



Bug News



July / August 2011

Swift wins

South African Quality Award

Maintaining, evaluating and improving a quality-management system takes a lot of hard work and dedication for any company striving to achieve excellence in microbiological testing. This has been our aim for the past 20 years as we successfully sustained our ISO 17025 certification (through SANAS) in our Cape Town and Midrand laboratories.

This commitment was rewarded on 3 June 2011 when we were declared winners in the category Quality Service (for large enterprises) at the annual 2011 South African Quality Awards! The ceremony, at the Velmor Hotel in Centurion, saw Dr Rob Davies (Minister of Trade and Industry) hand over a certificate and trophy to Swift Micro Laboratories in recognition of our excellent service.

The South African Quality Awards, established by the government through the Department of Trade and Industry (dti), are held annually and promote quality and effective quality-management methodologies in South African business. The awards are adjudicated by the dti, Business, Labour, the National Metrology Institute of South Africa, the South African Bureau of Standards and the South African National Accreditation System.

With many South African companies now competing globally, the dti felt it important to recognise the effort it takes to achieve quality. This event raises awareness around quality assurance, quality management and the different ways in which excellence can be achieved.

Companies are encouraged to adhere to proper-quality business norms and to comply with local, regional and international quality standards. Awards are made in five categories, with Swift receiving recognition for service that best reflects commitment to local production and quality.

The win means Swift Micro Laboratories automatically qualifies for entry into the SADC Annual Quality Awards which will take place in 2012.

We are absolutely delighted to be winners, especially as it acknowledges the systems that have been in place for the past two decades! We look forward to continuing to provide our clients with accurate results, excellent training, auditing and support services.



Deidre Willams (National Quality Manager) and Anza Bester (Business Development Manager).

In this edition

This edition is jam-packed with articles of interest – one of which is a focus on hand hygiene, a key element when implementing and maintaining hygiene-management systems. Knowing what should be included in a proper hand-hygiene programme is essential if you want to have a safe product as well as prevent bacteria and other microorganisms from spreading. We emphasise the basics, focusing on aspects such as technique, frequency and training.

Campden BRI

Swift will, once again, be hosting Campden BRI (from 15 to 19 August) for the Advanced HACCP course. The comment below reflects the feedback we received from delegates who attended last year's course:

"The course, presented by Dr Robert Gaze, provided world-class skills and knowledge to design, implement and verify food-safety management systems, based upon HACCP principles," says Liesel van Heerden (Quality Assurance Manager at Langeberg and Ashton Foods).

Seats are limited for this popular course, so make sure you book early!

Swift's Durban Launch

After much anticipation, we are extremely excited to announce that Swift has now opened in Durban! Our Kwazulu-Natal clients were recently treated to a presentation about the new regulations for the labelling and advertising of foodstuffs. Read about the branch's official opening (and the Swift services on offer there) on the back page.



Focus on ...

Basic Hand Hygiene

By Megan van Breda of Swift Micro Laboratories

Hand washing is very important as it is the first line of defence against harmful germs. Washing your hands regularly can reduce the spread of harmful germs and prevent contamination of food, work surfaces, equipment etc. by chemical, biological and physical hazard sources: many foodborne illnesses can be traced back to unwashed or inadequately-washed hands. Sneezing and coughing can spread germs into the air, but most colds are caught and spread through the germs on hands. Microorganisms that cause flu, SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), hepatitis A and various types of diarrhoea can also be spread via contamination from your hands. If these germs are on your hands and you touch your mouth or nose when eating, sneezing or coughing, it can make you sick. Touching a doorknob and shaking hands also spreads germs.

Hand hygiene is the most basic food-handling principle that tends to be forgotten. It is important to remember that many illnesses (from common colds to more serious ailments) can be prevented by going back to basics and learning how, when and what to use to wash your hands.

Ask the following questions to determine how often your hands should be washed:

- How did my hands become contaminated and dirty?
- What product is being manufactured?
- Do I work in a high-risk or low-risk area?
- What does company policy, procedure, work instructions or MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) say?

Cleaning and disinfecting agents

Antibacterial detergent and sanitisers must be appropriate for hand washing and for use in food-handling areas. Chemicals used in the facility need to be sourced from a reputable

supplier and must be registered by the appropriate regulatory authority.

MSDS of all chemicals must be readily available for use in food-handling facilities and should include storage conditions, concentration, contact time etc. It is recommended that SANS 1853 approved antibacterial hand soap should be used as it is chemically tested to be food safe and is extremely effective (99,9999%) for killing bacteria on hands.

Hand-washing facilities and toilets

Hand-washing stations should be placed at food-handling area entrances and toilet exits. There should be enough wash-hand basins (refer to Table 1 Sanitary Conveniences). Sufficient hot and cold (or warm) running water within the temperature range of 40 to 50°C is an additional requirement for effective hand washing. Warm water is generally more comfortable than cold and encourages hand washing for the recommended amount of time. Water temperatures used in hand washing can also affect the solubility or emulsification of some soils. Warm water is more effective than cold water in removing fatty soil so an adequate flow of warm water will cause soap to lather and help flush soil quickly from the hands.

