



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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CANADA

PROTECTING CANADA'S POULTRY INDUSTRY: FOR A BETTER CONTROL OF SPENT FOWL IMPORTS INTO CANADA

**Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and
Agri-Food**

Michael Coteau, Chair

**JANUARY 2026
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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Sarah Houle, Analyst

THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied the importation of broiler meat mislabeled as spent fowl and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in partnership with the Canada Border Services Agency, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and industry stakeholders, identify and apply stronger deterrents against the illegal importation or misrepresentation of spent fowl, and maintain robust enforcement of existing trade and food inspection regulations to protect the integrity of Canada’s poultry market.

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Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada track and report to relevant Ministers and stakeholders the duties, interest and penalties on misdeclared and mislabelled spent fowl collected by the Canada Revenue Agency.

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Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada increase its enforcement activities at the border and allocate more resources, including new technologies and advanced data analysis, to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canada Border Services Agency to have better control over spent fowl at the border and ensure that employees receive adequate training for this purpose.

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Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada ask its agencies (the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canada Border Services Agency) to implement a DNA test, developed in collaboration with Trent University, that can detect whether an imported poultry product contains spent fowl, broiler chicken or a combination of the two in order to detect illegal imports of broiler chicken declared as spent fowl.

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PROTECTING CANADA'S POULTRY INDUSTRY: FOR A BETTER CONTROL OF SPENT FOWL IMPORTS INTO CANADA

INTRODUCTION

On October 20, 2025, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (the Committee) adopted the following [motion](#):

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the fraudulent importation of broiler meat mislabeled as spent fowl and report its findings to the House.

The Committee held a meeting on October 27, 2025, and heard seven witnesses on the topic of the importation of broiler chicken mislabelled as spent fowl. The Committee would like to thank all witnesses for their contributions, and it is pleased to present its report and its recommendations to the Government of Canada.

The report begins with an overview of the fraudulent importation of broiler chicken mislabelled as spent fowl. It then outlines the solutions proposed by stakeholders to address the situation.

OVERVIEW OF FRAUD ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPORTATION OF BROILER MEAT MISLABELLED AS SPENT FOWL

Spent fowl refers to the meat of laying hens that have reached the end of their useful life. This meat is considered tougher and generally less appealing from a culinary standpoint compared with broiler chicken. Because of this difference, spent fowl are not subject to the [tariffs](#) that generally apply to imports of United States poultry meat under the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement.

Health Risks

According to [Diane Allan](#), Associate Vice-President for the Policy and Programs Branch at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), “[t]he matter of broiler chickens being incorrectly declared as spent fowl when imported is not a food safety or a labelling concern.” The CFIA does not distinguish between the two types of poultry, and its



primary focus is the safety of imported products. She said that the topic being studied is a matter of customs tariffs, not food safety.

When asked about the traceability of broiler chickens fraudulently labelled spent fowl, [Diane Allan](#) said that the CFIA is able to trace back poultry products, “including details on where the animals are slaughtered, processed and stored before they are exported to Canada.” Members of the Committee asked questions about the CFIA’s ability to carry out a recall in case of a food safety issue. [She](#) did not comment on how fraudulent labelling could affect the traceability of poultry, saying that the CFIA has the information it needs to guarantee food safety for poultry, and the issue at hand is primarily a matter of collecting tariffs on broiler chicken.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in partnership with the Canada Border Services Agency, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and industry stakeholders, identify and apply stronger deterrents against the illegal importation or misrepresentation of spent fowl, and maintain robust enforcement of existing trade and food inspection regulations to protect the integrity of Canada’s poultry market.

Economic Impacts

The fraudulent importation of broiler chicken mislabelled as spent fowl allows exporters to bypass tariffs on broiler chicken. According to Chicken Farmers of Canada, it has been an issue since 2012, as [Tim Klompaker](#), Chair of Chicken Farmers of Canada, explained when he appeared before the Committee:

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.

When asked about the overall impact on the poultry industry of the fraudulent importation of broiler chicken mislabelled as spent fowl, [Tim Klompaker](#) said that spent fowl processors in the United States also have concerns: “They’re saying they’re unfairly having to compete with these companies that are bringing in broiler chicken that’s classified as spent fowl.” [Yves Ruel](#), the Associate Executive Director at Chicken Farmers of Canada, gave an estimate of the economic impact in Canada:

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.

