

Accelerated Adoption of Virtual Audits & Digital Compliance

Food Companies are rapidly adjusting supplier management and auditing methods, as on-site visits have been virtually eliminated by the lock-down.

The current situation presents a big opportunity for the whole process of compliance management to move into the digital era, according to Paul Marples, CEO of supply chain transparency and supplier management firm, Authenticate.

“The industry was already moving towards greater use of self-assessments, shared data and electronic monitoring of suppliers, particularly given the rapid expansion of assurance, environmental, sustainability and welfare data, that is becoming the norm for the industry. The current situation has accelerated this migration away from physical on-site audits and is unlikely to return any time soon.”



Authenticate estimates the need for more than 150,000 compliance audits to be carried out on the UK's 10,000 food manufacturers and 50,000 assured farms, most of which are members of one of more of the 35 different Assurance schemes operating in the UK. On top of the official Assurance schemes, many of the UK's supermarkets and major food manufacturers have their own independent

audit routines. The number is further increased by the ever-expanding requirements to monitor environmental, worker welfare and sustainability programmes.

Since February, Authenticate has witnessed more than 100% increase in usage of its on-line platform, with more than 1,000 new companies each month providing data to multiple customers by way of on-line assessments and KPI metrics. “Each month since the lockdown, we have seen a steady expansion of the number of companies using online collection of data methods. Not only is this helping customers obtain the compliance data they need but has saved up to £1m in auditor site visit fees, travel costs and ancillary costs”.

“We do not see this changing even when things get back to normal. The whole industry of compliance management is fast evolving as clients require regular metrics across the whole CSR, ESG spectrum. Whilst physical site audits will obviously continue and play a big part in the world of food compliance, the digitisation of data collection and analysis is here to stay.”