



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 010**

Monday, October 27, 2025

---

Chair: Michael Coteau





## Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Monday, October 27, 2025

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Michael Coteau (Scarborough—Woburn, Lib.)):**  
I call this meeting to order. Welcome to meeting number 10 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format. Pursuant to Standing Orders, members are attending in person in the room and remotely using the Zoom application. Before we continue, I'd like to ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the cards on the table. These measures are in place to help prevent audio feedback incidents and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including our interpreters. You will also notice a QR code on a card that links to a short awareness video.

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of all witnesses and members. Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking or asking a question directly to a member. For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English or French. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. This is a reminder that all comments should be addressed through the chair. For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the "raise hand" function. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can, and we appreciate your patience and understanding in this regard.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Monday, October 20, 2025, the committee is commencing its study of the importation of broiler meat mislabeled as spent fowl.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses today. Thank you for joining us.

From the Chicken Farmers of Canada, we have Tim Klompmaker, who's the chair, and Yves Ruel, associate executive director. From the Natural Resources DNA Profiling and Forensic Centre, Trent University, we have Christopher Kyle, who's the director. From Sterisense, we have Geoff Lumby, who is the founder.

I'll give each of the delegations five minutes to speak. Please try to be on time. We'll start with the Chicken Farmers of Canada.

Welcome, and thank you for joining us here today.

**Tim Klompmaker (Chair, Chicken Farmers of Canada):**  
Thank you very much for having us here this afternoon.

Good afternoon. My name is Tim Klompmaker. I'm a third-generation chicken farmer from Ontario and the chair of Chicken Farmers of Canada.

We are here to ask that the committee work with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to direct the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canada Border Services Agency to implement the DNA test that will help stop the fraudulent importation of broiler chicken mislabelled as spent fowl. This border fraud has been impacting Canadian chicken farmers for well over a decade, so thank you for studying this important topic.

Chicken Farmers of Canada represents more than 2,800 farmers, located in every province. We are built on supply management, ensuring stability for farmers, processors and consumers. One pillar of supply management, import controls—meaning the predictability of imports—helps us determine how much chicken must be produced to satisfy the domestic market.

While there is market access provided for broiler meat, based off agreements with trading partners, there are no restrictions on spent fowl imports, and they can enter Canada duty-free. Spent fowl are egg-laying hens that are processed for their meat at the end of their production cycle. Canada imports both broiler and spent-fowl meat; however, one cannot visually distinguish between the two products. As a result, some importers have been purposely mislabelling broiler chicken meat as spent fowl to circumvent Canadian import regulations.

Over the years, we have worked closely with AAFC, CFIA and CBSA to address this fraudulent mislabelling, and they have implemented some measures to try to control the mislabelled imports. From CFIA's suspension of a cold storage establishment in the U.S. to CBSA's inclusion of spent fowl under its priority verification program, over \$361 million in duties, interests and penalties on mis-declared spent fowl have been assessed, proof that the problem is real and that better enforcement is required.

I'll take you back. In 2012, we noticed the first warning signs: imports labelled as spent fowl were exceeding what was even possible in U.S. production. Thirteen years later, those numbers persist. For 2025, available data, from January to August, shows that imports of spent fowl have increased by 25% compared to last year. Even more alarming, when converted into a whole-bird equivalent, those imports represent 115% of total U.S. spent fowl slaughter. This shows that Canada's imports of spent fowl exceed the U.S.'s entire production, a clear signal that illegal imports are entering the country, and concrete action is urgently required. These growing numbers and overall concern for fraudulent imports led to a statement from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of Public Safety in March, directing CFIA and CBSA to develop an action plan to improve detection, enforce compliance and ensure a level playing field.

Back in 2014, we worked with Trent University to develop a scientifically validated forensic DNA test that can distinguish between broiler meat and spent fowl, in order to help government agencies find a solution to identify mislabelled imports and show our commitment to eradicating this problem. Despite these efforts, there has been no further action from the department or agencies on the DNA test since 2018, and it has not yet been implemented as part of Canada's import verification process. CFC has committed to investing in more work with Trent on the update of the tests and hopes that agencies will implement them as part of their tools to enforce Canadian import regulations and ensure food safety for Canadians.

Although these are not guns or drugs, this is illegal activity at our borders. This fraud costs jobs, tax revenue and fair-market competition. More importantly, it risks undermining consumer trust and food safety, because mislabelled products can't be traced if there's a recall on the original product.

Our farmers take these consequences seriously, so seriously that seeking government implementation of the DNA testing by the end of 2026 is a critical priority for our sector. Doing so would not only end this criminal activity but would generate additional economic activity, strengthen food safety and restore fairness for Canadian farmers and processors.

- (1535)

Together we can stop this border fraud once and for all. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

We will now go to the Trent University representative.

**Christopher Kyle (Director, Natural Resources DNA Profiling and Forensic Centre, Trent University):** Hello. My name is Christopher Kyle. I'm a professor here at Trent University. I'm also the director of the Natural Resources DNA Profiling and Forensic Centre.

Today, I would like to talk to you about some of the centre's services to give you some context on a test that we developed that distinguishes between spent hens and broiler meat.

Our facility provides molecular diagnostic support for a range of wildlife research and environmental pathogen detection, including waste-water detection that we report to public health agencies. Our

facility also includes a forensic wildlife DNA lab, where we provide expert witnesses and services for a range of federal and provincial agencies that have included the RCMP, Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Environment and Climate Change Canada. Cases range from poaching, animal abuse, animal attacks, parentage testing of breeding stock and, importantly for today, food mislabelling.

As I mention food mislabelling, I think it's important to introduce my colleague Geoff Lumby, who founded Sterisense. Sterisense and Trent work together on industrial commercialization, testing of international seafood and retail company samples for species identification and population verification. This relationship expanded greatly in 2011, when Maple Leaf Foods approached Sterisense and Trent University to develop a spent-fowl test that distinguished between broiler meat and spent fowl and assessed the fraudulent mislabelling of spent fowl.

In 2012, contracts were inked between Maple Leaf Foods and the Chicken Farmers of Canada with the planned phases of research and development followed by proficiency testing and subsequent deployment by the government. By 2014, we had an approximately 800-sample database that was built from sire and dam lines of commercial genetics companies with a three-stage test to assess shipments across the border. I think it's important to mention what these three phases do.

The first phase was to sort sex identification where the expectation was that spent hens from egg layers would have roughly a 98% to 2% ratio of females to males, whereas broilers would have a ratio that was roughly fifty-fifty. The second stage involved using genetic differences between broiler lines and egg-laying lines to distinguish between the groups. Third, in some cases, the parental stock of broilers can enter the spent-fowl market, so we actually had a third phase to distinguish parental stock from the actual broiler meat itself. This was completed in 2014.

From 2015 to 2017, we did some testing for different commercial groups and had ongoing discussions with CBSA and CFIA to discuss the implementation of the test and assess the validity of the test. It wasn't until 2018 that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada sent us 90 samples to assess the test. Of the 90 samples, three actually weren't even chickens but were assessed as being a turkey, a cow and a duck. Of the remaining 87 samples, 73 were properly distinguished; 13 of the samples were unassigned, as some of the genetic variants that we came across were not in our database and thus couldn't be assigned; and one was declared as a misassigned sample, something that I'll put an asterisk around for now.

After this test, there were some discussions to discuss the results, and in 2019, CBSA representatives came to visit the Trent lab. However, since then, it wasn't until the last two weeks that we've had some communications with some of these agencies to discuss the test again.

• (1540)

[Translation]

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to take part in your study. I also thank you for your interest in the genetic test that we've developed.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

We will now go to Geoff Lumby.

**Geoff Lumby (Founder, Sterisense):** Hi folks. Thanks. I'm glad to be here.

I don't have much more to add to what Chris has said.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much.

That was the shortest presentation ever. We appreciate your time.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** We'll do a round of six minutes each. We'll go to the Conservatives for six minutes.

Richard.

**Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to each of the witnesses who have come here today.

I'll start with you, Klompmaker. You've given us a lot of pertinent information. Can you summarize quickly what the overall impact is on the poultry industry here in Canada, and even the impact it may be having on our U.S. counterparts as well?

Just a brief summary on that, please. I have some follow-up questions for you.

**Tim Klompmaker:** I'll start with the impact we're seeing that the U.S. is talking about, and then I'll go over to Yves and he can give you the details exactly on the impact on our sector in Canada.

In discussions we had with some of our processors down in the U.S. who do spent fowl, they're actually quite concerned about this because they see themselves as being sole exporters of spent fowl into Canada. They're saying they're unfairly having to compete with

these companies that are bringing in broiler chicken that's classified as spent fowl. They're concerned about it as well, and they're willing to work with us.

If we go back to when CFIA shut down that storage facility in the U.S., they were very supportive of that occurring as well—very much on side with us.

• (1545)

**Richard Bragdon:** Thank you.

Mr. Ruel, do you want to add?

