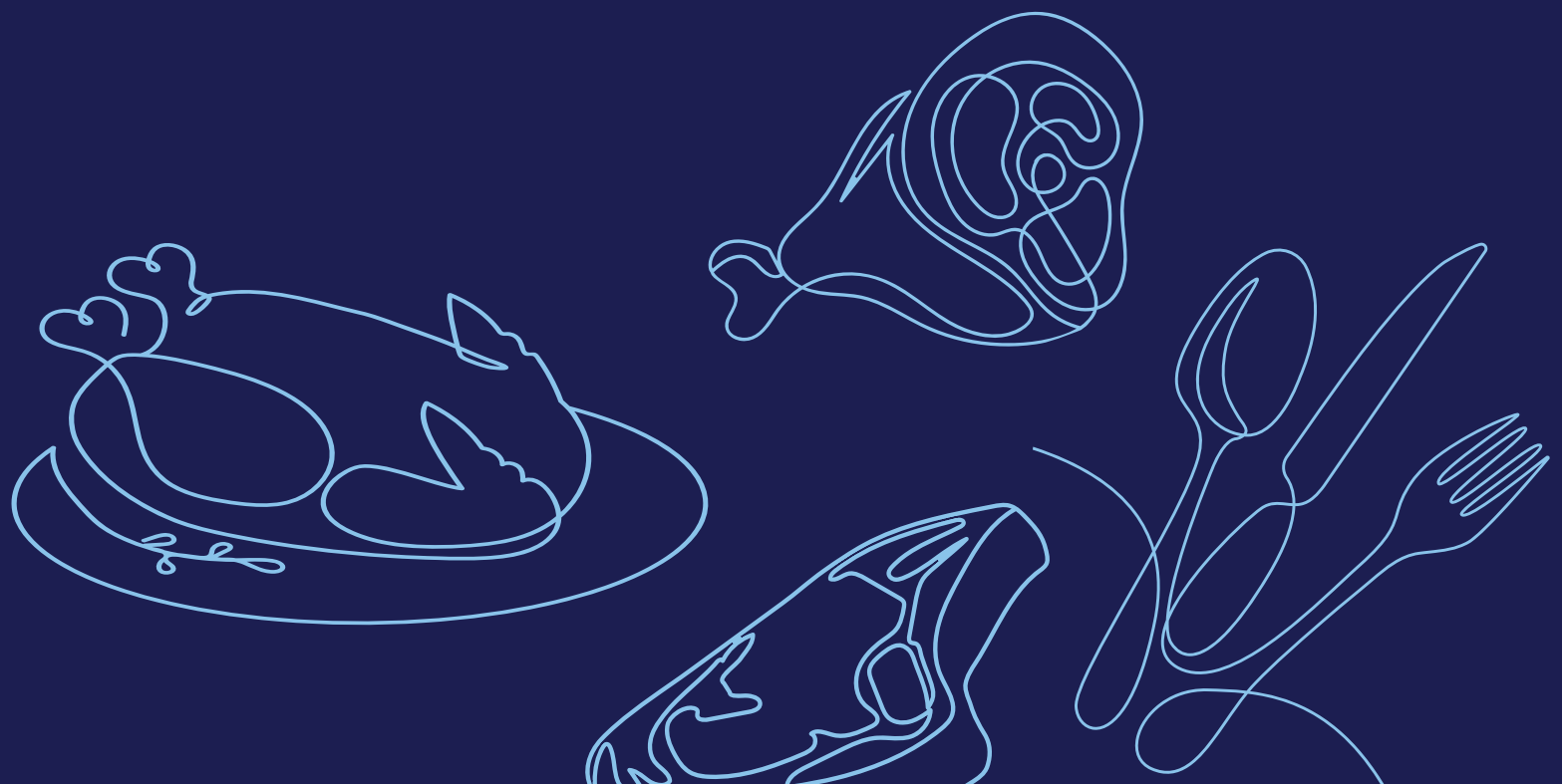




Nourishing Today
Sustaining Tomorrow

Food Safety for the Executive





Nourishing Today
Sustaining Tomorrow

Dear Valued Member,

Food safety is the foundation of our industry. It is a shared responsibility that impacts human health, our financial resilience, and the trust consumers place in animal protein. For Meat Institute members, the goal is clear: to produce safe meat and poultry products without exception.

