In light of recent events, all businesses have been assessing security risks ranging from Internet connections to people allowed through the front door. Here are some precautions for food processors:

Restrict delivery personnel to an entrance that does not allow access to food processing areas. All personnel and visitors should enter and exit through one single entrance and all should register in and out of the facility and be accounted for at the end of each day.

Contract workers who provide security, sanitation or janitorial services must be carefully screened before employment. Some processors have completely taken over these services to have more control over personnel movement through the facility.

Managers must also consider how to protect raw materials against microbial or chemical contamination. All raw materials should be inventoried daily and documented. These records should be kept in a secure location with limited access, such as quality control. Product batch sheets should properly document the use of raw materials and contain the correct code date. All food products should have a code date that is traceable to all materials used in the food product, including packaging.

Milk producers have recently implemented procedures to secure and identify milk transport tankers that have been cleaned and sanitized before filling with a load of milk. Water bottling companies and liquid egg processors should also implement similar procedures.

No matter which security measures are implemented, be sure to test the system to make sure that it will work when you need it! If you require assistance in risk assessment or would like to implement a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system, please contact Nancy Flores, food technology specialist with New Mexico State University’s Cooperative
Extension Service, at (505) 646-1179.