



CASE STUDY

FAGERBERG PRODUCE: BUG-PROOFING FOR AUDIT SUCCESS

The Fagerberg family has been raising onions on the Eastern slope of the Colorado Rocky Mountains since the 1940s. The company has supplied national retailers and food services with quality red, yellow, white, and sweet onions for decades.

While steeped in legacy, the company has always looked forward when it comes to food safety and that includes making pest control a top priority.

Emily King, compliance and marketing manager for Fagerberg Produce, said staying ahead audit requirements – the company’s packing operation follows GFSI audit standards – is part of Fagerberg’s culture.

“Food safety and pest control are always linked,” said King, “We have a ready to eat classification and as a result must have a solid pest management program and documentation in place. We recognize the benefits pest control brings to the table.”

That is why when Fagerberg needed to upgrade its pest control and audit preparation programs to the next level, King knew it had to move beyond the small-sized service providers the company had traditionally contracted with.

CHALLENGES

Fagerberg’s 100,000 plus sq. ft. packing facility and multiple bulk onion storage facilities are in the middle of agricultural growing areas where pest pressure – mice and flies – is high. The dry environment combined with the fine dust and onion peels makes keeping interior rodent devices harder to keep clean.

In the summer months, nearby livestock and farming operations contribute to intense fly pressure around Fagerberg’s facilities. Pressure that needs to be mitigated.

“We must be audit-ready 365 days of year,” said King. “Passing audits is essential. If we do not pass our audits we would not be able to operate.”

Fagerberg had enlisted the services of a smaller pest control company for years but as the complexity of audit standards grew and the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) was enacted, the game changed.

“We got by with what we had for years but we could not continue to guide them through the complexity of our pest control needs and put our audits at risk,” said King. “It was time for a change to a company that understood where we were headed.”



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SOLUTION

The move to Sprague Pest Solutions was rooted not only because of its innovative, proactive approach to pest control, but also because of its Online Logbook that features a Pest Sightings Log and cumulative electronic Service Binder.

“Sprague came in and immediately understood what was needed to achieve our goals for pest control and audit preparation,” said King. “Their logbook was a game changer for our audit process.”

The Sprague Online Logbook consolidates all pest control-related information in one place, eliminating the need to manage or search for physical logs. This centralized approach streamlines audits and ensures that essential data is always accessible to both clients and auditors.

The Pest Sightings Log feature of the logbook eliminates the hassle of manually entering data into paper-based pest logs. It also employs QR codes for mobile uploads of pictures that empower employees to take immediate action when they spot a pest.

The online and mobile QR code features simplify compliance for audited facilities and streamline the secure sharing of information. The pictures uploaded are only visible to Sprague field team employees and auditors can access the data points without viewing the images, ensuring the confidentiality of sensitive information, and preventing customers from over-exposure during an audit.

In the past Fagerberg employees had to lead the conversation on managing the logbook. It was one more process among many that they had to manage. When Sprague took over service and introduced the Logbook it took a lot of pressure off King’s team.

“We had confidence that all the documentation and necessary information was in place before our audit,” said King. “There was no scrambling ahead of time to locate documents or confirm information. We scored a big check mark in our audit prep with the Logbook.”

In addition to ensuring the Logbook had everything it needed, Sprague went the extra mile in the week prior to the audit.

King said she was in the warehouse at 7:00 p.m. the night before the audit and ran across Sprague Route Manager Jeff Armentrout double checking everything was ready.

“Sprague did a top to bottom sweep of the facility making sure all the rodent devices were cleaned and properly positioned. They installed door sweeps and prioritized everything for us,” said King. “It took a lot of pressure off our team.”

Armentrout said Fagerberg is an engaged partner that takes Sprague’s recommendations seriously and acts on them.

“Their sanitation practices are top notch, and everyone knows good sanitation is the first step to achieving a successful pest control program,” said Armentrout. “There is a good dialogue between us and that makes the program easier to manage and achieve better results.”



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RESULTS

When audit day arrived, Fagerberg was ready. King said the auditor – who had performed audits on other facilities where Sprague was the pest control company – said he trusted everything would be in order.

The auditor spent a minute reviewing the pest control section and told Fagerberg it was good to go. The Logbook's ease of use and Sprague's attention to detail made the process seamless.

In addition to a successful audit, Fagerberg is seeing its pest control program continuously improve and support its corporate food safety goals. Sprague's route manager and technical team are always making recommendations to reduce conditions conducive to pests.

"Our previous pest control company did not communicate; we hardly knew they were there," said King. "Sprague's communication and professionalism stand out. Our brand is important to us, and Sprague supports that 100 percent."



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