Achieving this requires more than technical expertise; it requires leadership from the top. That is why our Executive Board task force developed the Food Safety for the Executive toolkit. This notebook was designed specifically for you—as an owner, CEO, or senior leader—to provide a flexible roadmap for governing food safety and embedding a culture of food safety excellence throughout your organization.

While every functional area impacts food safety, the example must be set by the executive. These tools are designed to help you lead that charge, ensuring food safety priorities are woven into the culture of your company.

We are proud to share this resource with you as a benefit of your Meat Institute membership, and we extend a sincere thank you to Corbion for their generous sponsorship of this edition.

Thank you for your leadership and for making food safety your highest priority. I look forward to working together to advance our industry.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Anna Potts".

Julie Anna Potts
President and CEO
Meat Institute

Explore Corbion Solutions



Table of Contents

Templates Background & Usage	Page 1
Template 1: CEO's Food Safety Commitment	Page 2
Template 2: Board & Senior Executive Reporting	Page 3
Template 3: Executive Site Visit Guide	Page 4
Template 4 : Executive Review Prompts by Business Function	Pages 5-14
Template 5: CEO's Food Safety Governance Checklist	Page 15

FOOD SAFETY FOR THE EXECUTIVE

Templates Background & Usage

Food safety is a critical concern for Meat Institute members, impacting human health, business finances, and trust in the animal protein industry. A strategic goal of the Meat Institute is for its members to produce safe meat products without exception. Achieving this builds resilience in our industry and businesses.

In April 2025, the Meat Institute Executive Board created a Task Force with a mandate to develop voluntary tools for use by senior executives to ensure that governance over food safety is in place within their respective company. The "Food Safety for The Executive" Task Force has met multiple times and has engaged a group of professional food safety subject matter experts to support the development of a series of Food Safety Governance Templates. These templates are developed for use by the company owners, CEOs, senior executives and company boards of meat businesses of all sizes.

These templates serve as a set of guidelines for governing food safety programs and promoting a company culture that incorporates food safety requirements, priorities, and needs. **It is important to note that these tools are specifically designed for the top executive(s) of the company, and are not intended to be delegated throughout the organization.**

Every functional area of a food business impacts food safety. By involving the whole company and setting a top-down example, executives can embed food safety into the business culture. Although certain aspects of these templates may not be relevant for every situation or company size, they have been designed to be flexible for various sizes and types of meat businesses. The Task Force recognizes that each company is at a different stage in the development of their food safety programs, and it is important to consider this when utilizing these tools. The Task Force also acknowledges the need to gather feedback over time and update these tools as necessary to reflect best practices and continuous improvement.

TEMPLATE 1

CEO's Food Safety Commitment Statement

Background and purpose: Setting the tone from the top starts with a formal statement concerning the importance of food safety to the senior leadership of the company. A written and formal statement from the CEO or company owner can set a powerful and purposeful statement of commitment that can be enduring and meaningful to multiple stakeholders, including the senior leadership team, front-line employees, customers, consumers, suppliers, and shareholders. The template below provides a starting point, but each company leader is encouraged to customize this letter to fit the company culture.

Dear Stakeholders,

As the Chief Executive Officer of [Company Name], I am personally committed to ensuring food safety is a non-negotiable and fundamental component of our business. We will uphold all applicable laws, regulations, and customer requirements, and we must also recognize that compliance is a minimum bar, and in many cases is not enough. A commitment to excellence in food safety practices is our goal. We will foster a culture where every employee understands their role in protecting the safety of our products and our consumers. Accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement are the pillars of our food safety efforts. As CEO, I commit to actively overseeing our food safety performance, empowering our teams, and ensuring we have the right financial resources and leadership in place.

Signed,

[CEO Name]

[Date]

Footnote: Certain companies opt to integrate their food safety commitment with their Occupational Health and Safety commitment. While this may be a suitable and effective approach for some organizations, for the purposes of these documents, we will exclusively address the commitment to Food Safety.

