Computer generated HACCP

By Anny Dentener

The use of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Software may be an alternative to the traditional paper work normally associated with procedures and documentation in accordance with HACCP guidelines. With one package promising time savings of up to 70% for new plans, it warrants investigating which, if any, package is right for you. You will be spoiled for choice with a huge range of HACCP software available

An alphabetic overview with websites and indication of prices (where available):

	Name of company and package	Websites	Cost (where known)
1	Associated Software Developers: **HACCP Now** (was HACCP2000)	www.haccpnow.co.uk	
2	Bizeman Interactive Solutions Pty: **HEAT HACCP**	www.bizeman.com	Aus$1,999
3	T. Bowring & Associates Pty: **HACCP Wizard**	www.haccpwizard.com.au	Free download. Full registration (including support) Aus$895
4	Campden & Chorleywood FRA: **HACCP Documentation Software**	www.campden.co.uk/ publ/pubfiles/haccpsw.htm	£450.00
5	CAVU Companies: **HACCP Pro** (and **Recipe Pro**)	www.cavucompanies.com/ (under Products for Food and HACCP)	US$350; support add US$250 each
6	Economatics: **HACCP software**	www.economatics.co.uk (under secondary school -food and textiles)	£49
7	Encos Global Systems Ltd: **EncosFIRM**	www.encos.com	On request
8	Envirohealth: **HACCP Master 2000 Food Safety Planner**	www.envhealth.com.au	
9	FSP Food Safety Practice Inc.: **Food Safety Manager**	www.foodprocessors.ca look for FSM package	Can$3,495
10	HACCP Help Software Inc.: **HACCP *Help!***	www.haccphelp.com	
11	Keller-Soft: **HACCP Plan Developer**	www.foodbeverageit.com/ HACCP01.htm	US$799
12	Niche Ware systems (previously Bradley Ward Systems): **HACCP Plan**	htpp://nichewarepmis.com look for HACCP	US$875
13	Norbackley, Ley & Associates: **doHACCP**	www.norbackley.com or www.dohaccp.com	US$675 "do" module
14	Performance Management Systems: **HACCP Easy**	www.persyst.com.au	Aus$1,975
15	Safetyware.com: **HACCP ProActive**	www.safetyware.com	
16	TNO Nutrition and Food Research: ***FIST-HACCP***	http://www.voeding.tno.nl/ or info@vansonsbeek.com	On request
17	QSA: **QSA HACCP**	www.qsa.co.uk	
18	Q-Pro**: HACCP and SSOP Software** (data management)	www.ewts.com	

The following is some information on these packages obtained from statements on the companies web sites and/or from correspondence with them. Note that some packages are a complete solution, whilst with others you need to build up from modules:

HACCP Now claims the be "…a market leading HACCP software…". It offers varying versions for different size companies and different activities: "Standard" for small/ medium and "Enterprise" for medium/large companies. Training modules and versions for Consultants, Butchers and Caterers are available. Twenty food industry case studies available. A free demo can be downloaded.

HEAT HACCP states "…this software will reduce the time it takes to create a HACCP plan by 70% and will reduce the time it takes you to modify a plan by up to 90%..." It includes a flow chart tool and audit modules and can be password protected. Their client list includes some large Australian/New Zealand food companies. A free 30 day time-limited trial is offered.

HACCP Wizard, according to its writer, was designed to simplify introduction to concepts of HACCP on a **free of charge** basis, and to provide a registered program that would serve as a practical, do-it-yourself, starting point for most small businesses needing to introduce HACCP planning. It also offers a support library for the registered users.

HACCP Documentation Software is "leading" software to document systems, and maintain records from Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association (UK). A free demonstration copy is available on request.

HACCP Pro claims "…Whether you're starting from scratch, looking for a way to keep your plan up to date, processing meat, seafood or vegetables or operate a retail establishment, HACCP Pro is right for you..." Download available. It ties in with **Recipe Pro** focussing on plant operation and recipe management.

Economatics HACCP software is targeted as a resource for UK secondary schools for their food design and technology teaching: "the software is an ideal research tool giving students insight into how HACCP is used in the food industry". The software includes cheese production, chicken cook/chill meal and bread production examples. A PDF brochure (409 kb!) is available.

EncosFIRM (Food Information Risk Management) offers a system to improve food information and risk management with an electronic solution for HACCP compliance, quality insurance and process control data capturing with hand held devices. Customises packages to clients needs and level of expertise. Case studies from two New Zealand meat companies on the website.

