



Doug McMillon
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As the world's largest grocer, we help people all over the world save money and live better. We are committed to playing a leading role in providing access to safe, high-quality foods for our customers.



The Why

When Sam Walton founded Walmart in 1962, he couldn't have imagined the food safety discussions we have today. Walmart serves nearly 265 million customers each week. We have more than 11,000 retail units, more than 50 of our own manufacturing plants around the world, and an ever-growing eCommerce presence. Sam Walton put the customer first, and that principle is core to what we do. Our customers trust in the safety of the food we sell, and we take that responsibility seriously.

In 2008, Walmart began requiring all U.S. private brand food suppliers to receive a GFSI-recognised certification, and by 2010, GFSI was a requirement across all markets. Since then, our food business and private brand sales have grown significantly. However, many of the challenges we have identified in the global supply chain are non-unique to Walmart. With thousands of private brands, national brands, and developing food suppliers, we recognise food safety is an issue that can't be solved alone.

The How

The Global Markets (GM) Programme gave us the opportunity to work with small and developing suppliers in markets where GFSI adoption fell short of Walmart's requirements. Our GM approach enables suppliers to obtain an assessment from select certification bodies. After passing an audit, suppliers must commit to working towards full certification within two years.

We believe in empowering and supporting our suppliers to meet these goals. In many of our markets, we provide GM participants with training workshops and resources. Examples include:

- **Mexico and Central America:** Building on the success of Walmart's Tierra Fértil programme in the agri-food sector, we began using "Escuela de GFSI y Alimentos Seguros" (GFSI School and Safe Foods)

and “Universidad Walmart” (Walmart University) to train suppliers on various topics, including the GM programme and GFSI standards. This approach has helped small and developing suppliers raise their food safety standards. The number of suppliers with GFSI-recognised certifications increased from 111 in 2017 to 202 in 2019.

- **Chile:** Walmart’s Food Safety teams partnered with Certification Programme Owners (CPOs) on training and awareness modules for different supplier levels.
- **India:** We are training small and developing suppliers on GM and raising awareness by providing easy-to-understand requirements and resources, in-person meetings, videos, and other tactics. These resources make the programme more accessible to less-developed suppliers.

- **Africa:** Our Food Safety team led a discussion within the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa to rally retailers to use Food Safety standards and adopt the GM Programme and GFSI-recognised certifications.
- **China:** Walmart is an active member of the China Chain Store & Franchise Association (CCFA), a joint effort with GFSI to provide suppliers with a third-party audit platform to fulfil requirements from multiple retailers. A Walmart representative co-chaired the CCFA-GFSI Joint Working Group to help create training for participating suppliers.

In addition, food safety market leaders actively participate in local GFSI groups in Argentina, Chile, Japan, China, and Mexico. These local groups help regulators understand the importance of the GM Programme and GFSI-recognised certifications as a tool to improve food safety standards.

The Benefits

Walmart believes in continuous improvement. We have a relentless dissatisfaction with the status quo, and we recognise participation in the global food safety community as fundamental to our success. GFSI is the foundation of our supplier programme and has allowed us to take a global, unified approach with our supplier partners and in our own manufacturing facilities. Through the GFSI Global Markets Programme, new suppliers could join our supply chain from markets where GFSI was less established and where regulations vary. In addition, we were better equipped to track food safety management progress.

Suppliers have seen the benefits, as well. The programme is an opportunity to not only improve food safety and other compliance standards, but also to sell products to new customers and markets beyond Walmart.

Food safety is foundational to Walmart’s success as a company and to our suppliers. The cross-functional, public-private collaboration – internally and externally – is supporting the acceleration of food safety programmes around the world.

Figures

Since 2017, GFSI-benchmarked certifications have consistently increased in regions leveraging the Global Markets Programme and where certified suppliers were scarce. Many suppliers who started in the Global Markets Programme shifted from passing Walmart-initiated Global Market audits to achieving full certification. Our food safety journey is not over, but we’re proud of the progress in our supply base to lift food safety standards around the world.

of GFSI-Certified Suppliers vs. # of Suppliers Passing Global Market Audits, 2017-2019

**Private brand some small and developing suppliers*

