

## HOW MTEC WAS ABLE TO GUIDE A HUDSON VALLEY FOOD MANUFACTURER ON THEIR QUEST FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT

**ABOUT CATSMO, LLC.** Catsmo Artisan Smokehouse out of Wallkill, New York, produces smoked salmon, artisanal cheeses, and premium caviar. Nestled on a hillside just past the Village of Wallkill, Catsmo runs made-to-order production in order to get the freshest product to their clients. In conjunction with Solex Fine Foods, they have upheld their artisanal practices even through a period of substantial growth. Fresh fish is flown in daily from the icy Atlantic waters and is individually inspected by sight and smell before beginning the production process. Working exclusively with fresh and never frozen fish makes Catsmo an incredibly unique food manufacturer.

**THE CHALLENGE.** In 2020, Catsmo sought assistance from MTEC, part of the MEP National Network™, securing a food safety specialist and defining new procedures to lay the foundation of their new Food Safety and Quality standards. Based on the success of that project, Catsmo sought MTEC's assistance in 2021 with performing a gap analysis in order to find areas for improvement and ensure they were operating to the highest standards. In collaboration with the Bonney Ziegler Group, MTEC aided Catsmo in identifying opportunities to strengthen their systems and processes.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** As a result of working with MTEC, Catsmo has introduced more thorough documentation methods to aid in accountability and the formation of positive habits. They have hired additional full-time staff dedicated to Food Safety and Quality Control. An FDA-approved lab was established on site for testing both product and the environment for bacteria. A pre-operations inspection now takes place every day as a prerequisite for their sanitation program to verify compliance to their safety standards and document any deviation. This includes visual and microbial testing, and full documentation before production starts.

To further improve Catsmo's food safety systems, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) was introduced. Through HACCP, Catsmo was able to guarantee that they practiced the utmost care in all aspects of their food safety operations. Catsmo has also advanced their facilities through renovations and highly organized storage systems. With help from the MTEC and Bonney Ziegler team, Catsmo has achieved excellent standing with Safe Quality Food Institute (SQF) and achieved a score of 96/100 on their most recent SQF audit. In addition, the Catsmo now has members of their team who are trained Preventive Controls Qualified Individuals (PCQI), meaning their food safety will only continue to strengthen in time. Catsmo has added a dedicated sanitation team for post-production. They dedicate 200 hours a week to clean and sanitize the entire production site.

"Without MTEC our success would not be possible. They have been a vital part of changing the culture at Catsmo to become focused on reducing waste and optimizing their processes. MTEC brought us to the standard we were looking for and pushed us to get the best score possible."

-Fred Pothier, CFO

## RESULTS



8 new or retained jobs



\$2,500,000 in new or retained sales



\$45,000 in new investment

## CONTACT US



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