NSF Introduces PFAS-Free Certification

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Oxford, UK, March 26, 2025 – NSF, a leading global public health and safety organisation, today announced the launch of NSF Certification Guideline 537: PFAS-Free Products for Nonfood Compounds and Food Equipment Materials (NSF 537). The new guideline leverages NSF's extensive laboratory and testing capabilities to confirm that products are free of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a group of synthetic or manufactured materials that resist degradation, also known as "forever chemicals."

Due to their oil and water-repellent properties, PFAS are often used to make water or stain-resistant, nonstick and grease-proof products, including consumer goods, food equipment and nonfood compounds such as food-safe lubricants, cleaners and sanitisers. At the same time, PFAS are known to be carcinogenic and have been linked to detrimental health conditions, including liver disease, certain types of cancers and delayed development in children. According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, people are most likely exposed to PFAS by consuming contaminated water or food.

"With growing concerns and new regulations being introduced on PFAS in our environment and food supply, NSF 537 represents a significant leap forward in consumer safety and transparency," said Sam Cole, Director of Food Contact Evaluation at NSF. "This certification will empower forward-thinking manufacturers to clearly distinguish PFAS-free products, giving both retail and food businesses and consumers confidence and peace of mind."

Key features of NSF Certification Guideline 537: PFAS-Free Products for Nonfood Compounds and Food Equipment Materials (NSF 537):

- **Evidence-based:** The guideline is backed by decades of specialist food industry knowledge and standards development and is based on existing limits in regulations.
- **Thorough Formulation Review:** Technical review of product ingredients, confirming there are no intentionally added PFAS.
- **Comprehensive Testing:** Ensures minimal to no detected total organic fluorine (TOF) levels with yearly retesting.
- **Rigorous Disclosures:** This requirement requires the manufacturer to attest that no PFAS additives or post-consumer recycled material are used in the product and that manufacturing facilities minimise cross-contamination.
- **Certification Mark:** NSF PFAS-Free certified products are accompanied by the relevant official NSF certification mark, signifying compliance with the guideline to retailers and consumers.
- **Public Listing:** Certified nonfood compounds are listed in the NSF White Book™ and certified food equipment materials are **listed in** NSF's Certified Food Equipment listing.

"Certification to NSF 537 helps to reduce human exposure to these harmful chemicals while underscoring a commitment to meeting evolving regulations, consequentially opening up exporting opportunities," Cole added. "By demanding NSF 537 certification, specifiers and buyers can further advance sustainable operations, including in food processing facilities, equipment manufacturing and the retail, food service and hospitality sectors."

Designed by food safety specialists, NSF 537 is based on industry needs, in-depth food industry knowledge and decades of standards development. To achieve certification, nonfood compound products must first be registered under NSF's Nonfood Compounds Guidelines or certified by NSF to ISO 21469, Safety of Machinery, Lubricants with Incidental Product Contact-Hygiene Requirements. Food equipment materials must be certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 51: Food Equipment Materials to ensure that products meet minimum public health and sanitation requirements.

Learn more about NSF 537.

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