**Yves Ruel (Associate Executive Director, Chicken Farmers of Canada):** Thank you.

I'll add on the Canadian impacts. We assume that legitimate imports should be about 60 million kilograms per year. Based on the trends so far this year, we're heading toward 105 million. If you take 45 million of illegal imports or very questionable production, that's 45 million displaced from Canadian production. The impact generated by 45 million is about 3,600 jobs, \$394 million in economic contribution to the GDP and \$129 million in taxes. Basically, this is what's taken away from Canadian economic activity by those illegal imports.

**Richard Bragdon:** That's a pretty significant impact, for sure.

Are there any health risks associated with the mislabelling of broiler chicken as spent fowl? Can you provide a little background on that as well if there are some health concerns?

**Yves Ruel:** Obviously, if the chicken is imported and illegally declared as spent fowl, Canadian authorities will be able to trace it as a spent-fowl imports but not as chicken imports. If the chicken were to be recalled in the U.S. for whatever reason—there's something at the U.S. processing plant—there would be no way to find out that it has made its way into Canada. It would enter the food chain in Canada and there would be a food safety risk.

**Richard Bragdon:** Thank you.

Are you aware of any other countries dealing with similar issues to this? What are they doing about this?

**Yves Ruel:** I'm not aware of any other countries. Most of the time, if they have import controls on chicken, they would be on the overall chicken species. They would not be broken down. In our case, we have import controls on broiler chicken but not on spent fowl.

**Richard Bragdon:** Thank you.

Mr. Kyle, my understanding is that you have a test that's been developed. You did the test, and it was reviewed in 2018, which identified a couple of questions or issues or challenges.

Can you tell us what developments or adjustments you've made to alleviate the concerns? Have they addressed with you why they haven't implemented this test yet?

**Christopher Kyle:** It's a challenging question to answer.

There was no more funding. We did the proficiency test. Things did not continue beyond the meetings we had in 2018 and the tour we had in 2019. As such, there have been no further developments in refining the database. That's what was just mentioned by Chicken Farmers of Canada. We're about to re-embark on updating the database, which will be critical. I think an ongoing update of the database each year will be critical to making sure we maintain its validity.

I think a lot has happened in over a decade in our ability to do this type of work, where I think we could probably make it much better. That is our goal in the coming year, to build on that preliminary proficiency test, which quite honestly had a few minor issues with it. I think the important part whenever you're doing a forensic case is to always have a "none of the above" choice, so those 13 of 87 samples that we didn't assign. I think that's an important thing to maintain and to remember that we're going to be assessing shipments, not individual samples.

Overall, I think that three-phase test could be implemented quite soon, but we would really like to update that database.

**Richard Bragdon:** Do you feel quite confident about where the science is on this, that any concerns that were brought up have been alleviated? Do you feel that this could withstand a court challenge?

**Christopher Kyle:** I guess that's why I tried to introduce some of the services that we do provide. We do provide expert witness testimony, when need be, for a range of forensic cases. You're going to like this comment, perhaps: We like to be conservative on those fronts in making those assignments. We will be developing relative probabilities. It doesn't mean that we're absolutely right, but we will be giving you something to the equivalent of what you might hear in a human DNA forensics case, such as "there's a one in  $x$  chance".

• (1550)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Perron.

[*Translation*]

**Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** I'm sorry to interrupt the witness, Mr. Chair. On a point of order.

There is some noise disrupting the meeting.

I would like to ask the interpreters if the noise is disrupting their work. We want to preserve their auditory health.

Can you make the noise stop for the next hour?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you for bringing that to our attention.

I have asked Chris, who works with me, to go downstairs. I think there is some construction.

Is there no interpretation...?

I'll start again.

Thank you so much, Mr. Perron, for bringing this to our attention—

[*Translation*]

**Yves Perron:** I'm told that it disrupts the interpreters' work. I think we need to take a break and ask that the noise stop.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We will suspend for a few minutes. I'll just let people know that we have sent someone down already.

• (1550)

(Pause)

• (1550)

• (1555)

**The Chair:** Order.

Mr. Perron, are you good now?

[*Translation*]

**Yves Perron:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Okay. Perfect.

The interpreters are good. I've had a thumbs-up from them.

We will now go to MP Harrison for six minutes.

**Emma Harrison (Peterborough, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

Good afternoon. Thank you for being here. It's always a great day when there are people here from the riding of Peterborough, especially those who are advocating so strongly for farmers. I really appreciate your being here. It's nice to see you today.

Chicken Farmers of Canada has invested a lot of time and money into this issue. Could you please tell the committee how much Chicken Farmers of Canada has invested to date into the initial DNA test, and how much you estimate the cost will be to update and maintain the database used to identify spent fowl?

**Tim Klompmaker:** It's great to be here, and yes, certainly, being from Peterborough too is great.

With that, when we first did the DNA test with Trent University, we spent \$250,000. We just made a commitment as a board of directors about two weeks ago to invest another \$350,000 to recertify that test. A significant amount of money has been put forward.

I know that maybe it appears that the board of directors is being somewhat presumptuous about where we may end up, but to the board of directors, it was getting out of hand and it needed to be addressed. They certainly were very committed to spending the money.

**Emma Harrison:** Thank you for that.

Have you observed any regional disparities in the impact of these imports across Canada?

**Yves Ruel:** We don't know exactly where those imports end up. You have to assume that most of the imports come to central Canada, Quebec and Ontario, but the impact will be felt all across the country because illegal production reduces our opportunity to grow more chicken. That chicken would be grown in all 10 provinces, so it's a widespread impact all across the country.

**Emma Harrison:** Thank you.

To Mr. Kyle, another person from Peterborough, welcome. You're a professor at Trent University, and I love Trent. Thank you so much for being here.

Could you talk a bit about how reliable the test is in distinguishing between broiler meat and spent fowl?

**Christopher Kyle:** For the ones that we assign.... I can only speak about the tests that we did nearly a decade ago. As to how reliable the tests would be now, we need to reassess what the genetic lines are and how distinct they are.

Going back to that test, it was quite reliable, but it didn't have a fine polish on it. That's the fine polish we're looking to put on it right now, in order to assess its current reliability. I think the fact that we assigned 85% of the samples correctly is strong evidence that it worked well, and the 13 we didn't assign.... I mentioned, just before the interruption, that it's a critical part of any forensic test. When providing forensic evidence in a legal context, you need to have the wherewithal to know when not to make a call. I think that spoke well of our test.

**Emma Harrison:** Thank you.

To follow up on that, how long does it typically take to receive the results from the test?

**Christopher Kyle:** Again, from receiving the sample to giving a result, it depends on relative priorities. This would not be the only thing our centre is doing. If there were a commitment, I would be able to have the staff prioritize this. One could expect that we would provide answers within a few weeks if it were streamlined.

Our current turnaround time for the more generic cases we do with the Ministry of Natural Resources in Ontario, or across the country for that matter... We promise to have an answer within three months, but investigations are all quite different. There was a streamlined, more industrial process that I can speak about—the waste-water work we did with public health. We were giving next-day answers during the pandemic, so we have the capacity should that arise.

• (1600)

**Emma Harrison:** Thank you.

I'll go back to either Mr. Klompmaker or Yves.

How do you envision the DNA test being integrated into the existing inspection enforcement framework?

**Yves Ruel:** First, it's not up to us to dictate to government agencies how they should do it, because they are the ones responsible for tariff classification and have access to the imported shipments. One thing, for sure, is that we've never asked that the test be administered at the border. You can understand how disruptive it could be to the regular flow of merchandise between countries.

Currently, CFIA inspects meat shipments at receiving plants. When meat is imported into Canada, there are some random inspections for food safety within the plants that receive it. We think that would be the proper place to take samples for DNA, but, clearly, we never asked that it be done at the border. I definitely think combining it with the food safety inspection that already takes place would be the most efficient way.

At the same time, it's up to CBSA and CFIA to decide on the proper risk level and the best way to do the test. They don't ask me about the way to conduct their own operations.

**Emma Harrison:** Thank you.

To either of you, how does this issue affect domestic pricing and market competitiveness for Canadian chicken producers?

**Yves Ruel:** As I mentioned earlier, we expect it's 45 million kilograms of chicken that we won't produce this year.

First, there's an opportunity in terms of lack of economic activity and lack of production. The illegal products also mean unfair competition for all the Canadian chicken processors who follow the rules. Suddenly, they see that there's a competitor that can outprice them with supply coming from, apparently, spent fowl but which in reality is not spent fowl. It's chicken. It's unfair competition for all the legitimate players throughout the chain.

**The Chair:** Mr. Perron, you have six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Yves Perron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for joining us today. I apologize for the technical glitch earlier.

I don't want to be disrespectful to anyone, but I'm a little tired of seeing the DNA test issue come up again. I've been the agriculture critic since 2019. I'm told that work on the tests began in 2014 and was halted in 2018-19.

So far, a number of questions have been asked. In particular, we talked about the problem's significant impact on your market. For the benefit of those watching at home or elsewhere, could you explain what's going on?

From what I understand, people send their spent hens to the border. Once the spent hens arrive at the border, they are cut in four, packaged, labelled "chicken" and sold as chicken.

Have I understood correctly?

