



COVID-19 AND THE RISING NEED FOR FOOD SAFETY SOFTWARE

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Many are shocked to learn that 97% of the food industry still conducts food safety processes with paper and spreadsheet. The cracks in this antiquated approach are starting to show. Despite the food industry now spending \$10B on food safety annually, there was a record 10% increase in food recalls from 2013 to 2018.

The growing number of recalls demonstrates high risk in food safety. By operating with paper and spreadsheet, the food industry is failing to meet the increasing consumer demand for safety, sustainability, and transparency in food. Government regulations are tightening in response, spurring the industry to catch up to consumer demand. Recently, FDA Deputy Commissioner for Food Policy and Response, Frank Yiannas, announced new FSMA rules that lay the groundwork for advanced traceability in food safety. Any company still operating with paper and spreadsheet will need to transition into specialized food safety software that enhances speed and accuracy.

COVID-19 has reinforced the need for such digital food safety, as many of Canada's worst pandemic outbreaks happen at food processing facilities.

Cargill is one such example. By conducting analog, in-person safety screening, the company saw mass COVID-19 outbreaks from employee transit and screening lines. Without digital symptom tracking, Cargill responded woefully late to the outbreaks, triggering employee picket lines and negative media that has shaken the company's reputation. Walmart similarly failed to record their screening processes, and encountered lawsuits for negligence in managing employee health and safety.

The Public Health Agency of Canada released new projections on September 22nd that warn of exponential increases in transmission (Figure One, below). As wave two intensifies, COVID-19 appears to be here to stay, and new responses are necessary for the food industry to stay open and safe.

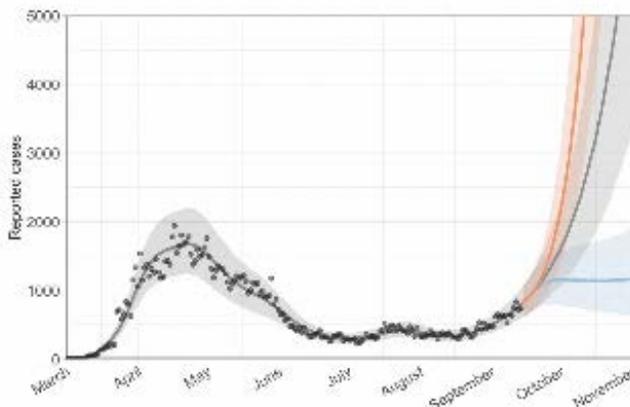


Figure One: Public Health Agency of Canada COVID-19 Projections, 09/22/20

To properly manage COVID-19 safety procedures, the food industry needs off-site screening with alerts and tracking, combined with encrypted storage of medical records. None of those safety functions are available with paper and

spreadsheet, yet all are accessible with software.

An Alberta-based company called Provision is at the forefront of this transition in food safety.

Says Danni Kneeland, Director of Food Safety Solutions, “Provision is Canada’s fastest-growing food safety software for a reason. Working with their team has been excellent.” Provision has grown by over 20 times in 2020, as food companies rapidly adopt its food safety software. Provision software is now used for 51% of fresh and frozen food in Canada, with major clientele such as VersaCold.

Provision’s Primary software ensures food safety completion with form-specific scheduling, reminders, and tracking. It improves the accuracy of records by translating forms to user preferences and auto-filling information between forms. Its clients operate faster by automatically running inventory from data already collected in production forms, and by automatically generating notifications and corrective action reports based on critical limits inside forms. Provision’s Premium software takes the granular data from these food safety records, and correlates every process variable with every production outcome. This creates administrator dashboards that replace gut-feel operating decisions for food companies, enabling data-driven control over safety and quality.

At the core of all this functionality, Provision software enables its users to create custom forms that automatically trigger custom alerts, tracking, and reporting. In March, the company noticed its users were creating employee symptom forms, and saw so much potential in this, they created a side product for COVID-19 so their users could stay open and safe.

Called Basecase, Provision’s COVID-19 software enables a workforce to submit digital screening forms before every shift, using any internet connected device. After submission, each user receives an email or text notification. Based on the answers in their form, the notification will either share the user’s one-time facility entry code if they’re safe, or a call button to organize a COVID-19 test if they’re at risk. This off-site screening limits on-site transmission risk, enabling employees to feel safe at their facility. Administrators receive instant alerts of off-site employee symptoms, so they can respond to risks, not outbreaks. As forms are submitted, the dashboard on Basecase shows the number of employees who are safe, caution, and isolated within a workforce, all filtered by date and location. This data allows companies to plan their production pace according to their operating risk. Every employee form is individually encrypted and stored, creating a trail of due diligence that protects corporate liability.

Recently, Basecase has garnered national attention in The Globe & Mail, and been adopted by significant food industry players such as Centennial Foodservice, which distributes much of the meat, seafood, and poultry in Canada.

Erik Westblom, Co-Founder & CEO of Provision, believes this shows the future of food safety. Westblom says, “As a sommelier, I saw that wine was the first de-commoditized food product, because every variable was tracked, then controlled, enabling value-based pricing. When food processors transition into software like ours, it doesn’t only improve the accuracy and speed of

food safety – it gives them real insight and control over their production variables. We’ve seen our software dramatically increase quality for our clients, enabling them to improve sales and operating margins.”

Basecase stands out as one targeted example of Provision’s software, where a digitized safety procedure significantly reduces operating risk.

Provision supports the increasingly stringent regulatory requirements, which will allow the food industry to fulfill consumer demand. Deep traceability is inherent in its software, as is labelling, and any other regulatory requirement designed to reduce recalls, fraud, and other concerns in food safety.

The AFPA has organized a 10% member discount on Basecase starting November 1, and a 10% member discount on Provision software starting January 1. For more information, readers can visit www.provision.io.