



Agriculture
Canada

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The Food Production and Inspection Branch



The Programs



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The success of Canadian agricultural and forestry products in both domestic and foreign markets depends on their health, safety, wholesomeness and quality. For this reason, the federal government has enacted legislation and regulations to guide producers and the food processing industry. Across the country, trained professional and technical employees of Agriculture Canada's Food Production and Inspection Branch inspect, test and monitor products to ensure compliance and conformity to these standards and norms.



The branch is one of the most diversified and decentralized in the government of Canada. It shoulders responsibility for five areas of the agri-food industry - plant health, animal health, health and safety, food quality assurance and race track surveillance.



Plant Health

This program ensures an adequate, safe and wholesome supply of plants and plant products for domestic and export markets.

Our trained staff detect, control or eradicate diseases and pests that attack agricultural and forestry crops and plants in Canada and prevent the introduction of other diseases from countries that sell us plant products.



Fertilizers enhance the fertility and productivity of the soil; branch staff test these fertilizers for effectiveness, potency and freedom from harmful substances.

Pesticides, too, are important tools to control plant pests in the home garden, in agricultural crops and in our forests. All pesticides used in Canada must be registered. The branch tests them for effectiveness and for safety to humans and the environment when used in an approved manner.



To accomplish this, our people carefully inspect agricultural products on the farm and at air, sea and land ports of entry. They ensure that the products meet the high standards set for health, safety and quality. The quality, purity and freedom from disease of seed, for example, is assured through inspection and certification, and by planting pedigreed, disease-free seed into fertile soil with the help of favorable weather.



Animal Health

The Animal Health Program prevents serious foreign animal diseases from entering Canada and eradicates or controls diseases that already exist in this country, to assure a healthy livestock population.

Canada must keep its livestock and poultry as free as possible from disease, because some diseases such as tuberculosis, brucellosis and rabies affect both animals and humans. Healthy livestock and poultry are also an asset when exporting livestock, meat and meat products. Also, if unchecked, many livestock diseases can cause serious losses to the nation's economy.

To prevent the introduction of serious animal diseases into Canada, the branch inspects livestock, meat, meat products, poultry, poultry products and certain products of the soil at ports of entry. In many instances, we require permits to import and certification by the exporting country. Quarantines are imposed where necessary, and samples and specimens are taken as required and submitted for laboratory examination and test. On some occasions, our officers visit countries from which we import livestock, to conduct tests and inspections that will ensure the animals' freedom from disease.



On the domestic front, we visit farms, stockyards, livestock assembly points and hatcheries to inspect, test and take samples. We have set up disease detection and monitoring programs, and conduct eradication and control programs when needed. The ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections of livestock and poultry entering the food system also serve as an important part of the national animal disease monitoring program.

We also inspect livestock and livestock products for export. Poultry and poultry products may be inspected for interprovincial trade, but for export, inspections are mandatory. We prepare certificates as required.

The branch also controls the transportation of livestock to significantly reduce their suffering and death when being moved by road, rail, water or air.

Health and Safety

A number of programs contribute to human safety and health.

Under the legislation and regulations governing the inspection of meat and meat products in Canada, veterinary inspectors, assisted by primary products inspectors, must approve the design and construction of registered meat-food plants. The inspectors also enforce rigid sanitary standards in all parts of each plant.

All food animals brought to the plants are given careful ante-mortem inspections and subsequent detailed post-mortem inspections after slaughter. The government inspectors remove from the food chain any animal, carcass or portion found to be unsuitable. All stages of the handling and post-mortem processing of the meat and meat products are done under their surveillance and monitoring. They pay particular attention to detecting drug and chemical residues, to additive use and to the accuracy of labeling.

The inspections, tests and controls of the meat inspection program contribute to human safety and health by assuring that only wholesome and disease-free meat and meat products enter the food system. Imported meat products must meet the same rigid standards before being permitted entry to our domestic markets.



The registration and inspection of plants processing dairy products ensures high sanitary standards in the butter, cheeses, milk powders and concentrated milk products produced in Canada. Similarly, manufacturers of egg products must follow regulations governing plant construction and sanitation to assure a safe and wholesome product for both domestic and export markets.