**Yves Ruel:** It's actually chicken that's put in a box labelled as containing spent hen. It should be noted that, unlike chicken, spent hens are not subject to import controls.

It is chicken illegally imported into Canada. It is declared as spent hens to avoid customs duties and controls.

**Yves Perron:** This completely distorts the market, which, let's not forget, is subject to a supply management system.

You took matters into your own hands and paid Trent University to develop the test.

People from the industry funded the work at Trent University, and it never received public funds.

Did I understand correctly?

**Yves Ruel:** That's exactly right. This is a very significant issue for the chicken sector.

The challenge is that the two products are almost identical visually. An inspector can't tell the difference between a chicken breast and a spent hen breast.

As Mr. Lumby mentioned, we were in touch with Maple Leaf right from the get-go. They directed us to the scientists at Trent University to explore solutions.

The problem was so significant that we felt it was worth our while to be proactive and invest in trying to find a solution that works. Our goal was to then present it to the government as a turnkey solution.

**Yves Perron:** What stopped that work?

**Yves Ruel:** As Mr. Kyle mentioned, the test went through a number of verifications during the development phases. We, the government and Trent University kept in contact.

I can't speak for the government, but my impression, based on what I've seen over the years, is that the government decided instead to focus on internal verification methods, such as accounting auditing and checking all import-related documents.

As we said, and as was also pointed out in the ministers' statement last March, over \$300 million was claimed in duties, interest and penalties related to fraudulent and illegal imports.

They did further verification. It was a valiant effort. However, we realize 10 years later that despite their efforts, despite the fact that they put spent fowl on the list of verification priorities three times in a row and therefore did three rounds of verification, the problem has not gone away.

I think it's time to move on and do something bigger.

• (1605)

**Yves Perron:** Don't you think the work on the test should be completed?

I don't understand why this work has been scrapped in a country that claims to attach critical importance to research, development and innovation.

A scientific method should be used to solve the problem. It's not about inspecting every load, but rather taking samples during random inspections, as you said. In fact, we are already doing that. It would be relatively easy to do that.

Instead, we find ourselves 10 or 12 years later having to deal with the same problem. This is similar to what is happening at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, or PMRA, regarding the time frame for registration. I think it's taking too long. In addition, work on the test has been scrapped. This is a serious issue.

Mr. Kyle, you mentioned earlier that you had an 85% success rate when the work was scrapped. You say that the test should be validated again and that you can do that in a few weeks for generic cases. You're saying that you can resolve all this in three months, as I understand it.

Did I understand correctly?

Can you tell me how much that would cost?

**Christopher Kyle:** No, I was talking about the time it takes to get results. The time it takes to get the results of the analysis of a sample depends on the resources we have. If we don't have the resources, it will take a little more time to analyze the samples and provide an answer, but as for the costs—

**Yves Perron:** Excuse me, Mr. Kyle, that's exactly what I want to know. You say you could do it if you had the resources, but what resources do you need?

We would like to have figures so that we can make a concrete proposal to the government in our report on this study. We would like to be able to tell them that you need  $x$  number of dollars to hire specialists. We could recommend that it take action. We would like to tell them that it would be resolved within three to six months.

Could we realistically make such a recommendation?

[English]

**Christopher Kyle:** I'm not prepared to tell you what monetary resources we need right now. Maybe Geoff would like to step in here.

It's going to take us some time to re-establish the database. I think the proposal we put forth to Chicken Farmers of Canada was that we're going to work on that over the next year. We want to re-assess the test and re-establish the database. We have been given the resources to do that by Chicken Farmers of Canada.

As for the resources to actually deploy the test, I can't speak to that right now. I don't know if you can, Geoff.

Those discussions did happen in the past, but we're a decade later.

**Geoff Lumby:** Yes, if I can jump in—

**The Chair:** I'm going to stop you there, Geoff. I apologize. The time is finished. Maybe you'll be able to bring that up afterward.

I'm going to go to the Conservatives. I'm going to Mr. Gourde for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Ruel, it seems that we are able to estimate the volume and market value of fake spent hens in Canada with relative accuracy, but we don't seem to know where they come from or where they go.

How do we estimate that, if we don't know how many spent hens are coming into the country?

**Yves Ruel:** To estimate the number of spent hens imported illegally, we use American slaughter levels and talk to companies that slaughter spent hens in the United States. We know that they don't send all their hens to Canada. Therefore, it is impossible for import levels to be as high as they are right now.

We calculated that, this year, imports accounted for 115% of the number of hens slaughtered in the United States. That's impossible, because their companies also sell them at home and in other countries.

**Jacques Gourde:** Could we put pressure on importers of spent hens?

They receive shipments full of boxes that say “spent hens”, but they potentially have broiler chicken in them. The guilty parties could be found quite easily. They all have to be spent hen importers.

Is that correct?

• (1610)

**Yves Ruel:** They are declared that way so that they can cross the border. That's where the risk lies, but we don't have access to those shipments. The Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, controls imports.

As chicken farmers, we can't barge up to the border or to processing plants and demand that shipments be opened to see what's in them. We don't have the authority to do that. It's up to the government authorities to do it.

**Jacques Gourde:** What proportion of spent hen imports are made up of fake spent hens? Is it close to 50%?

**Yves Ruel:** It is estimated that a normal, legitimate volume of imports of spent hens from the United States in a given year is 60 million kilograms. This year, the trend is towards 105 million kilograms: 45 million kilograms of a highly suspicious volume of imports and 60 million kilograms of a legitimate volume of imports.

**Jacques Gourde:** That broiler chicken ends up on the Canadian market.

Is it going to distributors, processors, restaurants? Where is it going?

**Yves Ruel:** We don't know, and no one will boast about buying illegally imported products.

**Jacques Gourde:** I want to come back to the idea of exerting pressure.

If we were to draw up a list of importers of spent hens, we would practically have a list of suspects.

In your opinion, is it just one or two importers? Are some importers above board?

**Yves Ruel:** The CBSA would be best placed to answer that question, because they are in the process of completing their third round of verifications of spent hen imports.

So far, according to the minister's statements, the CBSA has claimed \$361 million in duties, interest and penalties for misdeclared imports. There are a number of importers involved, and they would probably have more information to give you. It depends on their confidentiality rules.

We don't have access to the details, obviously, because we're not responsible for enforcing import rules in Canada.

**Jacques Gourde:** I get the impression that there are a handful of people who are making a lot of money on the backs of our Canadian chicken farmers right now. This is extremely disappointing, because we need to protect Canada's agricultural infrastructure at all costs.

We have to find a way to send a clear message to these importers to help Canadians and the agricultural sector. Right now, they're doing wrong. They're stealing money from farmers' pockets.

**Yves Ruel:** We agree with you. Thank you for inviting us to appear as part of your work on this topic. It is an important topic for us.

As Mr. Klompmaker said, this subject is so important that we have already invested \$250,000 in research and are prepared to invest an additional \$350,000 to update the test.

We want to be part of the solution.

**Jacques Gourde:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to the Liberals for five minutes.

MP Chatel.

[Translation]

**Sophie Chatel (Pontiac—Kitigan Zibi, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much to the witnesses for being with us. We know how hard our producers work. We're all here together to build a strong Canadian economy.

We obviously have trade challenges with our neighbours to the south. Therefore, it's important to solve the fraud problem, regardless of its origin, because Canada has entered into trade agreements. It abides by those agreements, and it is important to enforce them and detect cases of fraud.

I have three questions.

First, Mr. Ruel, you mentioned DNA testing. The CBSA is tracing these products and has estimated the fraud at \$361 million. Correct me if I'm wrong.

Can you tell us more about other verification methods?

**Yves Ruel:** Over the past few years, the CBSA has verified a number of importers. They found that there was a certain volume of imports—I don't have the exact number—that were declared fraudulently. In other words, poultry was imported into Canada under the wrong tariff class. The CBSA claimed \$361 million in penalties and interest on misdeclared imports.

One of the methods, then, is verification. The agency handles the process, so it can explain it better than I can. However, I can tell you that this was an accounting audit of import documents, which is done probably within a year or 18 months after the import. They are making a valiant effort.

Unfortunately, we are seeing that illegal imports are not decreasing despite all this. This year, we saw an upsurge. Therefore, we still have to be responsible and look at other solutions if the solution in place isn't enough.

• (1615)

**Sophie Chatel:** From what I understand, certain verification methods work, since money has been claimed. However, you want another method to be applied in at the same time.

My colleague Mr. Perron asked you earlier what resources you would need. We all know that we have to be very careful with the money we invest. This is the taxpayers' money, and we want to invest it properly.

Is there already infrastructure in place to do DNA testing, or does it need to be created? For example, do spent hens have to be stored in large refrigerators so that inspectors can go and test them on site?

Do we need to invest in building new infrastructure that will contain refrigerated spaces to store them before doing the tests?

I'm not clear on how all of this is going to be implemented and what the cost is going to be. Like my colleague, I have questions about that.

**Yves Ruel:** I can't speak to government measures. It's up to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canada Border Services Agency to determine how they want to proceed.