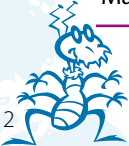
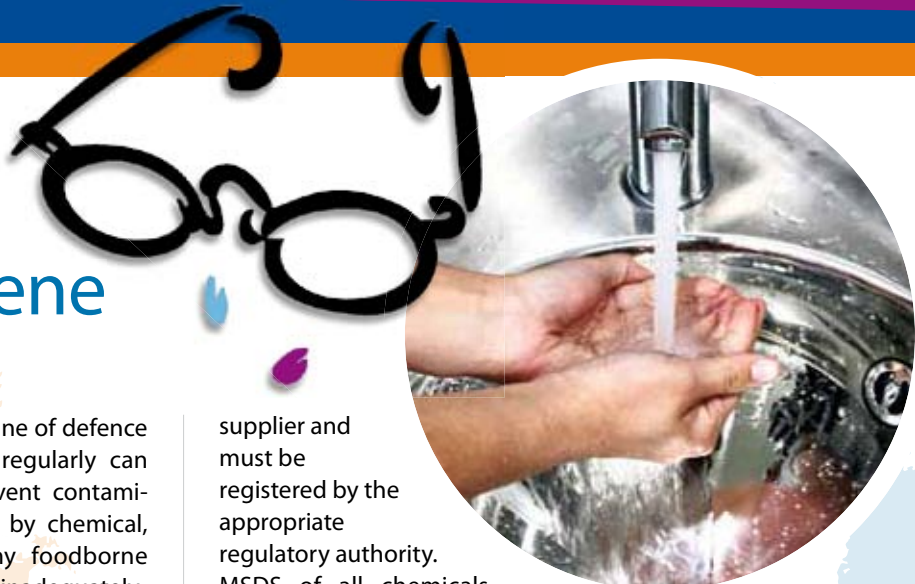
An ample supply of antibacterial detergent, disinfectant and disposable paper towels should be available. Taps should be hands-free (e.g. knee-operated or foot-operated), with pre-set volume control. Stations should be unobstructed at all times by equipment or operating activities. Wash-hand basins should be separate from equipment-cleaning areas and clearly identified to ensure this remains so.

Table 1: Sanitary Conveniences (Regulation R918)

Number of Staff	Number of Sanitary Convenience Installations				
	MEN			WOMEN	
Staff up to	Latrines	Urinal stalls	Wash-hand-basins	Latrines	Wash-hand-basins
10	1	1	1	1	1
20	1	2	2	2	2
40	2	3	2	3	3
60	3	3	2	4	4
80	4	4	3	6	5
100	4	4	3	8	6
120	5	5	4	9	7
140	5	5	4	10	8
180	5	6	5	11	8
Add 1 latrine, 1 wash-hand basin and 1 urinal for every 70 >180 staff				Add 1 latrine and 1 wash-hand basin for every 35 >180 staff	

About Megan van Breda

Megan van Breda qualified in Consumer Science (Food and Nutrition) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Responsible for the quality control in various factories in the food manufacturing industry, she joined Swift Micro Laboratories in 2009 as trainer in the Quality Management Systems (QMS) department.



When should food handlers wash their hands?

Make sure that employees working with food wash their hands properly and regularly:

- when entering the food-handling area
- before preparing food and between raw and cooked food processing
- after touching raw food, such as meat/poultry and eggs
- after handling food waste, emptying a bin, using a handkerchief and/or handling money
- after cleaning or handling chemicals
- after nose blowing, touching hair and/or mouth or smoking
- if hands are contaminated for any other reason.

Hand-washing techniques

Rinsing your hands without detergent does not mean that your hands are clean (even a quick rub with soap will not kill germs) and the correct steps, listed below, need to be followed:

1. Wet hands with water.
2. Apply enough soap to cover the surface of the hands.
3. Rub hands palm to palm.
4. Rub the back of each hand with palm of the other hand, fingers interlaced.
5. Rub palm to palm, fingers interlaced.
6. Rub the back of the fingers to opposite palms, fingers interlocked.
7. Rub each thumb (clasped in opposite hand) using a rotational movement.
8. Rub fingertips in opposite palm in a circular motion.
9. Rub each wrist with the opposite hand.
10. Rinse under a hands-free tap.
11. Dry thoroughly with a single-use towel.

It is important that these steps are followed to remove germs from hands and to ensure they are as clean as possible. Thorough hand washing with warm water, the recommended amount of soap (as indicated by the manufacturer) and proper hand drying are essential to reduce the possibility of transferring microorganisms to food. Hands should be dried thoroughly on a disposable towel as harmful bacteria spread more easily when hands are wet or damp.

Training

Food handlers should receive training on when, where and how hands should be washed. It is important to stress that the cleaning procedure must be followed. Hands and exposed arms should be kept clean and fingernails should always be short and clean. Wash hands only in designated wash-hand basins and use the appropriate sanitiser.