Fresh and processed fruit and vegetables, honey, maple syrup and eggs come under branch jurisdiction. Regulations govern the construction of plants and the inspection of the product to see that operators adhere strictly to standards of safety and wholesomeness. Our officers also inspect imported products to ensure they meet the same stringent standards as our own produce.

Agriculture Canada enforces legislation, made under the authority of Health and Welfare Canada, on licencing and approval of chemical products for the food industry.

Although Agriculture Canada bears final responsibility for registration decisions about pesticides and herbicides, the departments of Health and Welfare, Environment, and Fisheries and Oceans advise our staff about these products as they affect human health and the environment. These biological and chemical products range from the pesticides we use in our gardens and the anti-slime agents for the family pool, through sprays used in the forest to control the spruce budworm, to the herbicides farmers use to control weeds in their crops.

Quality Assurance

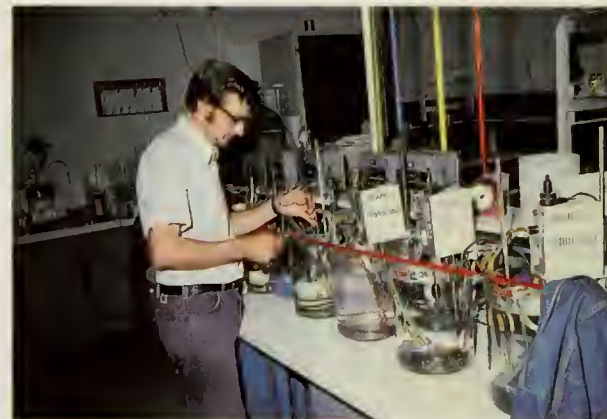
The various quality assurance programs the branch administers or monitors ensure that the agricultural products available to the Canadian consumer are properly graded and inspected, labeled to avoid fraud, and lawfully packaged.

In addition to monitoring and enforcing strict sanitary standards in registered establishments, our inspectors grade meat carcasses, fresh fruits and vegetables and shell eggs. They also monitor the grading of poultry by trained plant employees.

The branch reviews product labels to ensure accuracy and honesty. Packaging materials in contact with certain food products must also conform to standards.



The safety and efficacy of livestock feeds is another responsibility of the branch, to ensure they do not harm livestock performance and health. We monitor drug residues and biological and chemical contaminants in feeds to prevent the introduction of residues into milk, meat and eggs. Feed manufacturing plants and on-farm mixing facilities are inspected, with particular attention to the preparation of medicated feeds.



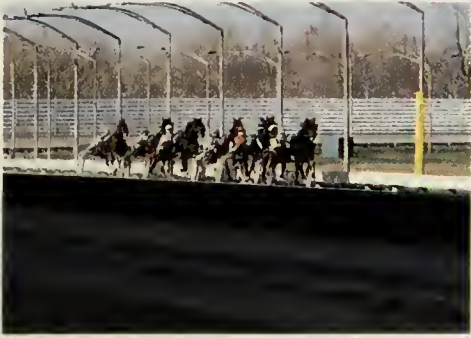
Through product testing and registration, the branch also assures producers of the effectiveness and potency of the commercial fertilizers they use.

Inspection and certification of growing field crops, along with inspection, testing and monitoring of seed offered for sale, ensures the quality of seed available on both the domestic and export markets. Only registered varieties that have demonstrated merit may be sold in Canada.

Branch inspectors who enforce food labeling requirements act under the authority of the Consumer Packaging and Labeling Act. They do this under an agreement between Agriculture Canada and the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada.



Race Track Surveillance



The branch also regulates and supervises the pari-mutuel horse betting system to protect the wagering public.

Technical Support

The laboratory services that support both the animal and plant health programs are located strategically across the country. The services they provide include chemical and microbiological testing of agricultural products on samples and specimens the operational units submit, identification of animal and plant pathogens, and preparation of test reagents. They also conduct research.

The laboratories are essential to the certification of plants, plant products, animals and animal products for export. In addition, Agriculture Canada needs their ability to conduct tests to prevent the introduction of

foreign plant and animal diseases into Canada and for the effective operation of programs to eradicate or control diseases now in the country.