The way we look at it is that the costs will probably be relatively minimal. They may be lower than what the agencies are currently spending on verification. Once people in the industry are aware that there is an effective DNA test in place, illegal imports will no doubt decrease enormously or stop entirely.

We never thought about holding meat shipments at the border. They can still be marketed pending the results, which will come in a few weeks later.

**Sophie Chatel:** Mr. Ruel just talked about efficiency. Mr. Lumby, you said that you don't necessarily have all the databases you need to ensure that the DNA test is effective. You also said that the results of a test could lead to fraud charges.

What is the status of the data banks? Would a lack of data prevent the test from being used effectively?

[English]

**Christopher Kyle:** Can I take that one, Geoff?

**Geoff Lumby:** It's a question really for Chris, but I can just quickly put a preamble in there. After the test was created—

**The Chair:** Geoff, I'm sorry. This is the second time I've had to do it to you. I have to move on to the next person. We have very limited time here. I apologize. Hopefully someone can ask you the question again.

Mr. Perron, you have two and a half minutes.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Lumby, I'll give you about 20 seconds to answer the question.

[English]

**Geoff Lumby:** Thanks, Mr. Perron, and thanks for your comments earlier.

We tested for industry parties after creating the test and while we were waiting for the government to decide whether or not to deploy it. At that time, when I interacted with those groups, they all were so afraid of the test that, to my understanding, imports dropped off. They thought the government had already deployed the test, even though it hadn't. The point is that the deterrence factor was huge.

On your earlier question, Mr. Perron, I'm glad to talk about those costs of the deployment. The cost of creating the test again, or updating, is one thing, but deploying it is another.

Thanks.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Ruel, if I understand correctly, the DNA test could be ready in less than a year. This test could be added to the administrative work, which you commended. This administrative work resulted in \$361 million in duties, interest and penalties being assessed. We agree on that.

Would it be a good idea to recommend to the government that it allocate the necessary resources to update the database associated with this test so that it can be put in place in existing infrastructure?

Random testing is already being done. It would be a small, low-cost top-up.

Does that make sense?

• (1620)

**Yves Ruel:** Yes, that makes a lot of sense.

As members of the Chicken Farmers of Canada's board of directors, we're prepared to contribute to updating the test and to invest up to \$350,000 in it.

Why not do that?

**Yves Perron:** What more could we do?

In an ideal world, we'd make the recommendation to the government, it would invest in the project and, within a year, we'd introduce this test.

The administrative work that's produced results, could we bring in other elements of that nature?

**Yves Ruel:** I don't know if other administrative measures would be effective. We've tried a lot over the last 10 years. Despite these efforts, illegal imports continue.

What we want is results, not means.

**Yves Perron:** When we receive more of this product than what the United States produces, we're basically being had, to put it politely.

**Yves Ruel:** Let's be clear: Canadian importers are abusing this subterfuge, not the Americans. The Americans we met with are on our side to try to limit these illegal imports.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We'll go to John for five minutes.

**John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Thanks, Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses.

I can certainly understand how important this issue is when we see those numbers that have skyrocketed over the last few years.

I'll go on with my colleague's question. I think it was Mr. Lumby or Mr. Kyle who mentioned that the testing was done or that the development of the tests was done, and then they ran out of resources. I see this as a program that should be self-sustaining when the Liberal government is collecting \$360 million in penalties and tariffs.

Mr. Lumby, has the government had discussions about using the tariffs and fines collected from the illegal importation of these spent fowl? Would that be sufficient to fund the expansion or the additional development of the test that needs to be done?

**Geoff Lumby:** We haven't had those discussions in the past, but that's an order of magnitude difference there. It's \$350,000 to develop the test versus \$350 million in penalties taken in.

**John Barlow:** To Mr. Klompmaker, have you had those discussions with the government at all? This seems to be a resource issue. Funding is clearly coming in. It would be exponential, I think, for a short time, because, hopefully, the deterrent would be there.

Is that a discussion you've had with the government in terms of using the tariffs and fines that have been collected as a means of funding the DNA testing and the development of that DNA test?

**Tim Klompmaker:** At this point we have not had those discussions with government about exactly how they would operationalize the whole thing as far as the DNA test is concerned. That certainly is a solution.

**John Barlow:** In your conversations with the government, since this has become more and more of an issue over the last few years, what is the reasoning the government has given you for not providing the resources necessary to develop this DNA test and get it im-

plemented, when clearly—to the testimony of Mr. Lumby—even the threat of having that DNA test has been a deterrent?

What has been the excuse from the government for not providing the resources necessary to get this in place?

**Tim Klompmaker:** I guess what we've heard from government was that they felt that the enforcement they had in place today was sufficient. They showed us what they were issuing in fines and interest and the duties they were taking in, and they said that showed that their enforcement was working.

Our concern is that we're seeing those numbers at \$360 million. We see that on the enforcement, but we're still seeing spent fowl imports going up. All the stuff that's happening at this point is by paper verification. Our thing is that you can't argue with science. You can forge a piece of paper, but you can't change science. That's why we're on the page that, once a DNA test is in place, that is the true deterrent, because there's no questioning it.

**John Barlow:** One quick question for me would be this: Would you agree with the government's assessment that their fines and current deterrents are enough? Would you agree with that assessment?

• (1625)

**Tim Klompmaker:** No, I would not.

**John Barlow:** You talk about science, and I have concerns. We had the agriculture minister here on Thursday. Time after time, he said that they have the science, but that they were in a geopolitical situation and that they were making decisions on politics rather than defending our science and our protocols in Canada, and thus defending our producers.

Is this just a question of resources, or does there need to be some political will here by the Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Health to make sure this happens?

**Tim Klompmaker:** Certainly there needs to be the political will to get it done, no doubt.

**John Barlow:** Concerning the letter that was done in March, six or seven months ago, have you seen any progress from the date of that letter to where we are now, where we see those numbers up 25% on the recent stats? Have you seen any progress from the government in terms of resolving this issue?

**Tim Klompmaker:** Maybe I'll turn that question over to Yves. He's probably better qualified to answer that.

**Yves Ruel:** Thanks.

We had two meetings, one on August 1 and one on October 14, to update us on discussions that took place between CFIA and CB-SA, but there was nothing concrete in terms of new actions or action plans as far as we know.

**John Barlow:** It's been seven or eight months—it's actually been more than 10 years—and there's still no action.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Connors.

**Paul Connors (Avalon, Lib.):** Marianne is going to speak.

[Translation]

**Marianne Dandurand (Compton—Stanstead, Lib.):** Thank you.

I'm a strong supporter of the supply management system. I recognize how important it is. Mr. Ruel, thank you for your commitment to protecting supply management. I think that's entirely to be expected in your case. It's interesting to see the projects you have in this area.

According to my notes, the amount of imported chicken is 45 million kilograms.

I'd like to get a better perspective on what that represents. How many kilograms of chicken does Canada produce?

**Yves Ruel:** Canadian production is 1.4 billion kilograms.

**Marianne Dandurand:** What does the TRQ look like with respect to the U.S. for chicken imports into Canada?

**Yves Ruel:** Under the World Trade Organization, or WTO, of which it is a member, the U.S. has access to the Canadian market, at 40 million kilograms of chicken. It's also at 55 million kilograms or 57 million kilograms this year.

**Marianne Dandurand:** So they can—

**Yves Ruel:** I'm sorry. I would just like to add that, when we talk about 45 million kilograms, we're mainly talking about chicken breast. If we were talking about chicken production, production would have to be a little more than doubled. So we're not talking about 45 million kilograms of whole chickens, but 45 million kilograms of chicken breast.

**Marianne Dandurand:** We now have an idea of what that represents. U.S. producers export roughly one and a half times as much as they are allowed to send us, because they cheat the system.

**Yves Ruel:** Yes, that's right.

However, I need to clarify something. For this to work, both parties, the exporter and the importer, need to be involved. This gives the importer access to illegally imported chicken. They're probably much more motivated to take advantage of this subterfuge than the U.S. producers are.

**Marianne Dandurand:** Later on, we can talk about the other solutions the Canada Border Services Agency has put in place.

The solution you proposed is interesting, and we tried to explore it a little. You said that it would be up to the CBSA to determine how to proceed. However, it would take several weeks to get the test results.

As I understand it, the shipment would make it to its destination, the poultry would be consumed in Canada and we would get the test results after the fact.

How do you and the researchers think the process would go after the DNA testing stage?

**Yves Ruel:** About 10 years ago, we discussed a proposal that we could make to the government. What ensued was that it would first be up to the government to determine the level of risk. To do that, it could inspect one in 10 shipments or set a percentage. It would assess the risk based on imports.

When an officer opened the container or the truck to inspect food safety, they would also take a sample of chicken and send it to the Trent University lab. University representatives would share the results with the CBSA. If the results showed that the import was misdeclared, the CBSA could follow up with the importer if the law had been broken.

We never talked about holding the product. Right now, I believe checks are done 12 to 24 months after importation. The CBSA will be able to tell you the exact number of months.

Right now, products aren't held on consignment for 12 to 24 months. We don't want to complicate things and make the process too cumbersome for the government and industry.

