



Aptean Food & Beverage ERP

# Ensuring Proper Allergen Management in Your Bakery



With food allergies affecting one in four Americans and **allergen-free food sales totaling \$19 billion**, it's apparent that this segment of the industry is on the rise.

It will continue to be an area of focus going forward, as key players like Mondelez and Nestlé are demonstrating their commitment to allergy-sensitive products and a **forecasted annual rate of growth of 8.32%** through 2024.

What does this mean for your bakery business? If you haven't asked yourself this question before, now is the time.

## Major Allergens and the Importance of Proper Allergen Management

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA), passed in 2006, is one of the key pieces of legislation dealing with this topic. It applies to all products with labeling regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), both imported and domestic—which includes all food except for poultry, most meats, certain egg products and alcoholic beverages.

The law names the eight ingredients that account for 90% of allergic reactions to food, namely milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts (almonds, pecans, walnuts), peanuts, wheat and soybeans. The presence of any of these, or proteins derived from them, must be included on product labels—no matter how small the amount might be.

Additionally, the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA) and Egg Product Inspection Act (EPIA) require that all ingredients used to formulate a meat, poultry or egg product **must be declared** in the ingredients list on product labels. Clear signifiers like these are necessary not only for following the law, but also for protecting consumers with sensitivities and intolerances.



The unsatisfactory practices that leave companies at risk, including improper storage, insufficient sanitation and procedural breakdowns, need to be eliminated to cut down on risks.

Such labels are also critical in efforts to reduce recalls—consider that **52% of product recalls in 2019 were due to undeclared allergens**. The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requires manufacturers to have allergen control measures in place, but many food businesses are still lagging in this area.

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## Allergen Control Points

How can you best prepare your bakery to comply with all regulations and reduce the chances of food safety and allergen-related errors? You need to begin by examining your critical control points (CCPs)—that is, the steps in your processes where extra care needs to be taken to prevent cross-contamination.

### Ingredient/Product Storage

From the time an item or ingredient arrives at your facility, it's your responsibility to ensure that safe labeling and storage practices are followed. Those materials with allergens need to be stored in their own dedicated areas, below other ingredients in case of a spill, with labels clearly displayed and containers tightly sealed.

### Production Scheduling

Having designated production lines for your products containing allergens would be ideal, but in the absence of dedicated equipment for those materials, intelligent scheduling is necessary to mitigate cross-contamination risk. That means manufacturing allergen-containing products at the end of shifts and ensuring there's time for complete sanitation after those runs.

### Employee Handling/ Sanitation Processes

When several different products are being manufactured simultaneously on different lines, there are many factors to consider to minimize the chances of allergens ending up where they don't belong, from shared tools and surfaces to general air circulation. Physical barriers are best for keeping processes and ingredients isolated—but don't overlook the human element, either. Stringent sanitation standards including hand-washing and

### Packaging

This last critical control point is a big one, considering **incorrect labeling was the number one reason for undeclared allergen recalls** in 2018. Errors can occur when a product is placed in the wrong package or when the wrong label is placed on a package.

You can avoid packaging-related issues by implementing the following:

- Diligent checking of printed labels for accuracy
- Critical review of packaging statements to ensure they reflect production standards
- Barcode readers for more effective management
- Annual reviews of ingredients, formulations and packaging specifications
- Documentation of all allergen-management controls and plans

## Track and Trace with an Industry-Specific Solution

Now you have some idea of measures you can put in place to protect your bakery products from allergen cross-contamination—but you're not done yet. What's next?

You need to make sure your data, tracking and traceability are in order, and not only to comply with the FSMA's requirements in these areas. This is best done with a purpose-built enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, because you need to be able to reliably answer the following about all of your goods.

### 1. What Went into It?

Complete control over your formulas and recipes is a necessity for ensuring safety, consistency and quality. With good ERP software, you'll know at a glance what ingredients are involved with any given product, and allergens are more easily tracked.

The best ERP solutions can also help identify when substitute ingredients can and can't be used in the case of shortages. This is critical, as soy and nuts are sometimes considered as alternative protein sources, but they raise major allergen concerns.

### 2. What Came into Contact with It?

We mentioned the importance of scheduling when the same production line might be used for both products free of allergens and those that contain them. Thankfully, an ERP can manage all of this for you—from creating optimized schedules to mitigate cross-contamination risks to serving as reference once a run is completed and the products have already moved along the supply chain.

### 3. Where Did It Go?

Speaking of the supply chain, full visibility up and down—from sourcing and shipments through all stages of production and on to shipping—is absolutely vital. An ERP gives you this kind of transparency, and version control features allow for a historical view of the various recipes being used at your facilities.

With an industry-specific ERP solution on your side, your bakery business will be better prepared in the case of an allergen issue resulting in a recall. You'll be able to target your efforts and drill down into the details, including where an ingredient was used, how much was used and where the product is now in the supply chain. That way, you recall only the batches or lots you need to, and you do it in an efficient and expedited manner.

# Manage Risks and Meet Demand

Clearly, proper allergen management is of utmost importance in an industry increasingly focused on safety, health and meeting consumer demands. We've laid out many of the major concerns on this front, as well as how ERP software can give you the control over your operations you need.

Ready to hear more about how the Aptean Food & Beverage ERP can suit your bakery's needs? **Contact us today.**



## Are You Ready to Learn More?

Interested to see how Aptean Food & Beverage ERP can help you better manage your food company?

Contact us at [info@aptean.com](mailto:info@aptean.com) or visit [www.aptean.com](http://www.aptean.com).



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