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Food Defense & Agriculture Security Council Spotlight

Imagine a can of seafood being prepared. The food is batched. Seasoning is added. The food is put in its can. Then, as the can moves along the conveyor belt, a disgruntled employee approaches and adds shards of glass to the can. How can this scenario be prevented?

The ASIS International Food Defense and Agriculture Security Council comprises global security professionals in the food and agriculture industry. Their work advances the security perspective in the protection of food.

“There have been years and years of work protecting food safety—protecting food from accidental contamination,” says Frank Pisciotta, council vice chair. “Our goal is to bring the food security perspective, looking at criminal and terrorist intent to contaminate the food supply.”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently announced unprecedented regulations on food defense, providing “[Focused Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration](#)” guidance aimed at preventing incidents with a widespread impact on public health.

“When the regulation came out, companies by default handed it off to their food safety teams,” adds Pisciotta. “It’s a situation where security has to arm-wrestle itself to the table to have a place in the food defense discussion.”

The council has engaged with ASIS Government Relations to offer meaningful comments on the new FDA guidance during the federal comment period, offering an interpretation of how the regulation would impact the work of physical security specialists.

“Our council teleconferences monthly with major companies to discuss food defense issues,” says Pisciotta, “and our participation is very valuable. When we share something like an estimate of what a card reader costs, they’re in awe. They didn’t know it would be that expensive. We’re trying to make a broader influence from an ASIS and council perspective.”

Creating pipelines for information sharing is one of the council’s primary goals. Several critical infrastructure sectors have established Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) in the United States. When participating organizations experience critical incidents, they share lessons learned with the ISAC—and the ISAC shares this information with its member groups, including relevant federal agencies. There is no ISAC for the food industry, and the council is working hard to establish one.

In recent years, the council also produced content to share food defense best practices with the ASIS community. Pisciotta contributed a [food defense article](#) in the June 2018 issue of *Security Management*, and the council produced an ASIS webinar—“Food Defense: From Theory to Reality”—in October 2017.

At GSX in Chicago this 10 September, Pisciotta and council chair James Summers are partnering with the ASIS IT Security Council to present “[Using Profiles and Root Causes to Create Effective Insider Threat Tripwires](#)”—an interactive case study that identifies an early warning system for insider attacks.