Having a common standard and a uniform way to evaluate the quality level of suppliers reduces a retailer's need for second party audits. For the retailer, supply chain management becomes more consistent and efficient. It reduces the overall costs of the process, and increases the level of safety for customers, suppliers, and consumers. While it may be a ticket to trade with retailers, it is also a chance for you to demonstrate your commitment to food safety, quality and legality, and to work on continual improvement.

What is the standard?
Concern among retailers about food safety because of their direct responsibility in case of an incident led to the development of uniform food safety standards and audit
system. IFS (International Featured Standard - Food) was developed by German and French food trade associations to take control of the situation and it is the international standard for auditing retailer and wholesaler branded food products. It is also supported by the major Italian trade association. The standard applies to suppliers at all steps of the food processing subsequent to the agricultural stage.

The requirements are related to the quality management system and the HACCP system, supported by detailed prerequisite programmes, that is a set of GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice), GLP (Good Laboratory Practice) and GHP (Good Hygiene Practice) requirements. It helps ensure that they comply with quality and safety demands and legal requirements.

IFS meets the criteria of the Global Food Safety Initiative by The Consumer Goods Forum, which was created by the merger of CIES, the pre-eminent food and consumer goods industry body, with the Global CEO Forum and the Global Commerce Initiative (GCI), two global retailer and manufacturer collaborative platforms.

**Why is certification good for my business?**
The most important European retailers require IFS certification from the suppliers that are included in their supply chain. But IFS is an international standard and can be applied to suppliers outside Europe as well.

The standard enables your organisation to:

- Provide evidence of commitment and in case of a food safety incident, legal defence in the frame of the "due diligence" concept*.
- Build and operate a management system capable of helping you to better meet food quality/safety requirements and legal compliance, with specific reference to the legislation applicable in the countries where the finished product is consumed.
- Provide a tool for food safety performance improvement, and the means to monitor and measure food safety performance effectively.
- Facilitate reductions in product waste, product reworking, and product recall.

**How can I prepare for certification?**
Companies that plan well will often have an advantage and be better prepared for certification. It is important that you and your company are positive, committed, and set clear target dates for implementation and assessment.

This includes:

- Establishing a quality management system.
- Identifying legal requirements.
- Identifying and documenting the specific food safety hazards and the relevant control measures (HACCP system).
- Identifying the applicable Good Manufacturing Practice/Good Hygiene Practice, including a pest control programme, equipment and building maintenance programme, housekeeping and cleaning programme, and all the specific standard requirements.
- Implement any needed structural improvements.

**Why partner with DNV GL?**
DNV GL is one of the world’s leading certification bodies. We help businesses manage risk and assure the performance of their organizations, products, people, facilities and supply chains through certification, verification, assessment and training services across a wide range of industries.

In the food and beverage industry, we help customers worldwide to achieve excellence in food safety and quality, environmental management, supply chain management and product sustainability. We combine technical, digital and industry expertise to empower companies’ decisions and actions. Partnering with our customers, we build sustainable business performance and create stakeholder trust.

With origins stretching back to 1864 and operations in more than 100 countries, our experts are dedicated to helping customers make the world safer, smarter and greener.

* The capability to be able to demonstrate that every reasonable measure has been taken to avoid an incident.