



## SAFE FEED/SAFE FOOD UPDATE

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Volume 11

### FSC36 Safe Feed/Safe Food

#### *On-site Auditor Assessment*

A successful third-party certification audit hinges on the job completed by the auditor. A general understanding of the industry or manufacturing processes being audited are important for the effectiveness of the auditor.

Auditors follow a set of standards or guidelines developed by the standard owner provided through the certifying body (CB). For FSC36 Safe Feed/Safe Food, the guidance document is maintained and updated, as needed, by the American Feed Industry Association Quality and Animal Food Safety Committee and AFIA staff. The last update occurred in January 2015, [Edition 6.0](#). AFIA works with its four CB's that complete FSC36 Safe Feed/Safe Food audits to ensure auditors understand the requirements for the certification.

**Auditor assessment survey.** AFIA requested FSC36 Safe Feed/Safe Food facilities to complete a survey to assess the performance of auditors that completed its facilities last on-site audit. AFIA sent emails to more than 265 facility key contacts and received 90 completed surveys (34 percent completion rate). With FSC36 Safe Feed/Safe Food being a two-year certification, the last audit completed by half of the certified facilities was a self or remote audit. Thus, the last on-site audit for those facilities may have been nearly two years ago.

Key observations about the facilities completing the survey:

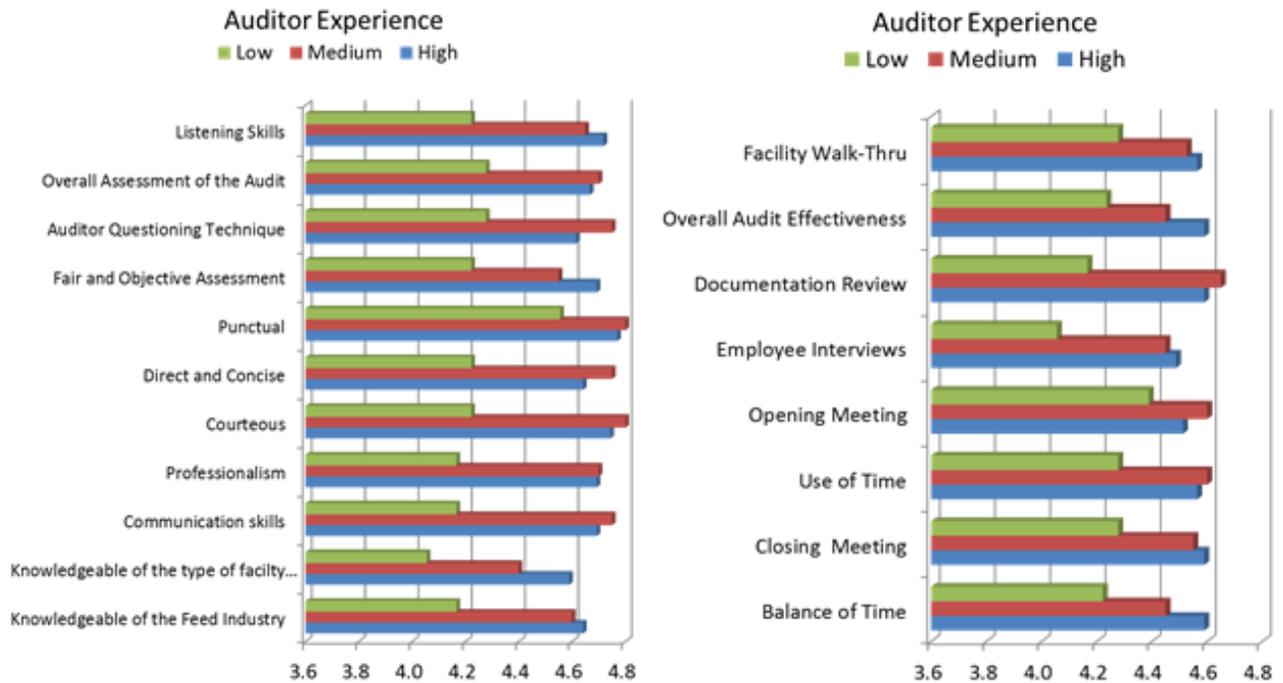
- A majority (48 percent) of the responses to the auditor assessment survey were feed manufacturers. Ingredient manufacturers accounted for 23 percent of the facility responses.
- More than 40 percent of the responses were from facilities located in the Midwestern U.S. The audits were completed by 11 auditors. There were 22 responses from facilities located in the Southeastern U.S. A total of nine auditors completed the audits.

Evaluations were provided for 25 different auditors. To better understand the data, auditors were combined into three groups based on the number of audits completed within the survey: high (more than 5 audits); medium (3 to 5 audits); low (less than 3 audits). The number of audits and auditors within each group is shown in the table on the right.

Auditor Experience	Number of Auditors	Number of Audits within Survey
High	4	41
Medium	5	28
Low	15	20

The high group accounted for 46 percent of the audits while the medium and low groups accounted for 31 percent and 22 percent, respectively. By grouping the auditors, AFIA observed the following:

- More experienced auditors involved more people at the site during the audit. On average, more highly experienced auditors involved nine people (particularly manufacturing personnel) while auditors with medium to low experience involved four to five people from the site.
- Auditors with more experience tended to take longer with the audits. However, more experienced auditors completed more manufacturing facility audits, which tend to take more time.
- Auditors with more experience were more effective auditors and were considered to have more knowledge about the feed industry and Safe Feed/Safe Food than auditors with low experience (completing less than three Safe Feed/Safe Food audits).



**Improving auditor effectiveness.** As a result of the information collected, AFIA is working with its CBs to improve the calibration and training of auditors completing FSC36 Safe Feed/Safe Food on-site audits. The following are corrective actions planned to improve the auditor process:

- Work with CBs to create an assessment process of the audit and auditor by the facility (supplier).
- Establish a process for facilities (suppliers) to report concerns or complaints about a certifying body and/or auditor and appropriate actions based on the input from the facilities.
- Obtain recommendations from CBs to ensure auditors are qualified to complete an FSC36 Safe Feed/Safe Food audit.

**What can be done to improve the effectiveness of an auditor?** The following are recommendations to improve the effectiveness of your next on-site audit:

- *Communicate with the CB before the audit.* Make sure the CB understands the scope of the audit so they can identify the best auditor for your facility.

- *Communicate with the CB after the audit.* Provide the CB an assessment of the audit and auditor. Did the audit meet the expectations? It is important to do more than "pass" the audit. The audit should help drive continuous improvement within quality and animal food safety program.
- *Start before a current certification expires.* The sooner a facility connects with its CB about scheduling an audit, the better the chance to get an auditor that is better suited to audit the particular facility.
- *Connect with the auditor before the audit.* Visit with the auditor prior to the audit to understand his/her specific needs that may make the audit flow more smoothly.
- *"Ready, set, go!"* It is important to be ready for the auditor when he arrives. FSC36 audits are designed to last 8 to 10 hours. Prepare as much as possible for the audit and make efficient use of the auditor's time.

AFIA appreciates the information provided by the certified FSC36 Safe Feed/Safe Food facilities that completed the survey and hope each facility finds it beneficial. For information or comments about the results, contact [Henry Turlington](#), AFIA director of quality and manufacturing regulatory affairs, at 703-650-0146.

## Food Safety Certification Programs

*Which program is right for me?*



### Contact AFIA

For technical assistance, contact [Turlington](#) at (703) 650-0146. For administrative assistance, please contact [Shakera Daley](#), AFIA accounting and administrative coordinator, at (703) 558-3571.

[Safe Feed/Safe Food Website](#)

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