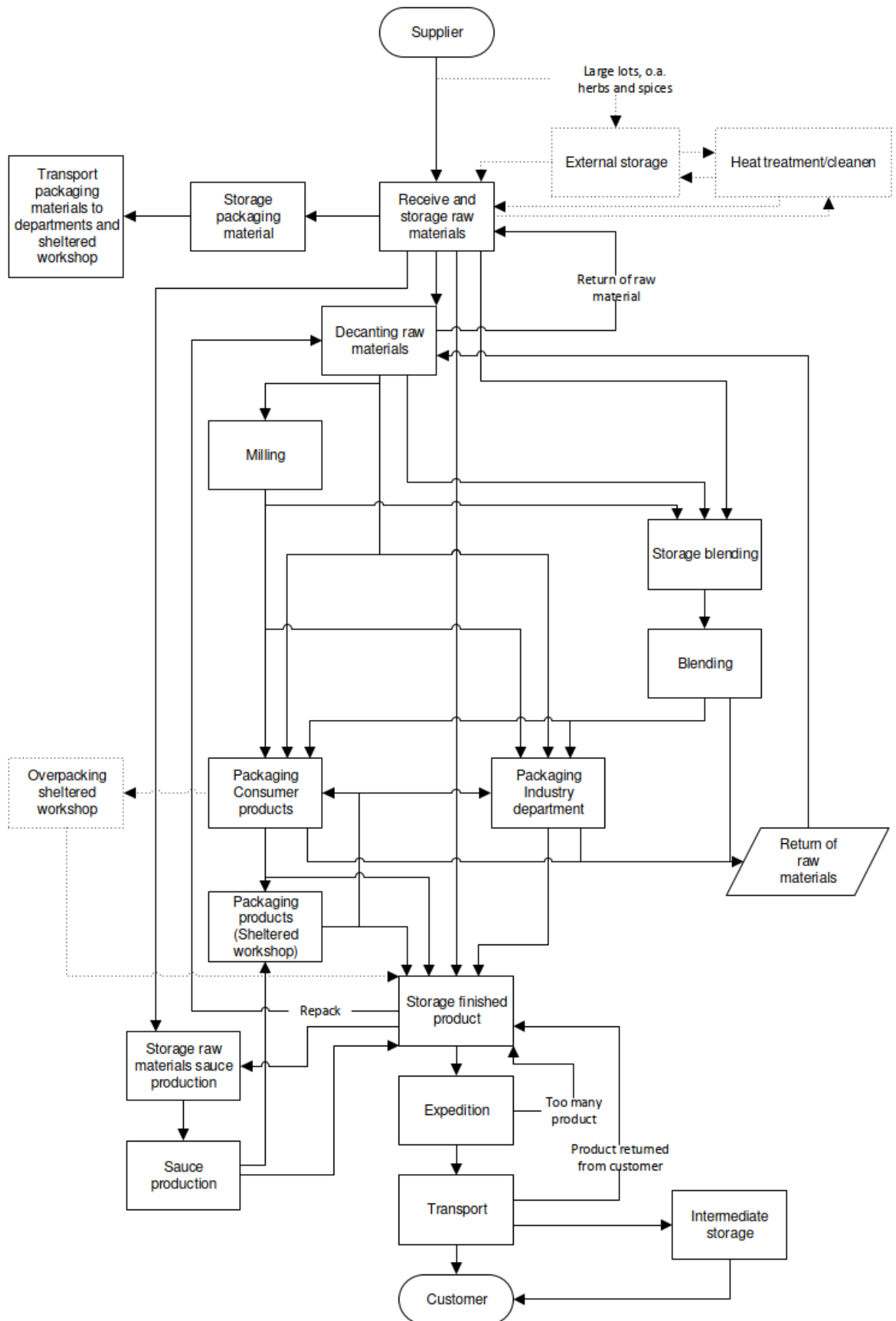
Verstegen's consumer products are available via various channels. Namely:

- Supermarket
- Butcher
- Poulterer
- Fishmonger
- Specialist greengrocer
- other

## **3. Processes.**

Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V. has several operational divisions: liquid production (sauces and marinades), dry production (tipping, grinding and mixing, packing herbs and spices and related articles), goods / raw material intake & storage, warehouse storage for finished product, transportation and distribution. Besides, there are a number of facility departments: quality assurance, product development, laboratory, technical department, business office, purchasing, sales & marketing, general and technical support, HR and finance.