However, one thing's for sure: as Mr. Lumby said, if everyone in the industry knows that a test is being used, they won't take any risks.

• (1630)

**Marianne Dandurand:** I'll turn now to the researchers.

You said you took on the cost of developing the test. You also mentioned that the university wouldn't have the resources needed to prioritize the analysis of results, so we would have to wait a few weeks before getting them.

How much could this DNA test cost?

How much funding would it take to maintain a database? Who would pay for it?

[English]

**Christopher Kyle:** I wish I was more confident in French to answer in French—my apologies.

I don't think we're really prepared to tell you how much each test is going to cost right now. Things have changed tremendously in the past 10 years. Simple reagents are two and three times what they were at that point, so we'll have to reassess that.

Please remember that we hadn't heard about any real attempts to rejuvenate this test until just a few weeks ago, so we look forward to providing those estimates and telling you how fast we could provide results. Right now, we're just focused on working with Chicken Farmers of Canada, getting the database back up and running and reassessing the test. I would assume there would be some costs obviously to maintain the database, as the producers change their genetics over time. We need to be able to adapt with time and provide the most reliable results that are contemporary.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I'd like to thank all of the witnesses for joining us here today. This is an important study. We appreciate your time.

We'll suspend for five minutes.

• (1630) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

• (1635)

**The Chair:** I'd like to call the meeting back to order.

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of our new witnesses: For those on Zoom, please wait until I recognize you. At the bottom of your screen you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on October 20, 2025, the committee is resuming its study on the importation of broiler meat mislabelled as spent fowl.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses joining us here today. Online, we have Diane Allan from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. From CBSA, we have Cathy Toxopeus and Alexander Lawton.

Thank you for joining us. We'll give you five minutes each.

Why don't we start with Diane Allan for five minutes first?

[*Translation*]

**Diane Allan (Associate Vice-President, Policy and Programs Branch, Canadian Food Inspection Agency):** Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, or CFIA.

The CFIA is a science-based regulatory organization with a dual mandate: to protect and to promote. Our primary responsibility is to safeguard Canada's food supply, plant and animal health. At the same time, we play a vital role in enabling trade to support the economic resilience of the agriculture and agri-food sector.

[*English*]

Importantly, the agency applies an economic lens to its work without compromising health and safety. By ensuring that all food, whether produced domestically or imported, meets consistent, science-based standards, this enables trade, protects market integrity and supports the success of Canadian farmers and food producers.

As for the issue related to spent fowl, it is important to note that broiler chicken imports are tightly controlled and subject to tariffs, while spent fowl can be imported freely.

The matter of broiler chickens being incorrectly declared as spent fowl when imported is not a food safety or a labelling concern. In Canada, all chicken products, whether produced locally or imported, are sold and labelled as "chicken". The distinction between broiler chicken and spent fowl matters only for import tariffs, which is neither a food safety nor a labelling issue, which I mentioned earlier. What is at stake here is that some imported chicken may be incorrectly declared as spent fowl to avoid higher tariffs.

The Canada Border Services Agency is the lead authority for enforcing tariff and import declaration requirements, while the CFIA's role is mandated to provide regulatory oversight and scientific expertise to ensure that food is safe and animals are healthy, and to support trade and the economic prosperity of Canada's agricultural resource base.

While we are not the lead agency on tariff enforcement, the CFIA does continue to work closely with domestic and international partners, particularly the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service, to ensure that all imported meat products, whether they be spent fowl or broiler chicken, come from approved systems that meet or exceed Canada's food safety requirements. An official meat certificate endorsed by a US-DA veterinarian is required for import of meats and meat products from the U.S.

Again, both spent fowl and broiler chicken are declared. The health certificate includes attestations related to the food safety, animal health and traceability information, including details on where the animals are slaughtered, processed and stored before they are exported to Canada.

By maintaining strong, scientific-based standards, the CFIA protects consumers, animals and plant health and preserves the confidence of trading partners, all of which contribute directly to a more resilient and competitive Canadian agri-food economy.

In closing, the matter of imported chicken and tariffs is neither a food safety nor a labelling issue; therefore, CFIA has really no role in this area.

The CFIA is responsible for overseeing the safety of Canada's food supply and protecting animal health and the plant resource base. The CFIA's regulatory framework is there to both safeguard and create a foundation for economic strength. Protecting food safety, animals and plants not only supports public health, but sustains market confidence and fuels continued growth across Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector.

Thank you for your attention. I'd be pleased to answer any questions from the committee.

• (1640)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll now go to the Canada Border Services Agency for five minutes.

**Alexander Lawton (Executive Director, Commercial Programs Directorate, Canada Border Services Agency):** Thank you, Chair.

Good afternoon, members of the committee.

My name is Alex Lawton. I'm the executive director responsible for the Canada Border Services Agency's trade compliance program.

As the committee may be aware, the CBSA has a dual mandate to safeguard our borders and to facilitate legitimate travellers and goods into Canada. In carrying out its mandate, the agency administers more than 100 acts, regulations and agreements on behalf of other federal government departments, provinces and territories.

Within the CBSA, my area works to ensure that all importers and exporters understand and respect Canadian trade laws and international trade agreements relating to the movement of commercial goods across Canada's borders. We assess duties and taxes owing on imported goods, conduct compliance verification audits and ensure the integrity of Canadian trade data and, by doing so, support the competitiveness of Canadian businesses.

Under Canada's tariff rate quota system, agricultural goods imported within the quota are subject to lower rates of duty, and goods imported over the quota are classified under higher rates of duty.

Allegations have previously been brought to our attention that some importers were incorrectly classifying broiler chicken imported to Canada, which is subject to a tariff rate quota and a rate of duty of 249%, as spent fowl in order to avoid the tariff rate quota requirement and the higher rate of duty. Spent fowl is meat processed from egg-laying hens once they have passed their useful productivity. Spent fowl is not subject to the tariff rate quota, whereas broiler chicken is.

The CBSA maintains a robust post-release verification regime and has made spent fowl the subject of regular trade compliance verifications. In response to stakeholder concerns, the CBSA developed tailored verification procedures to verify this specific commodity. These procedures served to create a comprehensive audit approach and provide a more effective means of identifying non-compliance by engaging all parties involved in the supply chain, including exporters, importers and Canadian customers, in order to validate the accuracy of the import declarations.

Between January 2010 and October 2025, the CBSA concluded 176 verifications of spent fowl and assessed \$377,416,130 in duty, interest and penalties as a result. Another 18 verifications or other compliance actions are still in process.

These verification results show a significant decline in non-compliance since 2017. Initial rounds of spent fowl verifications in 2017 and 2020, as a national priority, resulted in an overall non-compliance rate of 38%. The most recent round of verifications launched in September 2023 has so far resulted in a 15% non-compliance rate.

The CBSA continues to seek improvements in how it identifies and addresses non-compliance. With the release of the CBSA assessment of revenue management system, or CARM, on October 21, 2024, the CBSA now has higher-quality and more timely data, plus an improved ability to analyze this data and identify potential non-compliance.

By facilitating aggregation analysis of trade data, CARM allows the CBSA to better identify changes in an individual importer's im-

port patterns over time, inconsistencies in an importer's trading activities relative to others importing the same commodity or even discrepancies in how an importer describes its goods at different stages of the import process. As a result, CARM has improved the CBSA's ability to detect potential non-compliance, while also decreasing the time it takes to do so, and this is expected to directly impact the agency's ability to detect and address imports of poultry incorrectly classified as spent fowl.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you about the CBSA's work concerning this issue.

I'd be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

We'll go to the Conservatives now for six minutes.

I'll start with Mr. Bragdon.

**Richard Bragdon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to each of the witnesses today.

I want to start with you, Ms. Allan, if I may. You received a letter from the Minister of Health and the Minister of Agriculture—is that correct?—back in March, and they were insisting on this matter being resolved. On what date will the matter get resolved, in your estimate?

**Diane Allan:** Mr. Chair, we have had a significant amount of progress in discussions between us at CFIA and CBSA in sharing intelligence and information. We have met with a variety of stakeholders across the value chain, such as the Chicken Farmers of Canada. We also met with our colleagues at Food and Beverage Canada, as well as a number of other stakeholders.

We continue to provide stakeholder engagement in that space. We also are gathering further information and we have had discussions recently with Trent and CFC. As we continue to engage with our colleagues and understand their perspectives—

**Richard Bragdon:** Thanks, Ms. Allan. I have a short amount of time, and I have to try to get a few more questions in here.

If indeed we've seen a 25% increase in the mislabelled product coming into this country since the beginning of this year alone, how is this being mitigated? Have there been any steps? It doesn't seem like it. It seems like there have been more conversations. There have been more talks and a lot more discussions, but what concrete action has been taken by CFIA to address this problem, which has been raised by both the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Health?

**Diane Allan:** As you heard from colleagues earlier from Trent University, there are some discussions happening. We are discussing the rigour of the methodology that they're using.

In 2018, when we were engaged with them, there were limitations of the test that were found. We do know that the threshold for risk, as was mentioned by the Chicken Farmers of Canada, is something we need to look at without necessarily underplaying the upstream and downstream impacts in terms of the value chain in Canada.

