



Canadian Food  
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne  
d'inspection des aliments

# SAFE FOOD FOR CANADIANS ACTION PLAN



Strengthening Canada's World-Class Food Safety System

Canada 

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# SAFE FOOD FOR CANADIANS ACTION PLAN

The Government of Canada is taking action to further strengthen Canada's world-class food safety system.

The passage of the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* in November 2012 set the stage for important changes to Canada's food safety system. The Act will come into force at the beginning of 2015.

Over the next two years, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will work with consumer groups and industry to develop new regulations to support the Act. During this period, the CFIA will also launch a number of significant food safety enhancements.

**The result:** better protection for Canadian families from risks to food safety.

Canada's food supply is already among the world's safest. The **Safe Food for Canadians Action Plan** focuses on continuous improvement based on science, global trends, and best practices.



- **STRONGER FOOD SAFETY RULES**
- **MORE EFFECTIVE INSPECTION**
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# STRONGER FOOD SAFETY RULES

The passage of the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* has set the stage for strengthening and modernizing Canada's food safety system.

The *Safe Food for Canadians Act* is more efficient and stronger. It will improve our food safety system and help manage risk to protect Canadian families.

The legislation will draw together all food inspection regulations in Canada currently administered under four different Acts into one overarching law. This will enable the CFIA to apply consistent regulatory requirements and inspection approaches across all regulated food commodities.

The legislation will also allow the CFIA to:

- **create a stronger system** to trace products throughout the production chain to ensure that unsafe foods are identified more rapidly and removed from the supply chain as quickly as possible, and

- enhance industry requirements for record keeping and documentation.

**Under the Action Plan, the CFIA intends to:**

- **improve the safety of imported food** by requiring food importers to put in place clear controls to ensure the food they sell is compliant with Canadian regulations, and
- **develop new rules** to reduce the risks posed by pathogens such as *E. coli*. For example, new requirements will strengthen the control of *E. coli* in plants producing raw beef.

In the interim, before the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* comes into force, the CFIA will be implementing some changes using existing authorities and administrative guidelines.

# MORE EFFECTIVE INSPECTION

Industry is responsible for producing safe food. CFIA inspectors will be able to better verify that industry is meeting **Canada's stringent food safety requirements** by having a single, consistent approach to inspection.

Their work will be better targeted at areas of highest risk and this will afford more efficiency thanks to new technologies streamlining workflow.

The CFIA is:

- designing a new food inspection model to improve industry compliance with food safety legislation,
- delivering better training to inspectors and improving recruitment strategies, and
- enhancing science capacity.





## **MORE EFFECTIVE INSPECTION** (cont'd)

CFIA inspectors will have increased powers in some areas. For example, the CFIA will have the power to:

- request that an individual start or stop an activity to adhere to the law, and
- prevent obstruction or interference with inspectors as they carry out their duties.

Interpretation of regulatory requirements will be aided by the replacement of the more than 100 commodity-based manuals with a new set of compliance education documents. Regulatory requirements will be expressed in plain language, and guidance will be provided to help ensure compliance. The goal is to increase industry standards and mitigate risks to food safety.

In addition, the CFIA will:

- establish 16 centres of expertise to bring together knowledge in specific programs or food commodities. These centres will help create a more efficient system for providing guidance and expert advice to both industry and inspectors.

And, because science is critical to reducing risks to food safety, the CFIA will:

- increase testing capacity,
- modernize science facilities and equipment,
- develop an integrated food laboratory network with other partners involved in food safety, such as provinces and municipalities, and
- seek new and effective ways to partner with industry.

# A COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

The CFIA is committed to efficient and effective service delivery to the individuals and companies governed by Canadian food safety laws.

As part of this, the Agency:

- published a Statement of Rights and Service in April 2012,
  - initiated a review of service standards and service user fees, and
  - established a review mechanism for regulated parties.
- introduce a clear, consistent set of inspection and enforcement rules that will significantly reduce red tape for Canadian food producers. This will allow food producers to do what they do best: put the safest possible food on the tables of Canadian families.

The review mechanism for regulated parties provides another option for those seeking review of certain decisions made by CFIA officials. Regulations under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* will make this an enduring commitment to stakeholders.

The CFIA will also:

- build a secure electronic interface so the Agency can share information and conduct transactions more effectively with industry and international partners, and



# MORE INFORMATION FOR CONSUMERS

The CFIA will continue to maintain a safe food system that **serves the needs of both the Canadian public and industry stakeholders.**

The CFIA is internationally recognized as having an excellent food recall and public alert system. This will continue.

As part of its commitment to being an open, transparent and visibly accountable organization, the CFIA will also continue to find ways of sharing its work with Canadians.

Information that is already publicly available includes:

- results of targeted food surveys, and
- enforcement and compliance data, including licence suspensions of facilities.

Under the new legislation the Minister will have the right — within the parameters of the *Privacy Act* and the *Access to Information Act* — to disclose personal and confidential business information if disclosure is deemed necessary to protect the health and



safety of Canadians, as in the case of a recall ordered by the Minister.

The CFIA will continue to explore other types of information that will have value to Canadians, and the best means of sharing this information.

As well, in order to continue to support consumer protection, the CFIA will be launching a comprehensive and public review of its requirements and enforcement for food labelling.

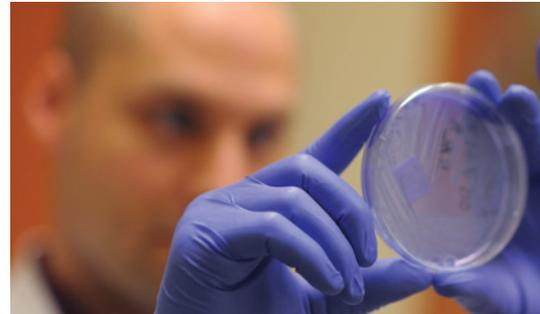
## A FOCUS ON PREVENTION

Canadians expect their food to be safe — whether they buy it at a chain grocery store, a fish market, or a neighbourhood butcher. While no food safety system can guarantee a completely risk-free environment, the goal of the Safe Food for Canadians Action Plan is to achieve the **highest possible level of food safety**.

To meet this goal, Canada will continue to build a food safety system that is capable of rapidly mitigating risks to food safety in a way that reduces impacts on consumers. The CFIA will develop a risk-based approach to focus its inspection activities on food commodities and establishments that pose the greatest risk for consumers.

To build a strong safety culture and help identify and prevent emerging food safety issues, the CFIA will also:

- require all food manufacturers, including processed food manufacturers, to be licensed and have preventive control systems such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) or equivalent, and
- work with small and medium enterprises to explore approaches tailored to their operational needs and assist them in achieving compliance.



## BUILDING ON A LEGACY OF SAFE FOOD

Canadians are justifiably proud of the quality of the country's domestic food supply, and the food commodities that Canada exports around the world.

Guided by the new *Safe Food for Canadians Act*, the CFIA is carrying out an action plan that will build on this legacy and continue to protect food safety for Canadians for years to come.

Over the next two years, Canadians will see a series of new initiatives that will modernize and build on Canada's food safety system.

The **Safe Food for Canadians Action Plan** will deliver results and build on the Government of Canada's commitment to safe food for all Canadians.

