



Bronson and Jacobs in China - *Track Record Speaks Volumes*

Some time ago all the press on "Made in China" was centered on China's huge rate of growth, burgeoning exports and a shortage of shipping to carry away the ever increasing and dazzling array of consumer goods to the world. More recently the spotlight has focused on reports of toxic pet food, lead paint on toys and banned substances in toothpaste. It would seem that the very foundation of "Made in China" which has delivered enormous benefits to consumers all over the world has turned rotten.

The reality however is that China has always presented a bonanza to those who know how to mine the riches and often disaster to those who do not. China is a huge country with countless small as well as large businesses, a bureaucracy that at best barely functions at the factory and, for many goods, an often untraceable supply chain. In such circumstances there is great potential for many undesirable practices including substitution, inappropriate constituents and outright cheating catching up with the unwary.

China's food industry has a predicted year-on-year growth rate of more than 20 percent, the industry's sales reached 838.3 billion Yuan (10.1 billion US dollars) in 2005, and the canny manufacturer is becoming more aware than ever that quality is his best route to riches.

Rising living standards in China mean the Chinese consumer has more influence over standards in the food industry and in spite of rising ingredient and energy costs; it is an industry in a boom. This of course means that manufacturers of raw materials in China have had to lift their game, and whilst there are many who have done just that,

There are still many who make it a minefield for the uninitiated.



The Bronson and Jacobs China Team

B&J China sourcing has evolved from a business that has continually traded out of China for more than forty years where long experience and a wary tradition have resulted in an enviable track record for getting it right.

To get it right has required a large investment in manpower, training and adherence to rigorous processes that leave very little to chance. Before any material, food or pharmaceutical is sourced the potential supplier is thoroughly investigated and in most cases a plant audit is also conducted using the most stringent criteria for approval.

A dedicated China based team with extensive business and product knowledge is charged with seeking out the best producers which are usually selected from the top three makers in each field. Regular plant visits and continuous exchange of information means that B&J has the confidence to supply high quality cost effective goods to customers in many regions.

Typically an investigation involving a supplier audit requires a list of over 200 detailed questions covering all main operational areas including: HACCP and Quality systems in place; Safety, Quality and legal compliance; document management; product specifications; process management;

continuous improvement; Internal auditing; corrective and preventative action; customer complaint management and resolution; traceability; product recall and incident management; new product development; purchasing and supplier management; monitoring supplier performance; security and external housekeeping; site and building layout; drainage and waste disposal; building standards; plant and equipment; pest management; external warehousing; production and process control standards; raw material product handling and storage; cleaning; laboratory facilities; personnel and training.

An audit would be undertaken following an enquiry from headquarters based on a specific customer request or after a new supplier has been approved for general supply. Different customers have different requirements, but with sufficient communication between B&J China, the new supplier and the B&J product manager, information is readily collated and distributed. Of course, when auditing an overseas supplier, a company must appreciate the nuances of the supplier and their cultural diversity and individual company principles, businesses can be rated on more than the number of boxes they tick.

The negative press is to be expected in an economy booming as loud as China, but for every rogue operator, there are a dozen who have the smarts to deliver. It's just the small matter of finding them. And being sure you got it right.



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