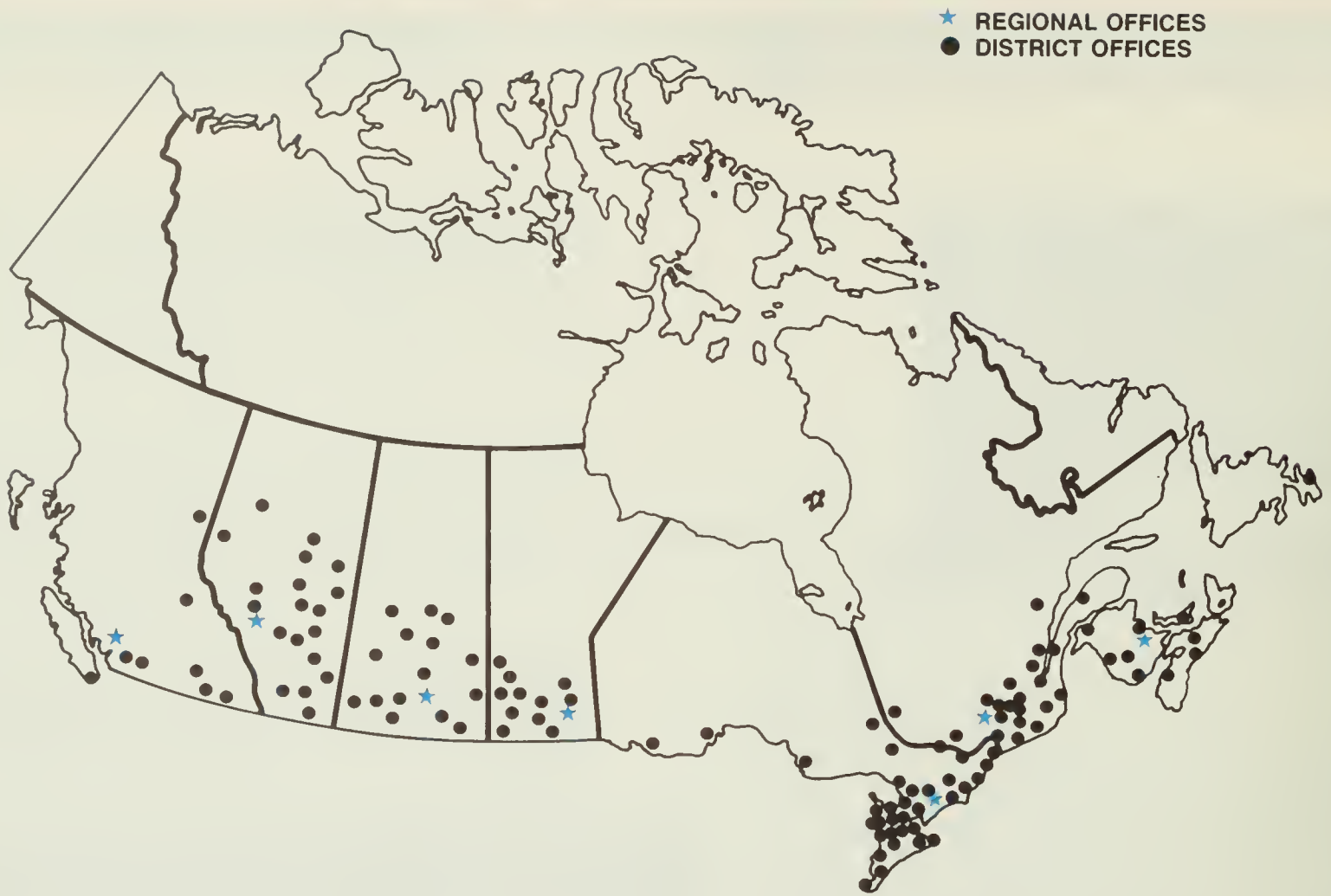
Operational Support



In addition to the traditional roles of administrative support groups, branch management services plan, audit and evaluate programs, and review legislation.

Financial support units permit the smooth functioning of the operational units.

Training units in both operational directorates ensure that the staff is prepared to perform their tasks and move, when needed, to positions of greater responsibility.



Direction générale de la production et de l'inspection des aliments

Programmes

