

# **Integrated Management Systems in the Food Sector: Insights from a Dairy Plant**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose** – This research focuses on the integrated adoption of the quality, environmental and food safety management systems standards in a dairy plant aiming to explore the benefits and constraints of integration with regard to sector and size.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A single case is studied in depth based on the literature findings in order to understand the integration of management systems in a food manufacturing setting by exploring why and how the integration evolves.

**Findings** – This case shows that sector-specific characteristics have a significant impact on the integration process. Motivated by the perceived integration benefits the case company is planning to further integrate the environmental dimension on the existing platform.

**Research limitations/Implications** – The analysis of more food companies of different sizes would reflect a wider sector-specific perspective of integration. Conclusions drawn intend to motivate food industry managers to streamline the quality, environmental and food safety management processes following an integrated approach. It is also shown how sector-oriented research brings to light the opportunities for sustained business that come from the integrated management systems adoption.

**Originality/value** – To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first in-depth study on the adoption of an integrated quality and food safety management system by a single food manufacturing unit. The case of the dairy plant visualises the contribution of an integration approach to the effective management of the critical food safety and quality operations and the significant environmental aspects.

**Key words** - integrated management system, food safety, environment, quality, management standards, sector, dairy