



FSSC 22000 VERSION 7

What changed, why it changed, and how organizations should prepare

A practical transition article for food, feed, packaging and supply-chain organizations

1 MAY 2026 Version 7 published	1 MAY 2027 V7 audits begin	30 APR 2028 Upgrade audit window closes
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FSSC 22000 Version 7: a significant transition for certified organizations

FSSC 22000 Version 7 (V7) was officially released on 1 May 2026. It keeps ISO 22000:2018 at the core of the food safety management system, but introduces a major change to prerequisite programmes (PRPs), strengthens selected FSSC Additional Requirements, updates the certification framework, and adds new expectations around packaging design and sustainability. For organizations already certified to FSSC 22000 Version 6, the practical message is simple: the transition period is already running, and the time to complete the gap assessment and implementation work is now. [1][2]

At a glance

Version 6 audits remain permitted until 30 April 2027. Upgrade audits against Version 7 start on 1 May 2027 and must be conducted by 30 April 2028. The upgrade is completed during the organization's next scheduled surveillance or recertification audit within the upgrade window - it is not intended as a separate standalone audit. [3][4]

What drove the move from Version 6 to Version 7?

Foundation FSSC identifies five main drivers behind Version 7:

- The publication of the new ISO 22002-x:2025 series for prerequisite programmes.
- Alignment of the Scheme with the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements 2024.
- Stronger support for organizations contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly through food loss and waste reduction and packaging design.
- A more clearly defined structure for food-chain categories and subcategories.
- Editorial improvements, clarifications and amendments arising from continuous improvement of the Scheme. [1][2]

These drivers show that V7 is not simply a wording update. It responds to changes in international PRP standards, GFSI expectations, sustainability priorities and the need for more consistent auditing across different sectors of the food chain.

1. The biggest technical shift: the new ISO 22002-x:2025 PRP structure

The most significant change in V7 is the move away from the previous ISO/TS 22002-x technical specifications and PAS documents to the new ISO 22002-x:2025 series of international standards. The revised structure introduces ISO 22002-100:2025 as a common baseline of PRP requirements, supported by sector-specific parts that add the requirements unique to each sector. [1][3]

Examples of the V7 PRP structure

Food-chain activity	Common PRP	Sector-specific PRP
Food manufacturing (B/C)	ISO 22002-100:2025	ISO 22002-1:2025
Animal feed (D)	ISO 22002-100:2025	ISO 22002-6:2025

Catering (E)	ISO 22002-100:2025	ISO 22002-2:2025
Retail/wholesale (FI)	ISO 22002-100:2025	ISO 22002-7:2025
Transport & storage (G)	ISO 22002-100:2025	ISO 22002-5:2025
Food packaging (I)	ISO 22002-100:2025	ISO 22002-4:2025
Bio/chemicals (K)	ISO 22002-100:2025	ISO 22002-1:2025

For example, a food manufacturer will need to apply both ISO 22002-100:2025 and ISO 22002-1:2025; a packaging manufacturer will apply ISO 22002-100:2025 together with ISO 22002-4:2025. The objective is to reduce duplication, improve consistency and simplify implementation for organizations operating across more than one sector. [3][7]

What organizations should do

- Obtain the new ISO 22002-100:2025 standard and the sector-specific part(s) applicable to your certification scope.
- Map every existing PRP procedure and record against the new common and sector-specific requirements.
- Identify requirements that have moved, been reworded, consolidated or newly added, and update procedures, forms, training and verification activities accordingly.
- Ensure the internal audit programme is updated so that it tests the new PRP framework before the first V7 certification audit.

2. Stronger FSSC Additional Requirements aligned to GFSI

Version 7 incorporates selected requirements from the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements 2024 into the FSSC Additional Requirements. This strengthens expectations in areas such as specifications, food defense, food fraud mitigation, and food safety and quality culture. [5][6]

Specifications

For relevant food-chain categories, V7 requires a documented review process for raw-material and finished-product specifications so they remain compliant with food safety, quality, legal and customer requirements. Where legislation does not define microbiological, physical, chemical or allergenic food-safety specifications, those limits should be based on appropriate scientific principles. [6]

Food defense and food fraud

The Scheme places clearer emphasis on competence, effective implementation and legal alignment. Threat assessments, vulnerability assessments and their associated plans must be developed and maintained by appropriately knowledgeable and competent personnel, be supported by the FSMS, comply with applicable legislation and remain current. For trading and brokering (subcategory FII), additional supplier expectations apply. [5]

Food safety and quality culture

V7 strengthens the culture requirement by making resource provision and demonstrable commitment more explicit. Organizations need more than a policy statement: they should be able to show that adequate resources are provided to maintain a positive food safety and quality culture and that personnel demonstrate commitment to safe production and handling. [6]

3. New packaging design expectations linked to food loss and waste

One of the most visible new organization-facing requirements is found under Product Design and Development. Organizations that design primary packaging or packaging material must consider packaging principles that support product protection, shelf-life and food loss and waste reduction. [1][5]

New V7 packaging-design focus

When developing new primary packaging or changing packaging, organizations should consider: (1) effective containment and protection from spoilage and damage, (2) preservation and extension of shelf life, (3) minimizing food loss and waste, and (4) clear consumer communication on handling, storage and preparation. Any design choice must not negatively affect food safety. [6]

This requirement builds on the food loss and waste provisions introduced in Version 6 and draws on aspects of the Save Food Packaging design principles developed by the Australasian Institute of Packaging and globalized by the World Packaging Organisation. It brings food safety, packaging functionality and sustainability closer together in the design process. [8]

Evidence that may support implementation

- Packaging design briefs that include food protection, shelf-life, transport, storage and consumer-use requirements.
- Documented risk assessments demonstrating that sustainability changes do not weaken food safety or product protection.
- Shelf-life, barrier, seal-integrity, transport or distribution validation where relevant to the product.
- Change-control records showing cross-functional review by food safety, quality, packaging, regulatory, operations and other relevant functions.
- Consumer-facing storage, handling and preparation instructions that are reviewed for clarity and legal compliance.