The production processes are represented in flow charts/ process charts. On the following page, you will find Verstegen's general process chart.



## **4. Product safety.**

### **Food Defense.**

As a part of the total HACCP Analysis Verstegen Spices & Sauces made a renewed risk analysis for food defence in 2019. Based on this analysis the needed control measures are taken. Our goal is to protect consumers and other customers against deliberate contamination of our products. The Food Defence plan is a part of the BRC and IFS standards where Verstegen Spices & Sauces is certified for. The Food Defence plan will be tested once a year and revised if needed.

Any unauthorised persons found on company premises will be approached immediately. The doors bordering company premises are fitted with a system to check entry. The doors to sensitive areas at Verstegen are fitted with a system to check entry. As soon as the working day for most employees has ended, the gates to the company premises are locked.

### **Product integrity.**

In 2019 Verstegen Spices and Sauces has renewed the methodology for food fraud risk analysis. Potential fraud risks are identified based on RASFF reports, notifications of FoodFraud.org and reports based on cooperation in development programs at suppliers of herbs and spices. The fraud frequency, together with integrity/corruption-index of the country of origin, the profitability of possible fraud and the detection complexity leads towards a risk analysis per raw material on which specific control measures can be based.

## **5. Corporate Social Responsibility.**

Verstegen takes its responsibility to enhance the sustainability of the herbs and spices market. De chain from farmer up to the consumer needs to be transparent, honest and sustainable for the human being, nature and community. Therefore we continuously are looking for ways to have a positive impact on this world. For this, we use the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or the SDG's. Verstegen focuses on 5 of the 17 SDG's which are fitting to our mission and vision.

### **No poverty**

The farmers growing herbs and spices do not always earn enough income to be able to invest. Investing is important for their children and the continuity of their business. No poverty and zero hunger are close together. To counteract both, Verstegen works hard for solutions.

To combat poverty, Verstegen is actively involved in the Living Wage Lab. This initiative examines what a living wage is for the farmers in the countries of origin and whether they receive this income. They discuss what a living wage is and what to do to realise it.

Besides, Verstegen has developed a training program for farmers of pepper. With this training, the farmers can diminish the use of fertilizer and improve the quality and quantity of their produce. In this way, the income of the farmer will increase, contributing to the reduction of poverty. We do this together with GIZ.

### **Child labour**

Verstegen does as much as possible to withstand child labour. Verstegen has been striving for years for a transparent chain without child labour. Continuously we are in dialogue with all our suppliers to ensure no child labour takes place while cultivating the herbs and spices. Every supplier who cooperates with Verstegen signs our purchasing conditions in which is stated that no child labour may take place. Verstegen keeps a close eye on this by trading directly with our farmers and produces in the countries of origin and by visiting them.

## **Zero hunger**

A lot of herbs and spice farmers do not have an equally distributed income due to the cultivation of only one crop and the harvest of it once a year. The other part of the year they have little to no income. In this way they can get dependent of lenders.

By promoting agroforestry Verstegen can show how they can sustainably grow different herbs and spices. The farmer can grow, harvest and sell different crops by making use of this agricultural system. The advantage is that the farmer is not dependent on only one harvest. If one harvest fails, other crops are available to earn an income. In this way, the business risks are spread, providing a more stable income for the farmer. A more stable income means also better living conditions for the farmer. And it is more beneficial for the environment and biodiversity.