TEMPLATE 2

Board & Senior Executive Reporting

Background and purpose: Regular reporting and reviewing key metrics, trends, and plans for future improvement are fundamental to good governance. This guide outlines tips on how to review food safety performance, emerging risks, and future plans. The frequency and depth of review should be tailored to business needs. Consistent measurements, full transparency and detailed review ensure effective management and improvement.

Suggested agenda for regular review:

1. Overview of Food Safety Performance

- Summary of KPIs impacting food safety. Should include lagging and leading indicators
- Progress on strategic food safety initiatives

2. Key Risks and Issues

- Emerging risks, recurring problems, or regulatory challenges – Escalated incidents and corrective actions

3. Culture and Capability

- Status of food safety training and leadership engagement
- Results from culture assessments or surveys

4. Capital Investments in Equipment and Facilities

- Planned improvements, maintenance capital trends, major capital investments
- Timeline and accountability

5. CEO Commentary

- Reflections and expectations from executive leadership

TEMPLATE 3

Executive Site Visit Guide - Observing Food Safety Culture

Background and purpose: The CEO, company owner, or other executive team members may visit the manufacturing site daily, monthly, or less often, depending on company size. Regardless of site visit frequency, employees observe what leaders focus on during these visits. To promote a culture of food safety from the top, executives should look for signs of a strong food safety culture while engaging with manufacturing leaders. Use this guide and checklists to prompt questions and reflections.

Things To Look For

- Plant leadership meetings include food safety as first agenda item
- Cleanliness and housekeeping of work areas, especially in areas of exposed food
- Staff handwashing and hygiene practices
- Clear signage and instructions for food safety
- Employee PPE usage and understanding of food safety risks
- Visible food safety performance boards and communication tools

What To Listen For

- Do employees talk about food safety as a shared responsibility?
- Are frontline workers confident in explaining food safety practices?
- Are concerns welcomed and addressed without defensiveness?
- Do supervisors actively coach food safety behavior?
- Are there examples of recent improvements or lessons learned?

TEMPLATE 4

Executive Review Prompts by Business Function

Background and purpose: All business areas must engage in food safety culture, including distribution, finance, human resources, innovation, manufacturing, maintenance & reliability, procurement, quality & safety, sanitation, and sales & marketing. Each management team member should consider, "How do you contribute to food safety in your role?" These CEO-led prompts are designed to encourage reflection and shared accountability. They aim to facilitate dialogue across business functions to clarify expectations for food safety accountability. The timing of these discussions may vary depending on company culture and leadership style. Listed alphabetically by function, here is an example list of prompts you may use to stimulate the appropriate dialogue.

Distribution

- How do we verify that third-party carriers and warehouses follow our food safety and quality procedures?
- What controls ensure that temperature, humidity, and hygiene standards are maintained during storage and transport?
- In the event of a distribution issue, how is this communicated to operations and quality teams?
- How often are distribution partners audited or trained on our food safety expectations?
- How is customer or retailer feedback relayed to the company, and how do we use that feedback to improve distribution of food safety?

TEMPLATE 5

CEO's Food Safety Governance Checklist

Background and purpose: Running a business can be overwhelming, requiring management of many tasks. Like a pilot's pre-flight checklist, executives need reminders for food safety commitments. This checklist offers guidance on crucial areas needing top-level support, framed as personal commitments to ensure accountability.

- I regularly review the company's food safety performance and risks.
- I ensure food safety is a standing agenda item in executive and board meetings.
- I ensure the company has clear and documented food safety objectives aligned with our business goals.
- I commit to having roles and responsibilities for food safety clearly defined in all key areas of the business.
- I have established effective mechanisms for internal reporting and escalation of food safety concerns.
- I ensure that our teams benchmark food safety performance against industry standards and best practices.
- I regularly review the assessment of our food safety culture and improvement actions.
- I have a designated executive (e.g., Chief Food Safety Officer) accountable for food safety.
- I ensure that food safety training resources are sufficient for all leadership and frontline employees.
- I actively demonstrate food safety as a core value through my decisions and actions.
- I take steps to consistently combat complacency with our food safety commitments