HACCP Master 2000 won the Queensland Intelligent Technologies Award for its software. Claims to be user friendly and versatile and "…covers HACCP considerations from when the food enters the food establishment until it is received by the customer...". Specifically targets the retail food industry and food service. A 15 day limited working version can be downloaded.

Food Safety Manager includes a hazard database dynamically linked to ingredient and process databases. Inserting a new ingredient or process in the flow diagram will automatically bring up all the hazards associated with that ingredient or process.

HACCP *Help* focuses on the (Canadian?) food service and hospitality industry. On their site you can request a demo CD, it has a free user guide, and a connection to an on-line user discussion group with 25 members when I looked.

HACCP Plan Developer states that it is an "…easy-to-use software programme that can help you avoid events that spell disaster for your company – product recall, liability, bad publicity and loss of business…" . A demo can be downloaded.

HACCP Plan helps companies work through the USDA/FDA mandated plan components, ensuring a complete plan is developed. It covers regulatory requirements, offers simplified templates, intuitive tools, automatic creation of hazard analysis tables, and linked files that ensure all parts of the plan are updated.

doHACCP, developed by John Norback and Kathleen Ley (University of Wisconsin), is one of the better known packages. The company was selected by the US International Dairy Foods Association to provide its HACCP software. Numerous modules are available covering different parts of HACCP in the food industry, with other packages for Food Service and Thermal Processors. Free demo on site.

HACCP Easy emphasises that it is more than just a HACCP program. It provides a package of 13 modules in total, that are designed to help manage food safety rather than just HACCP, and it can be integrated into overall quality management.

HACCP ProActive claims to save you time, keep you organized and on top of things with minimal effort. It comes in two modules. One module covers the manufacturing food industry and a second (ProActive CHEF) is for the food service industry. It states NZ references and has free downloads including "How to inspect incoming food products". Separate flow charting shareware (US$49), is available. The company claims its Australian customers like because the software has the special symbols they (and New Zealanders) need.

FIST-HACCP (also **RISK** and *SPECIFICATIONS* modules) are listed by the Dutch TNO Nutrition and Food Research Institute (in English), and a few other food safety sites. It covers flowcharts, analyses and reports. Free one month trial. Used by TNO in its work and courses.

QSA HACCP integrates with **QSA Specifications** for the management of raw material, product and packaging specifications, which enables it to generate allergen/ intolerance food data lists, ingredient declarations and nutrition details (UK data) in customer specific formats. QSA also offers **ProductVine**, an on-line product development and lifecycle management tool. Specifically claims success for "private label" product management. Customer list includes international companies. Case studies available on request.

Q-Pro HACCP and SSOP Software focuses on data collecting and report producing in line with US FDA requirements. Data can be entered directly from small portable hardware, thus eliminating paper work. It has features for verification and monitoring. Offers password protection and electronic signature.

Evaluation of several packages may be needed before you strike the one suitable for you. Fortunately many provide free time-limited demos. Discussions with a HACCP practitioner who abandoned a prominent package and went back to paper work, indicates that it is crucial for software to be user-friendly to all HACCP team members.

It has to easily update plans, and provide a good overview of consequences of change in one area on the whole system, rather than having to print out the whole plan to see what has changed with the addition of a new CCP (Critical Control Point). Multiple screen viewing options also help. Standard flow diagram design should be included, or be easily integrated.

You will also have to look further ahead and investigate how software can fit in with data collection and reporting. It is false economy selecting cheap software and subsequently having to set up new and expensive systems for data entry and statistical interpretation.

The use of Personal Digital Assistants linked to temperature probes and processing equipment is one way of addressing large data gathering. Consider if the programme needs to cover pre-requisite programs from training and personal hygiene, to pest control and product recalls. Can the software work in with ISO and Food/Product Safety Plans/Risk Management Programmes already in place, or do you have to duplicate this? Does it fit in with NZ Food Safety Authority and/or export countries' requirements? What do you need for auditing, be it internal, preparing for external or to audit your suppliers? These are some of the questions that need answering before you can decide "best fit".

If HACCP paper work is getting on top of you, or files are gathering dust on the shelves, consider software to keep everything up to date and relevant. However do remember that the software is only a tool and whilst it can help you develop and maintain a HACCP plan it cannot replace professional judgment on the implementation of a full food safety programme.

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