**Richard Bragdon:** Ms. Allan, is it not true that this does pose a serious food safety risk to Canadians because of the egg allergy aspect and the traceability aspect?

This is a huge concern not only for the producers here in Canada; it's actually a concern on both sides of the border. This is something that needs urgent attention. It needs to be addressed. It seems like we're hearing that there's just going to be more discussion and more examination.

What concrete steps is CFIA taking to get this matter resolved expeditiously?

**Diane Allan:** As I indicated earlier, we have had some intelligence exchanged between us. There has been a decrease in non-compliance, as was mentioned by my colleague at border services.

To go back to your point about the food safety issue, although there are studies that show spent fowl may contain egg protein, the risk is managed by industry through good manufacturing practices. Allergen labelling is available and exists to inform consumers when allergens such as egg are present in processed food products.

• (1650)

**Richard Bragdon:** Thank you, Ms. Allan.

Mr. Lawton, according to the March ministerial statement, \$361 million in duties, interest and penalties were assessed during the verification rounds. However, we do not know how much was actually paid to CRA.

Could you please update the committee on that issue if you have any insight on that?

**Alexander Lawton:** Unfortunately, I don't have the number in front of me in terms of how much was paid. That's something I could circle back on and provide at a later date. I don't have that number here.

**Richard Bragdon:** Please table that with us. Thank you.

My colleague, Mr. Epp, has a question at this time.

**Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to explore with the witness online a bit more about how this is not a food safety issue.

How is mislabelled product that prevents food traceability not a food safety issue? Could she elaborate, please?

**Diane Allan:** As I indicated in my opening remarks, we work with our USDA colleagues and we have full traceability of all chicken product, whether it be spent fowl or broiler chicken, through the system. We have access to all that traceability information. It is, therefore, not a food safety issue.

**Dave Epp:** How can you trace something that's mislabelled?

**Diane Allan:** All product that is processed and slaughtered in the U.S. has to be indicated on the meat import documentation with a U.S. veterinarian attesting to that information, so it is fully traced out on both sides of the border.

**Dave Epp:** Why did your agency shut down a storage warehouse in Detroit?

**Diane Allan:** I was not at the CFIA, unfortunately. I'd have to go back and look into the details of how that shutdown happened. I can table that with the members of the committee.

**Dave Epp:** For the record, that warehouse was involved in the mislabelled export of product. Spent fowl labelled as broiler meat was coming into Canada. The CFIA—your agency—shut it down.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** We'll go to MP Dandurand for six minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Marianne Dandurand:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for being with us and sharing what they know about this situation.

I'd like a clearer understanding of the relationship between the Canada Border Services Agency and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

How do the two organizations share information with each other?

[*English*]

**Cathy Toxopeus (Director General, Commercial Programs Directorate, Canada Border Services Agency):** Thank you for the question.

What happens first, regardless of whether the poultry is spent fowl or broiler chicken, is that the import documentation is submitted to the CBSA. It goes through the single-window information system. That single-window information system submits that and triggers a review by CFIA, which has access to that system. CFIA makes the release decision. When it comes to the border, our officers are not permitted to release any sort of poultry without that CFIA decision on record. That is how that goes.

Further to some of what Ms. Allan mentioned, we do have an exchange of information for any sort of thing they want to flag for anything related to trade verification fraud.

[*Translation*]

**Marianne Dandurand:** As I understand it, the CBSA would eventually do the DNA testing and then send the samples collected to a university in Ontario for the analysis to be done. The results would then be forwarded to the CBSA.

Based on your experience in similar situations, how long would this process take from start to finish?

[English]

**Cathy Toxopeus:** It would very much depend on the way in which it is done, whether it is done at the port of entry, whether the truck is held at the port of entry to do that DNA testing, whether that truck is referred to a warehouse inland to do that DNA testing.... We wouldn't be able to opine on how much it would cost or what the implications would be before knowing exactly how that would function.

[Translation]

**Marianne Dandurand:** Would a DNA test improve the situation?

Could imports of spent hens be stopped?

[English]

**Cathy Toxopeus:** For the CBSA, we can't comment on the DNA testing and if that's going to stop it. The only thing I think we can comment on is whether the DNA testing would have any sort of implication on our trade verification processes.

I'll turn it over to my colleague.

• (1655)

**Alexander Lawton:** Thank you.

Yes, from a tariff classification duty-rate perspective, the defining characteristic of spent fowl, what makes spent fowl spent fowl, is essentially the age of the chicken, the fact that it has to be an older chicken that no longer produces eggs. To the extent that a DNA test would be able to establish how old the chicken is, we could use it. It could be useful. However, if the DNA test was only able to indicate, for example, what breed of chicken was used for that meat, it could not be used to determine tariff classification or to determine whether the goods were mislabelled or misclassified or not. It would just be one indicator among many that we would use to inform our paper-based audits and verifications.

[Translation]

**Marianne Dandurand:** Could you explain again what the CBSA and the CFIA are currently doing to detect these cases of spent hens coming into Canada?

[English]

**Alexander Lawton:** Essentially, it's a trade compliance process, an audit process, where we have a number of different ways of risking individual shipments, especially within spent fowl. We'll look at import patterns. If there is a new importer or somebody begins importing spent fowl, that becomes one factor we look at.

Within the spent fowl space, if there are certain importers who are bringing in what they call spent fowl, but it's at a different price from everyone else, that's another factor. By looking at all these different factors, even, for example, an importer declaring their goods at the border as broiler chicken and then when it comes time to account and pay the duties they call it spent fowl, that's another risk. It's a pretty obvious risk factor, but it's a risk factor.

Using that, we're able to identify who should be verified, who should be audited, by the CBSA to confirm whether their goods are spent fowl or not. During the verification process, we don't just look at the importer and the importer's books and records, we'll also

contact the foreign exporter as well as the importer's customers. At that point, we have a full line of sight on the supply chain. If the exporter in the foreign country is calling it spent fowl and everything lines up in that respect, and if the importer has all the documentation saying it's spent fowl and if their customers in Canada say they're using spent fowl and are able to demonstrate it, then we say, okay, it's spent fowl. There is no non-compliance; there's no mislabelling.

If there are discrepancies, we'll pursue it further, and if those discrepancies are significant, we'll say the goods are misclassified, re-classify them as broiler chicken and assess the duty and tax. Where there is evidence that this was intentional in some respect, we'll make a referral to our colleagues in criminal investigations within the CBSA.

[Translation]

**Marianne Dandurand:** You've therefore stepped up efforts to detect these cases of fraud.

Given the time it takes to get results and the efforts you're currently making, could we assume that, if you continue in this way, the results will be exponential?

In other words, will you detect more and more of them in the coming months and years?

[English]

**Alexander Lawton:** The short answer would be yes. We're becoming much faster—especially with CARM, as I alluded to in my opening statement—at identifying imports of spent fowl as soon as they start, and we're addressing it much more quickly.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We go to Mr. Perron for six minutes, please.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for taking the time to be with us today. We appreciate it.

I have a lot of questions. I would therefore ask them to provide brief answers, if possible.

Ms. Allan, you said there were no labelling issues. You're saying that the CFIA has no role to play in this, because it's not a food safety issue.

If the spent hens entering Canada are labelled as spent hens and they turn into broiler chickens once they cross the border, that's a labelling issue, in my opinion. It seems to me that something's not working.

For example, there would be a problem if this product were recalled in the United States for food safety reasons. If the label has been changed so that spent hens can be sold illegally as chicken, we wouldn't be able to locate them.

**Diane Allan:** Thank you for the question.

[English]

As I indicated earlier, the product is labelled as chicken. Whether it's spent fowl or broiler chicken, it's labelled as chicken.

We do not look at the age or the process by which it was slaughtered beforehand, but we do have a veterinarian-signed document, when the product moves across the Canadian border from the U.S., that attests to the full traceability of the product, where it was slaughtered and how it was slaughtered. The U.S. also attests to the animal health and the food safety elements of it.

• (1700)

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** I understand your answer, Ms. Allan.

That said, if the product name changes once it crosses the border, can we ensure it's traceable?

Let's take the example of a spent hen cut into four pieces. These would be sold as broiler chicken. At some point, an intermediary is going to jump.

I agree that your role is safety. You've made that clear. However, how would taking a sample and having it analyzed as part of your random inspections make your role more cumbersome?

Would it be that cumbersome? Couldn't the CBSA and the CFIA work together on this?

Don't take this as a personal criticism. Generally speaking, as elected officials, too often we see departments not communicating with each other and not working together. For example, three agencies manage the reciprocity of standards. Every time we call one of them, they refer us to one of the others. In the end, no one takes the blame.

It seems to me that the test may be worthwhile, especially if it's heavily funded by industry. It could be added to all your agency's existing measures. You're doing an excellent job on food safety. I'm not questioning your work.

Couldn't you work together on this?

