
The Agricultural Inspection Directorate



*Cooperating for Quality in
Canadian Agri-food Products*

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Each year over \$20 billion worth of superior agri-food products make their way from Canadian farms to the kitchens and restaurants of the nation and the world.

Put simply, Canadian agri-food is big business, and ensuring that it meets the highest quality standards is vital to maintaining our competitive edge both at home and in the international marketplace.

To ensure excellence, the Agricultural Inspection Directorate of Agriculture Canada works closely with all sectors of the Canadian agri-food industry, from producers through processors to packers and shippers. The directorate provides an inspection and monitoring service covering a diverse range of products and processes. It also administers a cross-country market reporting network to give the industry daily information on current markets and new trading opportunities.

This booklet presents a brief profile of the Agricultural Inspection Directorate and its many activities. If you would like more information, contact your nearest regional office. You'll find it listed on page 8.



Seed Potatoes

Canada is a world leader in the production of seed potatoes, certifying over 240 000 t annually. To help us maintain our leading position, the directorate:

- carries out compulsory inspection in the field at harvest and during packing and shipping;
- conducts extensive post-harvest testing;
- oversees the quarantine of potato pests and diseases.



Seeds

Adequate supplies of quality seeds are vital to Canadian producers, and ensuring that supply is another of the directorate's functions. In addition to certifying imported seed and seeds for export, the directorate:

- inspects pedigreed seed crops in the field — each year over 400 000 ha are inspected;
- conducts post-harvest testing and certification for purity and germination;
- monitors the sale of seeds.



Feeds

The directorate helps assure the nutritional value and safety of all animal feeds. To this end, the directorate:

- monitors all feeds manufactured, sold and imported into the country;
- gives special attention to the safety of medicated feeds;
- investigates residues found in meats which may be related to feed;
- inspects feed manufacturing establishments.



Fertilizers

Safe and effective fertilizers are vital to Canadian producers. To ensure quality, the directorate:

- monitors all fertilizers manufactured, sold or imported into Canada;
- conducts regular sample inspections to ensure that the contents live up to the claims on the label;
- monitors legume inoculants;
- investigates complaints related to fertilizers, soil conditioners and soil supplements.



Pest Control

Without proper controls, pests could seriously damage Canadian agriculture. To ensure the safety and effectiveness of pesticides used on the farm, the directorate:

- carries out special surveys on pesticide user groups, e.g. aerial applicators;
- checks pesticides for safety and effectiveness through laboratory analysis of samples;
- carries out investigations to ensure that pesticides perform as advertised;
- liaises with provincial and other regulatory agencies.



Plant Health

Agricultural production also depends on preventing the introduction and spread of plant pests. To meet this goal, the directorate:

- conducts surveys to detect the presence of plant pests;
- inspects all imported plants, materials, fruits and vegetables, and incoming used vehicles and tires to protect Canadian agriculture against foreign pests;
- keeps pests from spreading within Canada by monitoring and controlling pest outbreaks;
- protects our trading partners from Canadian pests by inspecting all agricultural and forestry exports leaving Canada.



Dairy

Working closely with dairy processors, the directorate assures the highest quality products through:

- registration of all dairy product plants to ensure sanitation standards are met;
- monitoring and/or grading of all processed milk products (200 million kilograms are produced annually, including cheese, butter, milk powders, evaporated milk and ice cream);
- inspection of marketing, packaging, weights and composition.



Fresh and Processed Fruits and Vegetables

The directorate promotes wider consumption and ensures the quality of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, honey and maple products. In doing so, the directorate:

- inspects the grades of these products when they move interprovincially and internationally;
- monitors labelling and standardization of packaging to ensure efficient trade;
- operates a licensing system to ensure the fair and orderly trading of fresh produce.



Poultry, Eggs and Egg Products

To ensure the quality of hatcheries, poultry, eggs and egg products, the directorate:

- monitors the sanitation of hatcheries, poultry plants, egg grading stations and processed egg plants;
- conducts environmental sampling of plant air quality, equipment, premises, and sanitation;
- monitors grading, packaging and labelling;
- inspects all imported products as well as products for export.



Livestock

The directorate's grading system for beef, veal, sheep and hogs has encouraged the production of top quality Canadian meats.

The grade standards monitored by the directorate have directly increased the profitability of the Canadian livestock industry by encouraging leaner carcasses that yield more. In fact, Canada now exports breeding stock to countries we used to import from, and grading has helped set fair prices for both producers and buyers.

Market Reporting

The Agricultural Inspection Directorate operates a nation-wide market reporting network to collect raw data on agricultural commodities. It reports regularly on prices, and on what has been bought, sold, stored, processed, exported and traded interprovincially. This accumulation of market reports is vital to all sectors of the agri-food industry as they plan production and seek new trading opportunities.

Regional Offices

If you would like more information on the Agricultural Inspection Directorate, contact the regional office nearest you.

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