## **Good health and well-being**

Verstegen wants everyone to enjoy responsible, healthy but especially tasty food. We offer a taste for every dish, but are taking care that it is as healthy as possible. Therefore we have a policy for healthy food. We offer more vegetarian and vegetable dishes. We use as much as possible 100% natural raw materials, use less or no salt and sugar and we use liquid (unsaturated) fats. A few sauces without added sugar are launched. All herb mélanges are renewed to contain only a 100% natural ingredients now.

## **Responsible consumption and production**

Verstegen is aware of the fact that we should conserve our natural resources. It is important for us to stop food waste and to develop sustainable packaging. To stop food waste, fermented products as the LegHumes are developed. We also strive for chain transparency. The first steps are made. With block-chain technology we have made the nutmeg chain transparent.

As a part of the SpiceUp consortium, geo-information is made available to support 100.000 pepper farmers in Indonesia. This information is used to improve the quality and quantity of the pepper production. This project contributes to an improvement of a living income and food security. It also optimizes the use of water and fertilisers.

## **Climate action**

Verstegen compensates 3445 tons of CO<sup>2</sup> using agroforestry in Indonesia. Besides, Verstegen has made steps to make the head office in Rotterdam gas-free. We did this by making use of e.g. 876 solar panels and our windmill. We also have a diversity of installations at the head office, such as an integrated exhaust air heat recovery and LED lightning with presence sensors. The next step will be gas-free production.

More information about sustainability / Corporate Social Responsibility can be found on our website <https://algemeen.verstegen.eu/over-verstegen-spices-and-sauces/duurzaamheid/>. Our vision on sustainability is described in more detail over there.



## **6. Verstegen Spices & Sauces B.V. Quality System**

Verstegen Spices & Sauces has drawn up a quality system that is structured according to the system described in the standards BRC-Food and IFS-Food. The basis of the quality system is based on the HACCP principles of the Codex Alimentarius.

The quality manual provides a detailed description of the quality system, the aim of which is:

- To supply products in a consistent manner which are not only food-safe and of a high quality but also meet customer requirements and relevant legislation and regulations.
- To maintain a high level of customer satisfaction and increase customer satisfaction by continually improving the system.

The effectiveness of the quality system is measured periodically, for example by means of audits and performance indicators and is continually improved on this basis.

## **7. Hazards, risks and control measures.**

### A. Processes

With the HACCP teams, all hazards which could possibly have a negative impact on the safety of the end products, and which therefore require some attention, are listed per stage of the process, per product group, per packaging and other aspects (such as personnel).

The risk associated with the potential hazards is determined. The size of the risk is an aid in determining the Critical control points (CCPs). When carrying out the risk analysis, the following aspects are taken into consideration:

- The probability of a hazard arising and the seriousness of the negative impact on health.
- The qualitative and/or quantitative evaluation with respect to the presence of the hazards.
- The survival or proliferation of micro-organisms.
- The development or presence of contaminants including persistent toxins, chemical substances or physical pollution in foodstuffs.
- Cross-contamination with allergens.
- Conditions which lead to the above circumstances.

Control measures are given for all potential hazards. The control measures are geared towards the determined risk of a hazard. Greater risks are controlled by checks and/or continual control with the aid of CCPs (critical control points).

For the checks on CCPs, target values, action values and critical marginal values are drawn up. Target values include the normal operational (target) values. Action values indicate that intervention is needed in the production process to ensure that the critical marginal values are not exceeded. Critical marginal values are values whereby the requirements which apply to food safety according to or by virtue of relevant regulation and/or internal risk analyses are no longer met.

The monitoring system of CCPs consists of the checks on CCP registration of the readings by means of which the process is directed. The aim of the monitoring system is to monitor the critical control points effectively and efficiently. The registration data are collected by the department that carries out these checks. Quality Assurance manages the process control data from the various departments in the dry production and the sauces department. Our laboratory manages analytical data on raw materials, semi-finished products and end products.

If the critical marginal values and action values on CCPs are exceeded, the accompanying corrective measures are taken. When implementing the CCPs according to the standards, effective adjustment is possible, both during the process (short-term action) and after the process (long-term action, process improvement).