[English]

**Diane Allan:** The labelling requirement, as I indicated earlier, and the attestation provided [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] the product to move across the border. Once it arrives into an importing facility, as you are aware, members of the committee, every importer and anybody who is producing product for their manufacturing and is sold within Canada is subject to the safe food for Canadians licence and, therefore, there are traceability requirements and preventative control plans in that space. Their whole chain is from a traceability standpoint.

Regarding your question about collaboration with the CBSA, we are working very closely on a variety of facets, this particular file as well—

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** Pardon me, Ms. Allan.

[English]

**Diane Allan:** —and we work very collaboratively.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** I'm sorry, Ms. Allan. The sound is not very good, and it's preventing our interpreters from doing their job. Also, we don't have much time left. Thank you for your answers.

Mr. Lawton, you said that verifications that were done resulted in nearly \$377 million in duty, interest and penalties.

Have you collected all that money? Has it all been spent?

[English]

**Alexander Lawton:** Unfortunately, I think this question may have been asked previously in terms of collections. While I had the amount assessed here with me, I do not have the amount collected. That's something we'll table. I'll have to provide it to the committee after.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** I would appreciate that.

It seems to me that those funds could be invested in updating the DNA test. After all, it's related to the same issue. It could be done at virtually no cost, if we stop illegal fowl imports.

Do you think that money could be invested in developing the DNA test?

[English]

**Alexander Lawton:** I really wouldn't be able to comment on that, but one thing I should be able to note, if you give me two seconds, is that the \$360 million is heavily weighted toward the beginning of when we began our compliance verifications. For example, for last year, ending March 31, 2025, \$268,000 was assessed. It wasn't millions.

Even this year so far, we've assessed just over \$16 million. Again, it's a significant amount, but it's not hundreds of millions.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** Thank you very much.

In addition to investing that money in DNA testing work, the Canada Revenue Agency could verify the amount paid to buy the product.

That might give us a hint as to whether it's spent hens or not. I assume that chicken labelled as spent hen is cheaper to import, which is beneficial for the Canadian importer who is committing fraud.

To be more efficient, couldn't that be investigated? Isn't that something else that could be considered?

[English]

**Alexander Lawton:** That is something we could look at. We have a memorandum of understanding with the Canada Revenue Agency. We try to use all sorts of legally available data to further our compliance verification.

Potentially, it's a yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll go to the Conservatives now.

Mr. Barlow.

• (1705)

**John Barlow:** Thank you, Chair.

Thanks to the witnesses.

Ms. Allan, I want to make sure we're very clear. I know you've been asked this question a couple of times. You were talking about traceability. You said that, if there were a recall on broiler chicken in the United States, it wouldn't be an issue in terms of traceability and food safety.

Are you saying, then, that all chicken imported into Canada from the United States would then be recalled by Canada and the CFIA? I don't want to put words in your mouth, though. Is that your response to this?

**Diane Allan:** What I indicated was that we have traceability for product from the U.S. crossing the Canadian border. There is traceability to the importer under the safe food for Canadians licensing. We have a traceability chain between the U.S. and Canada to the importer and traceability within the safe food for Canadians licence. If a food recall were to happen in the U.S., the chain would not be broken. It would facilitate that trace-back.

**John Barlow:** You're saying the chain won't be broken, but our confusion is over this: A product is coming into Canada that's clearly mislabelled. I'm not sure how the chain is going in the direction you're expecting it to go when a product has clearly been mislabelled and put into the food chain in another unanticipated direction. There is some concern among several of the MPs here over your saying this isn't a food safety issue. We are clearly importing food into Canada that is mislabelled. Certainly, traceability and food safety should be paramount.

I'll go to Mr. Lawton and Ms. Toxopeus.

The \$360 million, I know, has been questioned in terms of how much that actually is. We have a DNA test that showed a great deal of potential about 10 years ago. That research wasn't carried through to the end. The response from the folks at Trent University was that there was a lack of resources. You clearly had a potential solution to a significant problem, but it was dropped.

Why was that not carried through to see that DNA test come to fruition and be used by CBSA?

**Alexander Lawton:** I'll put aside the science and scientific validity. I'm an accountant by training. I'm not a scientist, by any means.

As I alluded to before, in addition to any operational or logistical issues, and from a tariff classification, duty and tax perspective—which is what the CBSA is responsible for in this space—the DNA test is useful as a risking tool to the extent that it does not confirm the age of a chicken. How old a chicken is, really, is how spent fowl is defined. The test is an indicator of risk that some of the spent fowl is misclassified or mislabelled, but it wouldn't be determinative. It would just be one supplement to identify who we should be auditing, essentially.

**John Barlow:** Mr. Lumby, who was on the panel before you, said that there was potential with this test. In fact, he said that, when importers in Canada and those in the United States who are illegally mislabelling chicken heard that Canada was looking at this DNA test, it was a significant deterrent. That's without us even doing it.

Wasn't there potential there to at least see this through until the end and to see what would happen as a result? Clearly, you're saying that everything is improving, but we have a 25% increase in the amount of spent fowl and mislabelled chicken coming into Canada, and 115% of the entire slaughter in the United States is being imported into Canada.

Excuse me, but this doesn't sound like success to me. If there are some options or tools to add to your tool box, I don't see why we aren't following that path.

**Alexander Lawton:** I'll have to start by noting that imports of spent fowl have increased, but in fact all evidence points to imports of mislabelled spent fowl, of non-compliance, actually going down significantly. It's still significant at 15%, but it's much less than the 38% or 40% that was seen a decade ago.

With respect to the DNA test and its usefulness as a risking tool, it has potential. At the same time, essentially, every importer of commercially significant volumes of spent fowl has either been audited or is currently under audit. That's something the CBSA is continuing to do. An additional risking tool would not necessarily add much to the way we identify who gets audited.

• (1710)

**John Barlow:** Your tool box is insufficient now, so you need some help there.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We next go to MP Connors for five minutes.

**Paul Connors:** Thank you.

If someone like you gets the first time.... Is there a penalty for repeat offenders?

**Alexander Lawton:** The biggest penalty, with respect to spent fowl or mislabelled spent fowl, is a 249% duty. In addition to that, there is an administrative monetary penalty that's associated with it, and it does increase, depending on the frequency of non-compliance.

To be frank, the most significant penalty, if you can call it that, is that, when we do have repeat offenders, repeated instances of non-compliance, at that point it becomes relatively clear that there may be some intent and it is a form of fraud, so we will make a referral to our criminal investigations area within CBSA to pursue that. It's no longer just a regulatory administrative matter.

**Paul Connors:** You have consulted with the industry on the different ways of detecting, with DNA tests and all that. Is there any other way it can be detected? How are you detecting it now?

**Alexander Lawton:** The principal way in which we determine whether goods are truly spent fowl or are mislabelled or misclassified broiler chicken is through the audit of documentation of records—not just the importers' records but also their suppliers' and customers' records—to validate that there's consistency along the supply chain. That everyone everywhere is labelling the goods as spent fowl and all evidence points to its being spent fowl is, really, what we've relied upon.

With DNA testing or not, provided that the DNA testing wouldn't be able to shed light on the age of a chicken, that would continue to be our primary means of validating compliance.

**Paul Connors:** Okay. You came up with a number of 15%, which is what I think you just said. Was it 15% or 19%?

**Alexander Lawton:** The CBSA did three rounds of national verification priorities, which basically means that, at a given point in time, we verified all significant importers of spent fowl. The first round was in 2017 and the second in 2020. Those two rounds found a 38% non-compliance rate. The third round, the one we're currently finishing up, was launched in 2023. At this point, we have a 15% non-compliance rate.

**Paul Connors:** Do you think that the non-compliance rate is coming down because of the increased tariffs that would be put on it, or because you're using better ways of detecting spent fowl?

**Alexander Lawton:** I believe it would be a combination of both better risking and compliance techniques, but also faster risking, interventions and audits. Importers are no longer able to import for a year or two years before we knock on their door and ask to see their records. Today, generally, it's within a matter of weeks or months that we're able to launch a verification or an audit, which really does address the problem early. If they're inadvertently making an error, we alert them to it. If they're intentionally or advertently making an error, they become aware that we're onto them very quickly.

**Paul Connors:** We had the Chicken Farmers of Canada in, and they were very supportive of DNA testing and want us to move forward with this. What do you have...?

We talked about what you have in your tool box. Tell us what you have in your tool box that can satisfy us that you'll be able to pick out the spent chickens or the broiler chickens.

**Alexander Lawton:** I'd say, in general, there are three different tools in our tool box, three different things that really will address this issue.

The first is that we're verifying or auditing every single significant importer. We either have audited or are in the process of auditing them, so everyone who's in this space is getting contacted by the CBSA. The second is that we continue to monitor imports. By using the CBSA's new CARM system, we're actually much better at monitoring in a faster way. We look to see whether there are any changes in importer or any changes in market behaviour. We will identify that very quickly and address it as appropriate. The third is, essentially, just as you said: The 249% duty rate is prohibitive. If we're able to identify non-compliant imports very quickly and assess that duty very quickly, a 249% duty, generally, will dissuade people from attempting to mislabel.

• (1715)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Perron, you have two and a half minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Yves Perron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Lawton, you've told us a number of times that the DNA test doesn't confirm the age of the chicken. However, chicken farmers are telling us the opposite, and people from Trent University seem to be saying the same thing.

