

**Name:**

Effie Gail Dela Cruz

Country:

Canada

Company:

Simmons Pet Food

Job Title:

QA Manager

Tell us about yourself...

I am a seasoned Quality Professional with over 25 years of experience in implementing quality management systems in manufacturing environments. Throughout my career, I have developed a competency in assessing and improving quality and manufacturing processes. I am skilled in identifying areas for improvement and implementing corrective actions that drive both efficiency and product quality.

In addition to my technical skills, I am adept at adjusting my leadership style to meet the team's needs and address the challenges we encounter. Whether it's navigating unforeseen obstacles or guiding the team through periods of change I set clear expectations, led by example, and hold myself and others accountable, which cultivates a strong sense of responsibility and mutual respect.

My family and I relocated to Canada in 2002, and I have been with Simmons Pet Food for the past 22 years. I began my career in Operations and transitioned to the Quality Assurance Team in 2005. I am currently serving as the QA Manager for the Toronto Facility. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Mapua University in the Philippines and a Graduate Diploma in Food Safety and Quality Assurance from the University of Guelph, Canada, both of which have provided me with a solid foundation in both technical engineering and quality management practices.

Why did you join the BRCGS Professional Programme?

The BRCGS Professional platform provided me with an excellent opportunity to gain and exchange insights and expertise on Quality and Food Safety Management Systems, connecting with global food safety experts. Food safety standards constantly evolve, and this platform enables me to enhance my understanding of industry trends, best practices, and compliance standards, ensuring that I remain well-informed and capable of upholding the highest food safety standards within the organization.

What value do you personally feel the BRCGS Professional certification brings to you?

Earning the BRCGS Professional badge is a significant achievement for me and is an excellent complement to being known as an expert in standard implementation. By completing the program, I have taken part in several training sessions that have significantly expanded my knowledge of food safety. Additionally, it has reinforced my commitment to upholding the highest standards in Quality and Food Safety Management. The added benefit of international recognition tied to BRCGS accreditation further motivated me. The program's prestigious global reputation for promoting rigorous quality management practices perfectly aligns with my professional aspirations.

How has the training helped improve operations at your company?

Training has had a significant positive impact on our audit ratings. By aligning our processes with industry best practices, we've seen improved audit performance. This not only highlights our commitment to quality but also reflects our proactive approach to upholding high standards, boosting our reputation with regulatory bodies and stakeholders.

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Moreover, the knowledge I have gained has allowed us to implement more comprehensive safety measures, providing reassurance to both our team and customers about the quality and dependability of our products. This enhanced focus on safety has not only minimized risks but has also solidified our position as a responsible industry leader.

What did you enjoy most about training?

Nadia Narine from Lumar Food Safety Services possessed a combination of deep knowledge, effective communication skills, and an engaging teaching style. She is an expert in the BRCGS Professional certification, and she was able to break down complex concepts into understandable, practical knowledge, ensuring that we can easily grasp and apply what we have learned. Nadia provided constructive feedback and guidance while fostering a collaborative learning atmosphere, ensuring that the training is both informative and transformative.

What are you most looking forward to within the Professional community?

I am excited about the numerous opportunities that the BRCGS Professional community presents. Participating in networking events will allow me to connect with other professionals who share similar goals, fostering valuable knowledge exchange and collaboration. The chance to interact with like-minded experts from various industries offers the potential for new perspectives and forward-thinking solutions.

How do you plan to keep your skills up to date?

I am committed to keeping my skills up to date by regularly attending industry courses and events, webinars, and training sessions, staying current with the latest BRCGS updates, and actively participating in professional networks geared towards coaching and mentoring. I am also pleasantly surprised with the Microlearning access which is a great learning option and counts towards our Professional Progress Points. Ongoing learning and the practical application of new knowledge will help me sustain and further develop my expertise in food safety and quality management.

What are your career ambitions/aims?

Continuous professional development is a key aspect of any career, and it has always been a priority in my professional journey. By staying committed to best practices and emerging trends, I ensure that I remain at the forefront of the food industry. I also strive to maintain my leadership role, where I can contribute to the development and implementation of practices that elevate quality and food safety standards, drive continuous improvement initiatives, and mentor others within the industry.