In the table below, you will find all CCPs:

Stage of process	Critical potential hazards	Critical Control Points (CCP's)
Grinding	Broken sieve, so that coarse pieces end up in ground product	Check and registration after sieving with every filled eurobin and fraction sieve after every work order.
Packing for industry	Metal in end product	Use of metal detector* and per batch check that metal detectors are working (ferro, non-ferro, stainless steel), including registration.
Packing for consumer	Metal in end product	Use of metal detector* and per batch check that metal detectors are working (ferro, non-ferro, stainless steel), including registration.
Warehouse Finished product	Storage temperature too high Chilled products in cold store Warehouse for Finished Product (MGP)	Check and registration storage temperature cold stores Warehouse Finished Product, twice a day.
Transport	Transport temperature too high chilled products	Check and registration transport temperature transport vehicles.
Sauce preparation	When hot preparation: too low temperature during preparation, so that micro-organisms are not killed properly.	Check abnormal batch protocols operating system (process registration data).
	When hot filling: too low temperature during filling, so that micro-organisms are not killed properly.	Check and registration filling temperatures.
	Metal in end product	Use of metal detector* and per batch check that metal detectors are working (ferro, non-ferro, stainless steel), including registration.
	Contamination of outside packing with customer-specific products.	Microbiological inspection of outside packing

\*the following maximum levels for metal detection are used:

Type detection rod	Maximum levels (mm) (worst case)
FE	2,5
Non-FE	3,2
RVS	4,0

### **Raw materials**

Due to the large diversity in nature and origin of our raw materials, it is essential for Verstegen to structurally identify all relevant raw materials hazards and to ensure them where necessary. Verstegen uses the RiskPlaza system for this.

Verstegen is officially certified for Riskplaza since 2012. This is a database with information about the food safety of ingredients. RiskPlaza contains information about the hazards related to ingredients and control measures that can be taken to control these hazards.

The target of RiskPlaza is to control all relevant risks related to the safety of raw materials throughout the whole chain with adequate measures. This takes place by:

1. Providing the food chain with a simple and transparent insight into the hazards that possibly occur in ingredients
2. Giving insight into the management of these hazards
3. Auditing the control of food safety assurance.

#### What does the RiskPlaza audit+ entail?

During a RiskPlaza audit+ a certifying institution (CI) performs an additional audit at a participating company in addition to the already existing food safety certificate (HACCP, IFS, BRC, ISO 22000, FSSC 22000 or an approved hygiene code). This supplementary RiskPlaza audit+ is targeting at ensuring food safety of ingredients. During this audit, a company has to demonstrate that the potential hazards of ingredients are controlled.

Since 2008, suppliers can have the risk management of ingredients which are included in the RiskPlaza database checked by certifying bodies.

If the risk management is found to be in order, the company is included on the list of RiskPlaza audit+ companies. Customers of RiskPlaza audit+ certified companies do not have to verify the food safety of the raw materials with this supplier any longer.

## **8. Allergens.**

Without a correct understanding of exactly what happens to allergens in a production company, correct and meaningful labelling is impossible. A manufacturer who wants to provide reliable information about the presence of allergenic substances will also do their utmost to prevent cross-contamination. A manufacturer must control the whole production process, from the choice made during the purchasing of raw materials to selling to the customer; otherwise the information on the label is worthless.

Verstegen has formulated an allergen policy and this policy is aimed at providing users of products with as much information as possible about the presence of the most important allergens (allergens that must be declared in the list of ingredients) in the product.

The policy is also aimed at identifying the risks of cross contamination of the most important allergens (allergens that must be declared in the list of ingredients) at every stage in the process and taking measures to prevent this cross contamination as far as possible.