Management must ensure that workers wash their hands properly and should provide accessible, properly-maintained and designated hand-washing facilities which are equipped with sinks, warm running water, soap and paper towels (or any other means of drying). Signage acts as a reminder and ensures proper hand-washing steps are followed. Provide information on local and national foodborne outbreaks as this will create opportunities to understand the importance of hand washing and its impact, especially if the necessary steps are not followed. A "buddy" system can be implemented, whereby staff support each other and remind one another on when and how to wash hands – monitoring plays a key role in effective hand washing.

Sources: • Food Standards Agency – Food Hygiene – A Guide For Businesses • SANS 10049:2011 • Regulation 918:1999
• www.fda.gov/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/IndustryandRegulatoryAssistanceandTrainingResources/ucm184207.htm



On Hand At Swift

We have developed a range of posters to increase the awareness of hand hygiene in your facility. These posters, available in different sizes, can be included in your hygiene-consultation package at Swift (training/hygiene audits/sampling) or can be bought. Please contact our marketing department (in Cape Town or Gauteng) to view the various designs or to obtain a quote.

Also, be on the look-out for our revamped Hygiene Audits which will be launched from July 2011!

Swift's hygiene audits can be customised to your specific needs and incorporate a visual evaluation as well as microbiological monitoring. Visual evaluation includes an inspection of the:

- physical condition of the premises
- presence of undesirable or harmful materials
- sanitation, washing-up and hand-washing facilities
- condition of utensils and equipment
- personal hygiene of floor workers
- product being handled
- disposal of rubbish and waste matter
- storage facilities
- pest control.

Microbiological testing of samples (surface and hand swabs as well as food/product samples) taken during audits are tested in our internationally-accredited laboratories (according to ISO 17025 standards). Clients receive a comprehensive report (with scores allocated to the areas inspected), constructive advice and recommendations. Clients who sign up for routine (quarterly, at least) hygiene audits receive a certificate that affirms their proactive approach and commitment to hygiene. It can be publically displayed and serves as a marketing and motivational staff tool.



Latest regional office opens in Durban



Maureen Benedetti, Deon van der Merwe (Dezil Flexible Packaging) and Yolandé van der Riet (CGCSA).

See our website for more photographs from our launch.

Launch

Our eagerly-awaited Durban office opened its doors on Thursday, 9 June 2011! Located in Kingfisher Office Park in Mount Edgecombe, the launch was attended by approximately 60 people from the food manufacturing and retail industries who attended information sessions on the labelling and advertising of foodstuffs (R146 of 1 March 2010).



Nireshni Singh (Quality Products) with Spar's Keshia Chetty and Vanessa Wood.

Yolandé van der Riet, nutritional specialist at the Food Safety Initiative (Consumer Goods Council of South Africa) elaborated on the most important aspects of these regulations and how they will affect product labels.

"It is extremely important that labels and any information thereon (whether pictures or words) should not misinform. If any doubt exists as to whether information might be misleading, it should rather not be used," she says.

Anza Bester (Swift's Business Development Manager) spoke about the services on offer and introduced Maureen Benedetti, the representative who will look after Kwazulu-Natal clients. She has already begun introducing herself to clients in the area, but will be knocking on many more doors this month!

Maureen started working at Swift in March 2011 and spent time in Midrand before taking up duties at the Durban office. She will offer the following services:

- Independent microbiological sampling
- Hygiene audits
- Problem-solving investigations
- Assistance with microbiological monitoring programmes
- Helping to decide about training courses and selecting the appropriate Quality Management System
- Training
- Technical assistance for any current Swift service.



Competition

Two lucky readers stand the chance of winning a hamper - valued at R500 from **feast-de-renaissance** whose fruit sauces, relishes, coulis' and accompaniments enhance any dish. Each recipe is masterfully blended to combine the essence of good, slow food – and every delicious jar can be enjoyed in a myriad ways: as an entrée with cheese, sliced into salads, roasted as an accompaniment to meat dishes or with mascarpone as dessert.

To enter, simply answer the question below and e-mail your response to info@swift.co.za, with **July 2011 Bug News Competition** in the subject line. Closing date is 29 July 2011 and winners will be announced in the next Bug News issue.

"Where has Swift Micro Laboratories recently opened an office?"

Samples

Samples sent to the Durban office for testing will be couriered to our ISO 17025 accredited (SANAS) laboratory in Midrand. Please also contact her should you have any queries about nutritional analysis.

The office is also a depot for sampling equipment (items such as cooler boxes, ice bricks, swabs and sterile samples). It accommodates small meetings and clients are welcome to make an appointment to chat (over a cup of coffee!) about testing, systems and training. Swift will be using the nearby Kingfisher Conference Centre when hosting industry training courses – with the next round to be presented in September.

Please remember that courses can also be presented in-house, at your premises, at a date and time convenient for your company.

The day ended with a brief tour of the office. Durban clients are advised to be on the lookout for the branded Swift car in the traffic, which will be making sure queries receive *Swift* attention!

Contact Us

For further information on the training courses or about our hygiene audit service:

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