4. More defined food-chain categories and stronger auditor competence

V7 introduces a more structured division of food-chain categories and subcategories. In parallel, auditor qualification requirements have been updated to align with GFSI expectations and place greater emphasis on demonstrated competence in products, processes, practices, laws and regulations relevant to the category being audited. [1][4]

For certified organizations, this should translate into more category-specific audit competence and a more consistent assessment of technical activities. Certification Bodies must requalify relevant auditors and ensure they are trained on V7 and the new ISO 22002 standards before they conduct V7 audits. [4]

5. AI governance enters the certification framework

Version 7 also formalizes governance requirements for the use of artificial intelligence in the certification process. These requirements apply primarily to Certification Bodies rather than to the certified organization itself. Where AI is used, the Certification Body must establish governance, assess risk, validate and monitor systems, protect impartiality and confidentiality, maintain human oversight, train relevant personnel and communicate the scope of AI use to relevant stakeholders. AI may support certification activities, but it cannot replace human judgment or key certification decisions. [1][9]

6. Other practical Scheme changes

- Some requirements have been restructured or removed from the FSSC Additional Requirements where they are now addressed within the new ISO 22002-x PRP standards, reducing unnecessary duplication. [5]
- Version 7 provides more flexibility in minimum audit duration for some smaller organizations: where an organization has fewer than 20 full-time equivalent employees and no more than two HACCP studies, the Scheme allows further reductions to a minimum of 1.5 auditor days, subject to Certification Body judgment and audit effectiveness. [3]
- Board of Stakeholders decisions and Scheme Interpretation Articles remain important. Organizations should monitor them during the transition because they may clarify or override Scheme rules within defined transition periods. [3]

When should organizations implement Version 7?

Organizations should not wait until V7 audits begin. The implementation window runs from 1 May 2026 to 30 April 2027, and the purpose of this period is to give certified organizations and Certification Bodies time to understand, implement and verify the new requirements. As of October 2026, organizations should ideally already be in the gap-assessment and implementation phase. [3][4]

Official transition timeline

Date	What it means
1 May 2026	FSSC 22000 Version 7 published; 12-month implementation period begins.
Up to 30 April 2027	Audits may still be delivered against Version 6.
1 May 2027	Audits against Version 7 begin.
1 May 2027 - 30 April 2028	Certified organizations complete their V7 upgrade audit during the next scheduled audit in the certification cycle.
By 30 June 2028	Upgrade audit packs and V7 certificates must be uploaded to the Assurance Platform; remaining V6 certificates are withdrawn after this date. [4][10]

A practical V7 transition plan for organizations

1. Confirm your scope and applicable standards - Identify the exact food-chain category/subcategory and the ISO 22002-100 plus sector-specific standard(s) that apply to the site.

2. Complete a clause-by-clause gap assessment - Compare the current FSMS against the V7 Scheme, applicable ISO 22002:2025 standards, the current Board of Stakeholders Decision List and mandatory Scheme Interpretation Articles.

3. Update the PRP system first - Because the PRP structure has changed significantly, update site standards, procedures, inspection routines, sanitation and hygiene controls, maintenance controls, supplier controls and related records before finalizing the rest of the transition.

4. Address strengthened Additional Requirements - Review specifications, food defense, food fraud, culture, product design and development, environmental monitoring, quality control, equipment management and other applicable FSSC requirements.

5. Train people and verify competence - Train relevant managers, food-safety team members, internal auditors, production teams and support functions on the changes that affect their work.

6. Conduct a full V7 internal audit - Audit the complete applicable V7 criteria, not only the changed clauses. Record gaps, determine root causes and close corrective actions.

7. Complete management review - Include transition status, audit findings, resource needs, culture objectives, performance data and readiness for the V7 certification audit.

8. Align with the Certification Body - Confirm the planned V7 upgrade audit date, expected audit duration, category classification and any information the Certification Body requires before the audit.

Savvy Compliance Solution perspective

Treat Version 7 as a management-system transition, not a document-update exercise. The strongest organizations will use the transition to simplify PRPs, strengthen evidence of implementation, connect food safety with packaging and sustainability decisions, and improve the quality of internal verification before the external audit.

Conclusion

FSSC 22000 Version 7 modernizes the Scheme around a new PRP architecture, updated GFSI expectations, clearer category structures and stronger sustainability considerations. For most certified organizations, the biggest workload will be understanding and implementing the ISO 22002-x:2025 series, followed by ensuring that strengthened Additional Requirements are supported by clear evidence in day-to-day operations.

The deadline may appear distant, but the effective preparation window is much shorter once standards are obtained, documents are revised, staff are trained, implementation evidence is generated, and internal audits and management review are completed. Organizations that begin early will have more time to correct gaps before V7 audits become mandatory on 1 May 2027.

Important note

This article is intended as a practical overview and does not replace the official FSSC 22000 Version 7 Scheme, applicable ISO standards, Board of Stakeholders decisions, Scheme Interpretation Articles, certification-body requirements or applicable legal requirements. Organizations should verify the latest official documents before implementation or audit.

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