The main measures taken are listed below:

- The raw materials are stored per allergen or allergen group according to allergen number, so that specific allergen zones are created in the storage area.
- Throughout the whole production process, the raw materials are kept separated right down to the mixes.
- Specific working methods relating to dealing with allergens are included in procedures and work instructions.
- A chip on the barrels ensures that automated checks are made and makes the use of unclean barrels impossible.
- The allergen numbers follow the raw material during the whole production process with labelling.
- Staff has been and continues to be trained in how to deal with allergens.
- Machines are cleaned after every product change-over.
- The cleaning of machines, materials and parts used is checked according to a monitoring program that has been drawn up, and tested using allergen testing methods.
- Testing methods which are used in the monitoring program are allergen swabs and Elisa tests.
  - o With gluten swabs, an assessment is made of whether the tested surface of e.g. barrels has actually been cleaned. The result of the test is then negative or positive (>5ppm).
  - o Also, various gluten Elisa tests are carried out annually. This analysis is used to determine if gluten can be found in e.g. an end product. This test method indicates a quantity.
- Allergens policy is fully integrated in the HACCP system.

## **9. Quality control**

Verstegen Spices & Sauces has its own laboratory, where various chemical, physical and sensory analyses are carried out. Microbiological and chemical analyses are conducted by an external (ISO17025 certified) laboratory.

Every raw material, semi-finished product and end product has a specific analysis plan. This analysis package is included in the software system for the registration of all analytical results. The kind of analysis depends on the sort of product or the sort of raw material. Possibilities include:

- Sensory, visual re the reference sample
- pH
- Viscosity
- Moisture content
- Aw (Water activity)
- Brix
- Salt content
- Recipe check (actual quantity of raw materials checked against recipe)
- Sieve analysis
- Ash content
- Sand content
- Specific gravity
- Volatile oil content
- Microbiological: general germ count, yeasts, fungi, enterobacteriaceae, salmonella, aflatoxin, ochratoxin, lactobacillae, sulphite reducing clostridia, staphylococcus aureus,
- anaerobic spores, aerobic spores, bacillus cereus, coliforms, clostridium
- Heavy metals
- Pesticides
- Illegal dyes

Every sample is analysed according to the specific analysis plan. The results of the analyses are entered into the software system and kept up to date. Once all results satisfy the established criteria, the raw material can be released for production or the end product can be released for delivery.

Microbiological and chemical analyses are conducted by an external (ISO17025 certified) laboratory. The laboratory enters the results directly into the system by means of a software connection. The results can then be evaluated immediately by Verstegen.

In addition to the standard analyses of the raw materials, semi-finished products and end products, random samples are also taken to evaluate certain components every now and then. These random samples are incorporated into the monitoring programme.

Elements of this monitoring programme include:

- Residues of pesticides and heavy metals on certain raw materials.
- Microbiological state of various components (air, water, materials, hands, equipment, machinery, packaging materials)
- Effectiveness of cleaning.
- Cross contamination of allergens

Finally, shelf-life tests are also conducted, whereby the shelf life of (new) product groups is determined and the shelf life of existing products is verified.

## **10. Quality assurance.**

### **10.1. Managing documents, data and registrations**

Verstegen Spices & Sauces has compiled a quality manual, on the basis of the requirements described in the standards BRC and IFS.

The management of documents and data is set down in procedures. Documents and data refer to e.g.: procedures, working instructions, forms, quality records, legislation, qualifications of personnel, etc. The management, modification, authorisation and distribution of documents from the quality handbook come under the remit of the Quality Assurance department.

Registrations relating to training courses, cleaning work, defective products, corrective/preventive actions, external / internal complaints, internal / external audits, pest control, maintenance work, recalls, traceability, etc. are updated in a correct manner.