Who is right?

If the test isn't perfect, wouldn't it be worth investing in developing that tool?

[*English*]

**Alexander Lawton:** My understanding—and, again, I'm happy to be corrected by anyone from Trent University—is that the DNA test is able to determine if the chicken is male or female and the breed of the chicken—so, whether it's commonly used for eggs or not—but the age is not a factor.

[*Translation*]

**Yves Perron:** Mr. Lawton, from what I understand, the DNA test makes it possible to find out the age of the chicken. So it would be important to explore this tool further.

You're saying there's a 249% tariff on broiler chicken. You also say that, if we're able to quickly identify non-compliant imports, that is to say misrepresenting broiler chicken as spent fowl, that rate of duty is quite a deterrent.

However, that doesn't seem to be the case, since non-compliant imports are on the rise. I think we could be tougher on repeat offenders. You say that they're being criminally investigated.

For example, why couldn't we take away the import permit from people who use this scheme?

This could significantly reduce imports of broiler chicken mislabelled as spent fowl.

[*English*]

**Alexander Lawton:** In that respect, unfortunately I'd have to defer to colleagues within Global Affairs Canada with respect to import permits or the management of the tariff-free quota system. I apologize.

[*Translation*]

**Yves Perron:** We're going to have to tackle this problem. We've been at this for 10 or 12 years, if not longer. Work had already begun on the DNA test.

My colleagues wondered how long it would take to analyze DNA tests. We were told that the results of those test results wouldn't be available until several weeks after the fowl was imported.

I don't think that's a big deal. Once the results are known, customs duties can be imposed on importers at fault and their import permits can be revoked. I don't think they'll use this scheme over and over again, and it will send a clear message to everyone.

One of the witnesses in the previous panel mentioned that just making it known that work was being done on a DNA test reduced the number of fraudulent import cases.

In any case, I've made a lot of suggestions to you today. We'll take your testimony into account and make recommendations to the government.

Thank you for being open to the idea of looking at the Canada Revenue Agency's figures. A shipment that cost much less than others is all the more suspicious.

Thank you very much, Mr. Lawton.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to our final five minutes from the Conservatives.

Go ahead, Mr. Bonk.

**Steven Bonk (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** This question is for Ms. Allan and the CFIA.

What organization is in charge of labelling and enforcement in Canada? Once the spent fowl is in Canada, who enforces labelling?

**Diane Allan:** The misrepresentation of fowl in terms of its import is the CBSA's responsibility. Labelling on the packaging sold to consumers is a CFIA responsibility, and on that labelling it clearly says chicken. We do not differentiate spent fowl labelling versus broiler chicken labelling; it is just chicken. That is the responsibility we have at the CFIA.

**Steven Bonk:** What would be the difference if someone was to import buffalo and call it beef, for example? Is there no enforcement once it's in Canada?

**Diane Allan:** If the product that is coming in is misrepresented, that is definitely a responsibility for the CFIA. Misrepresentation in the circumstance that you've indicated would be a different species versus the species that's on the label. In the question of spent fowl, spent fowl is chicken, and broiler chicken is chicken.

**Steven Bonk:** Okay.

There's a DNA test that's been proposed here that can basically solve the problem between broiler meat and spent fowl, and it's being proposed to you by the Chicken Farmers of Canada. Is that not something that you could use as a tool to have proper labelling? It seems that the crux of the problem here is a labelling issue.

**Diane Allan:** The question is not the labelling of the product, per se. It's a question of the misrepresentation when it's imported through the tariff aspects. Maybe I can defer to my colleague at the CBSA.

● (1720)

**Dave Epp:** I'd like to make some comments for the record.

In response to the Chicken Farmers of Canada request, the former federal minister of agriculture announced:

...to ensure appropriate tariff classification of spent fowl, the Government will also look at specific options regarding certification requirement for imports of spent fowl product, while ensuring that any such requirement would be fully consistent with Canada's international trade obligations.

That quote comes from former minister of agriculture Lawrence MacAulay in November 2016.

This committee is undertaking two studies, and I can't help but draw some parallels between them. You can't help but wonder why Canadians are frustrated at times with government and our departments when we're talking about the speed of reacting to issues. That was back in 2016.

I want to laud the work of the Chicken Farmers of Canada and their persistence in carrying on. They've provided some materials. I'm going to read into the record a bit of the chronology of this entire issue:

2013: Multiple meetings with AAFC and CBSA to find ways to prevent illegal imports and to request specific labeling for spent fowl products (CFIA requires whole bird to be labelled as "mature chicken", but cut-up products can be labeled as "chicken", therefore misleading consumers...

2014: Successful DNA test developed by Trent University presented to government officials

2014: Proposed pilot for DNA testing from Trent University-Sterisense to government officials

2016: Senate Standing committee on agriculture and forestry - hearings on the imports of spent fowl

2016: Presentation of the spent fowl DNA test to government officials for scientific validation

2016: CFIA suspended a cold storage facility in Detroit for mislabeling practices

2017: [Chicken Farmers of Canada] seeking progress from government officials on validation of the DNA test

2017: First round of CBSA Priority Verifications for spent fowl

2018: Blind validation of the DNA test—90 samples...

We've heard testimony on that. It continues:

2019: On-going lobby to have the implementation of the DNA test

We heard in testimony there was radio silence since then until a couple of weeks ago. It says:

2020: Second round of CBSA Priority Verifications for spent fowl

2023: Third round of CBSA Priority Verifications for spent fowl—\$250 million assessed for misclassified imports under rounds 1 and 2.

2023: Imports are increasing again—Year to date end of July - 17% increase. Estimate annual volume to be at 85Mkg, similar to 2020

2023: Starting to have imports from Brazil and Argentina

**The Chair:** I'm sorry to interrupt, but the interpreters are saying you're going a little bit too fast.

**Dave Epp:** I will slow down. I do have that tendency.

It's not a wonder that the public and farm organizations become frustrated with the speed of government and of departments to respond.

The numbers don't add up. One country cannot import more than 100% of another country's production without there being criminal fraud.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

I'll go to the Liberals for the final five minutes.

Go ahead, MP Harrison.

**Emma Harrison:** Thank you very much.

My first question is for the CBSA. How frequently or in how many cases has the criminal investigations unit of the CBSA been successful in investigating when it comes to spent fowl?

**Alexander Lawton:** Unfortunately, I don't have those numbers in front of me. To be honest, I'm not entirely sure to what extent those could even be shared. That's something that, if it's acceptable, we will table and provide at a later date, to the extent we're able to.

**Emma Harrison:** Do you know what the consequences would be if the criminal investigation were successful?

**Alexander Lawton:** It would be a criminal infraction. In terms of the actual consequences and penalties, I'm really not able to say. I apologize.

**Emma Harrison:** That's okay.

If the DNA test is not what the CBSA needs to prevent this from happening, what would be an alternative solution? Clearly, it's still a problem that needs a solution, so what would be the recommendation?

**Alexander Lawton:** That's a good question. It's not that DNA testing is not a solution; it's just that it's a solution to assist us in risking.

To be honest, I don't really have other alternatives in front of me right now that leap to mind.

**Emma Harrison:** If the DNA test were able to differentiate between a broiler and a layer, wouldn't that at least be a flag if there were a surge of, let's say, layers being put through so that CBSA could further investigate?

• (1725)

**Alexander Lawton:** My understanding, again, speaking as a layman, is that the test is essentially able to differentiate between breeds that are usually used to lay eggs, which are spent fowl, and breeds that are normally used for broiler chicken. To the extent those breeds are the traditional breeds that are always used for those two purposes, it's able to be used.

In recent years, with both trade diversification and changing market conditions, where egg shortages mean that some birds that traditionally were used for broilers are now used for eggs, the mix of what is spent fowl and what breeds are commonly used may be changing. It is an indicator of potential non-compliance, but the extent to which it is a reliable indicator is something we'd really need to look into further if we were to operationalize the DNA testing.

**Emma Harrison:** Not many large producers would ever use a laying hen to produce meat for broilers, because it would be nonsensical. I farm. It would be nonsensical to use a layer hen, because a broiler is designed to produce heavy breast meat and is best for the market.

If the DNA test could, at a minimum, flag a large number of layers, would that not be a step forward for the chicken farmers of Canada to make sure that their market access is protected?

**Alexander Lawton:** That would essentially identify shipments where it's almost certain that the goods being declared as spent fowl are truly spent fowl, because the breed is used for spent fowl; it's a layer chicken. It wouldn't necessarily help us identify non-compliance. What it would do would be reduce the amount of noise in the system by validating true compliance to a certain extent.

Yes, low-risk shipments would help us identify those.

**Emma Harrison:** Based on historical data, how much spent fowl meat should be imported from the United States annually?

**Alexander Lawton:** Unfortunately, I don't have historical trends in front of me.

**Emma Harrison:** That's all, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much.

This is the end of our meeting. I'd like to adjourn. Is there any opposition to adjourning? No.

The meeting is adjourned.

---







Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>