



LEE INDUSTRIES
Processing Perfection.™

Complying—and Thriving—with the Food Safety Modernization Act

**FDA FOOD SAFETY
MODERNIZATION ACT**



Safety is a top concern for nearly every food processing company. Read on to learn about the safety features you should consider for your food processing kettles.



Food Safety

Food safety is a major concern for both food manufacturers and consumers. Failure to comply with appropriate food safety standards can be very costly, as a company in Texas recently discovered after being forced to recall more than 17 tons of precooked ground beef product after potentially dangerous plastic was found in the meat.

While fines and recalls get the most attention from the public, food manufacturers know that regulatory agencies shine an even brighter spotlight on the manufacturer's preventative operations and processes. This dates to 2011, when the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) became law and the Food and Drug Administration shifted its priorities on food safety from reacting to issues after they arise to stopping them from occurring at all. Today, as we near the end of the seven-year phase-in period when most food manufacturers must comply with the FSMA, it may be helpful to look at some of the best practices inspired by the Act and peek ahead to future safety improvements.

First, let's revisit FSMA.

What is the Food Safety Modernization Act?

Signed into law by President Obama in 2011, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) has been called the most sweeping reform of U.S. food safety laws in 70 years. Affecting nearly every part of the food manufacturing business (including processing and packaging), the FSMA focuses on preventing contamination rather than reacting to problems caused by contamination after they arise.

These new FSMA rules didn't take effect immediately. The FDA established a range of deadlines by which businesses of varying sizes must bring their operations into compliance. For example, the FSMA's "Food Defense" rule requires businesses categorized as "not small or very small" to be in compliance by July 26, 2019, while the smallest businesses have until 2021. Other FSMA rules are already fully in effect.

When it first came into law, Lee Industries identified four areas where the FSMA could affect our customers:

- **Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) and risk-based preventative controls** – The FSMA requires food processors to identify biological, chemical and physical hazards that may be associated with their facilities and how they will plan to prevent contamination. These preventative measures also need to include a plan for handling issues if they arise.
- **Registration of food facilities and inspection of records** – A food processing facility must renew its FDA registration every two years under the FSMA and be willing to allow the FDA to access its facility records.
- **More frequent inspections** – Every food processor faced increased FDA inspections under the new guidelines. Even facilities determined to be "low-risk" under the FSMA's new guidelines faced more frequent inspections.
- **Mandatory recalls by the FDA** – If there is a reasonable probability a food product could cause adverse health consequences, the FDA can order a recall. Prior to the FSMA it could only ask.

To protect our customers, we intensified efforts to educate food manufacturers on the impact engineering and construction features of kettles, tanks and agitation systems could have on their ability to comply with the FSMA. Our work resulted in several significant food safety advancements.

For example, we can offer the following optional design upgrades:

- **Optimizing existing sanitary features to improve clean-in-place procedures** – Adding higher-grade surface finishes to vessel interiors and other food contact surfaces increases cleaning efficiency. Welding, grinding and polishing all weld joints and seams creates smooth, sanitary and easily cleanable surfaces.
- **Designing new features to eliminate standing water collection** – Water collection on the outside of a kettle can be a significant food safety issue. By adding small design elements such as sloped kettle covers and rounded legs and support hardware to move water away from areas where water tends to collect, problems with standing water can be virtually eliminated.
- **Enhancing pipeline metal detection features** – Foreign object contamination in food products is a serious concern. Impregnating our scraper blades with stainless steel powder has made potential contaminants visible to both x-ray and magnetic pipeline detection systems.

As the final deadlines approach, our focus has shifted to the post-implementation phase of the FSMA. In some ways, our future role in assisting our customers will remain the same. We are continuing our work to develop and implement new technologies that make food safety a more easily attainable goal. A recent decision to replace piano hinges with sanitary hinges on kettle hinged covers is an excellent representation of our ongoing innovation in food safety equipment. We have continued to focus on cleaner, stronger design, a focus that has allowed Lee Industries to continue to create best in class products for our customers while also helping them achieve FSMA compliance.

We have also made customer feedback a significant priority. The better we understand our customers' challenges when it comes to FSMA implementation, the more comprehensive plans we can make to address them. As we've listened to this feedback, we've also offered up more diverse equipment options to help them comply. We'll always do whatever we can to help our customers meet their FSMA requirements.

To learn more about kettle design and configuration to optimize safety, quality and production, download our *Expanding Your Food Processing Operation* guide.

leeind.com/expand





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