

CASE STUDY



PREMIER FOODS SERVES UP

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WITH ISO 14001

SGS

In April 2010, Premier Foods' Ashford plant passed its triennial ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) audit for the third time since 2001. Richard Giles, Premier Foods Ashford's Safety & Environment Manager, says: "Regaining ISO 14001 certification is a big plus for us, mainly in terms of protecting the environment and demonstrating our commitment to environmentally responsible production."

ABOUT PREMIER FOODS

The UK's largest food producer, Premier Foods manufactures and distributes a wide range of branded and non-branded foods. Its well-known brands include Mr Kipling, Ambrosia, Batchelors, Hovis, Branston, Sharwood's, Hartley's, Quorn and Oxo. In 2009, 99.4% of British households bought at least one Premier Foods brand.

In 2009 Premier Foods' sales totalled £2.7 billion. It employs around 16,000 people at over 60 sites across the UK and Ireland. These include: Rogerstone Park, Leicester, the largest chilled ready meals facility in Europe; Histon, Cambridgeshire, one of the largest jam factories in the world; and Long Sutton and Wisbech, two of Europe's largest canneries

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Premier Foods has developed, adopted and published CSR policies in areas such as health and safety, ethical trading, responsible marketing, employee welfare and community involvement. The company monitors all its sites to constantly raise performance and ensure standards are upheld.

Premier Foods' policy on carbon dioxide includes measures such as: increasing energy efficiency; setting targets for reducing CO₂ and monitoring progress; and encouraging suppliers to reduce their CO₂ footprints. Similarly, the company's environmental policy includes:

- minimising environmental impacts such as waste and noise, and the risk of harmful incidents
- ensuring employees are aware of, and trained to meet, their environmental responsibilities
- producing environmental impact assessments for capital projects
- maximising efficiency at every opportunity, for example by ensuring plant and machinery are properly maintained
- using renewable raw materials whenever possible
- ensuring raw materials are ethically sourced and legally compliant

ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS

Premier Foods' company-wide Five Star Environmental Award Programme (FSEAP) helps it to meet its environmental objectives. Developed internally to address the specific needs of its own business, but fully compatible with ISO 14001, FSEAP provides the broad framework through which environmental improvements are managed, encouraged and delivered. FSEAP's benefits include the identification and dissemination of best practice, active engagement of all staff, fostering of good relationships with local communities, and cost and risk reduction. Premier Foods met or exceeded five of its six environmental targets for 2009. During the year it reduced its: energy consumption by 5.2%; CO₂ emissions by 7.7%; waste to landfill by 37.7%; packaging by 2%; water usage by 6.1%; and delivery mileage by 3.5%. Buoyed by this success, Premier Foods has set new environmental targets for 2010.

In recognition of its achievements, at the 2009 Food and Drinks Federation Community Partnership Awards, Premier Foods won an award for its approach to environmental management.

PREMIER FOODS' ASHFORD PLANT

One of the largest dry foods plants in Europe, Premier Foods Ashford produces powdered and dry foods such as Cup-a-Soup, Pasta 'n' Sauce, Batchelors Savoury Rice, Paxo, Bisto and McDougalls.

Since 2007 Premier Foods Ashford has more than tripled production to around 50,000 tonnes a year. During this period it has also doubled its workforce to 378. First achieved in March 2001, Premier Foods Ashford's ISO 14001 certification covers its own site and the provision of utilities to a nearby plant owned by fragrance and flavour producer Givaudan. As before, Premier Foods Ashford's current ISO 14001:2004 EMS is based on a target-plan-do-check-review cycle of continual improvement. Richard Giles was involved in establishing the site's original EMS. He helped to identify environmental aspects and impacts and build the EMS, which includes: waste and pollution control procedures, incident/complaint procedures, the management review process, and regular inspections and audits.

Richard says: "Since 2001 we've used ISO 14001 to make big improvements, such as increasing our recycling rate from 9% to 60%, and cutting our water consumption by 36% in 2009; we've also improved our relationship with our neighbours because we have the processes in place to respond quickly to any concerns; and, among other benefits, our processes ensure staff are environmentally aware and encourage them to provide feedback and ideas." Other environmental initiatives at Premier Foods Ashford include annual perimeter noise surveys, performed by a trained factory operative, and the recent appointment of a full-time safety and environment assistant.

In addition to holding ISO 14001 certification, Premier Foods Ashford has a Food Safety Management System audited and certified to the British Retail Consortium Grade A standard.

LATEST ISO 14001 ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

To carry out its independent, external ISO 14001 assessment, Premier Foods selected United Kingdom Accreditation Service-accredited certification body, SGS.

Richard Giles says: "We chose SGS on the recommendation of the environmental manager at one of our other sites. When they arrived here on site the SGS auditors made the whole process easy and gave us helpful advice in the Pre-Assessment Audit and the audit itself. Everyone at SGS was professional, keen to help and ready to advise on improvements and best practice. All in all, SGS was excellent."

David Glenister, International Sales Manager at SGS, says: "Premier Foods' Ashford plant manages its environmental impact extremely well. There's a strong awareness of, and long-held commitment to, environmental responsibility, compliance and improvement across the site. I've also seen strong innovation, particularly regarding waste and energy management."

Using both ISO 14001 and FSEAP processes, Premier Foods Ashford's goals for 2010 include:

- boosting waste recycling from 60% to 80%, cutting waste disposal costs by £50,000
- investigating energy generation from incinerating remaining landfill waste
- reducing energy consumption and therefore costs by £114,000

FURTHER INFORMATION

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