### **10.2. Product specifications.**

Raw materials and primary packaging materials have a product specification or purchasing specification. In the (purchasing) specification of raw materials, the following elements are included:

- Name of supplier
- Product features re product safety and product quality (microbiological, physical and chemical risks)
- Storage conditions (storage temperature, storage humidity)
- Shelf life
- List of allergens
- GMO-free declaration
- Use
- Packaging
- Specific requirements (specific legislation)

For all end products, product specifications are available from our specification system (SpeCX). In this product specification, the following elements are included:

- Name Verstegen
- Article number of product
- General product description
- List of ingredients
- All necessary product features included re product safety and product quality
- General product features
- Specific product features
- Specific requirements (specific legislation, customer demands)
- 'Alba' list (allergen database)
- Storage conditions
- Shelf life
- Use
- Packaging

### **10.3. Purchasing and assessment of suppliers.**

The specifications which raw materials must meet are fixed. Raw materials can only be purchased from approved suppliers. Suppliers are assessed periodically in a multidisciplinary team meeting. Aids here are a suppliers' questionnaire, the defects registered and the results of supplier audits.

New suppliers are given a trial period of six months. After this trial period, there is an evaluation and an assessment is made of whether or not the supplier is fully approved.

### **10.4. Traceability of products.**

Verstegen has an extensive ERP package, which makes full tracking and tracing according to the General Food Law possible. With the aid of batch numbers, raw materials are identified. These batch numbers are linked with the work order numbers. The work order number of the end product is linked with the batch code and sell-by date code. In this way, we can fully trace a product from the supplier to the customer and back. The complete traceability is set down in an extensive procedure.

### **10.5. Defects and Recall.**

Defects are dealt with and managed according to the procedure "Blocking and Rejecting". A record is kept of every defect. Products or raw materials which deviate from the required quality are blocked immediately and are no longer made available to the production department. In the event of a defect, the situation at hand is dealt with first and then the focus shifts to finding a structural solution, to prevent faults recurring wherever possible. In addition to the procedure "Blocking and Rejecting", a detailed "Recall" procedure is also in place. This procedure meets all legal provisions relating to foodstuffs and is tested annually. The results of this annual test are set down in a report.

### **10.6. Complaints procedure.**

Verstegen Spices & Sauces has a comprehensive procedure for dealing with complaints from outside. External complaints are entered into the complaints system by the service team. The Quality Assurance department is informed immediately of the external complaint. An employee of the Quality Assurance department looks into the complaint in consultation with the relevant departmental head or other experts and decides, in consultation with the relevant parties, whether or not the complaint is well-founded, what the cause of the complaint is and what corrective and preventive action must be taken. This is then returned to the service team. The service team subsequently deals with the complaint as far as the customer is concerned.

Complaints from outside are sub-divided into different categories. Every month overviews are made of the complaints per category. This overview is discussed again in various quality meetings.

### **10.7. Internal audits.**

A procedure has been put in place regarding the execution, planning, reporting and discussion of internal audits. Every quarter which contributes to a process belonging to our BRC-Food/IFS-Food standard is audited at least once a year by qualified internal auditors. Topics of assessment are the implementation and verification of processes and procedures and their effectivity. Results and progress of the actions of the internal audits are discussed in the HACCP meetings and management meetings.

In addition to audits, the Quality Assurance department conducts hygiene rounds on a weekly basis, during which neatness and cleanliness, hygiene and cleaning work are assessed.

### **10.8. Verification, validation and management evaluation.**

Periodically, an extensive management evaluation is held. Part of this is the evaluation of the quality system. The verification and validation of new or changed procedures, working instructions,

products, processes and areas occurs prior to implementation and is carried out by the validation team. Execution of the verification, validation and management evaluation is described in detail in a procedure.

#### **10.9. Cleaning, maintenance and calibration.**

All production and storage areas are periodically cleaned by the production staff in accordance with established instructions and frequencies. Records are kept of the critical cleaning work.

A maintenance plan has been drawn up for the machines and equipment within the production departments. This maintenance plan was drafted by the Technical Department, which is also responsible for administering it. Records are kept of all maintenance work.

In addition to the maintenance plan, a calibration plan has also been drawn up for all measuring tools. This calibration plan was drafted by the Technical Department, which is also responsible for administering it. Records are kept of all calibrations.

#### **10.10. Controlling absence of components foreign to product.**

General:

Various measures are taken to counter the presence of components foreign to a product within the production and storage areas. These include: hygiene plan, procedure for visitors, procedure for glass & hard plastic, procedure for knives, procedure for wearing gloves, cleaning plans, process control, covered lamps, filtered air inside production areas and packaging regulations.

Raw material level:

All raw materials are checked by the laboratory. Various raw materials are accompanied by an analysis certificate on arrival. In addition, several raw materials are sieved or metal detected.

Product level:

Products are only released if no defects are found during the analysis. In addition, the end products are fed through a metal detector. Ground products are first sieved before further processing. Also, all machines and equipment are suitable for their intended use and are used and maintained in such a way that the chance of the product becoming contaminated is restricted to a minimum.

#### **10.11. Pest control.**

A pest control plan has been put in place. This plan contains several forms of action for minimising the chance of vermin (e.g. storage methods, screened conveyance, neatness, cleanliness, etc.).

Pest control is in the hands of a certified external service provider. This company periodically conducts detailed inspections. The results are recorded in an inspection report. Verstegen acts on any possible findings. This action is described in the report.

In addition to the inspections conducted by the external service provider, Verstegen staff also pays attention to this element. If any pests are spotted, the pest controller is called in immediately.

#### **10.12. Storage and transport.**

The storage of raw materials, packaging material and end products and the transport of end products are managed in-house. These elements are incorporated into the quality system and are also included every quarter in the internal audits. There is an extensive system for the transportation and delivery of end products. Raw materials, packaging material and end products



are stored and transported under the right conditions. During storage and transport, the products are protected adequately against contamination.

All products are delivered FeFo. Some of the means of transport are fitted with conditioned areas for transporting chilled products. The temperature of cooled transport is measured automatic.

#### **10.13. Personnel.**

Everyone who enters a production or storage area must comply with the established rules on hygiene. This means that use must be made of hairnets (over the ears), clean work clothes or visitors' coats, work shoes, beard/moustache net (if necessary), glasses cord (if necessary) and gloves (if necessary). Also, it is forbidden to eat, drink, smoke, chew gum and wear jewellery inside the production and storage areas. Open wounds must be covered with blue metal plasters, infectious diseases must be reported to those in charge and hands must be washed every time one enters the production or storage area.

Every Verstegen employee has his/her own batch, which establishes specific access. In addition, every production worker has his/her own locker for storing personal items and food. Work clothes are kept apart from personal clothing. Clean work clothes are available every day. The work clothes are washed by a professional outside company. The changing areas are separated from the production and storage areas.

The hierarchic structure within Verstegen is set down in an organigram.

#### **10.14. Training.**

Staff who are vested with authority in the quality system are competent to carry out their duties. Written procedures have been applied to establish the needs for training and to provide the right training for those members of staff whose work has an impact on quality. Data on the relevant internal and external training courses is kept up to date. Besides, Verstegen Spices & Sauces considers it important to provide professional practice for professional training. The relevant person in training is given the needed practical experience. We are always open to new ideas and developments.

Verstegen is registered at the foundation for Education & Business and as a training company for the food sector and logistics.

#### **10.15. Product development.**

Part of the key strategy of Verstegen Spices & Sauces involves setting trends through innovative product development. To achieve this, a team of professional product developers has been brought together, with optimum know-how when it comes to herbs, spices and sauces and their use. As a result, a tailor-made product can be developed for the customer, with all the accompanying facets.

The whole product-development process is part of the quality system. The process is explained in a detailed procedure and all stages are set down and recorded in the correct manner. If necessary, hazard and risk analyses are conducted for new products.

**Closing word.**

This brochure is an attempt to present the essence of our quality policy and the content of our quality system by means of a brief overview.

We realise that all our customers will have set up their production processes in a unique way. This could mean that you will need additional information to supplement this brochure. If so, please send any specific unanswered questions you might have to our Customer Support department.