TACKLING FRAUD ASSOCIATED WITH IMPORTING BROILER CHICKEN MISLABELLED AS SPENT FOWL

In March 2025, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Rural Economic Development and the Minister of Public Safety announced steps “to enhance collaboration with industry and enforcement agencies and advance our efforts to address this issue.” They added that “[t]he Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) are working on sharing intelligence to develop an action plan to improve detection, enforce compliance, and ensure a level playing field for all.”

Alexander Lawton, Executive Director of the Commercial Programs Directorate at the CBSA, told the Committee that, “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.” However, when asked about the amount collected from the assessed penalties, he was unable to tell the Committee what amount had been recovered by the CBSA.

Alexander Lawton added that the CBSA has noted a decline in non-compliance since 2017. He mentioned that, between 2017 and 2020, the overall non-compliance rate was 38%, compared with 15% for the period from 2023 to when he appeared before the Committee. When asked about the reasons for this decline, he noted that it was due to “a combination of both better risking and compliance techniques, but also faster risking, interventions and audits.”

According to Alexander Lawton, the CBSA currently detects cases of fraud associated with the importation of broiler chickens mislabelled as spent fowl using a trade compliance process, which is an audit process. It assesses import patterns. The presence of a new spent fowl importer or changes to imports of spent fowl by existing importers are considered risk factors. Another factor is the price that importers are paying for spent fowl. A significant price difference compared to market price could indicate possible fraud, which would trigger an investigation.



Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada track and report to relevant Ministers and stakeholders the duties, interest and penalties on misdeclared and mislabelled spent fowl collected by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Implementation of the Canada Border Services Agency Assessment and Revenue Management System

On the topic of anti-fraud measures, [Alexander Lawton](#) mentioned that, “[w]ith 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.” He said that CARM would help the CBSA to better identify cases of fraud by tracking changes in individual importers’ import patterns over time, allowing the CBSA to identify, for example, when an importer of broiler chicken suddenly switches to importing spent fowl, or begins importing spent fowl in significantly higher quantities, indicating a possible case of fraud.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada increase its enforcement activities at the border and allocate more resources, including new technologies and advanced data analysis, to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canada Border Services Agency to have better control over spent fowl at the border and ensure that employees receive adequate training for this purpose.

Implementing DNA Testing

When he appeared before the Committee, [Tim Klompmaker](#) explained that Chicken Farmers of Canada had provided funding in 2014 to Trent University to develop a genetic test that could identify spent fowl. He believes that this type of test would be useful in tackling spent fowl fraud. [Geoff Lumby](#), Founder of Sterisense, who worked with the lab to develop the test, told the Committee that it would cost \$350,000 to update the test today, but that it could bring in \$350 million in penalties.

[Christopher Kyle](#), Director of Trent University’s Natural Resources DNA Profiling and Forensic Centre, told the Committee that his lab was in discussions with the CBSA and the CFIA in 2015 so they could assess the validity of the DNA test. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) sent samples to assess the test in 2018. Of the 90 samples tested, 3

were not chicken, and of the remaining 87 samples, 73 were properly distinguished. Following these trials, discussions were held between the stakeholders, and CBSA representatives visited the Trent University lab in 2019. Between 2019 and 2025, AAFC and CBSA did not communicate with the lab and no substantial progress was made on the project.

[Christopher Kyle](#) said that, other than a lack of funding, updating the genetic database used for the test is the biggest challenge in implementing genetic testing. In his view, regularly updating the database would ensure that the test results would maintain validity in the future.

On the topic of the feasibility of a DNA test to detect spent fowl, CBSA [representatives](#) said that they were unable to estimate how much it would cost or what the logistics would be. [Cathy Toxopeus](#), Director General of the CBSA's Commercial Programs Directorate, said that the CBSA could not comment on the effectiveness of the DNA test, but it could comment on whether the testing would have any implications on its trade verification processes. [Alexander Lawton](#), of the CBSA, said that a DNA test would be useful if it could establish how old the chicken was. However, he said that his understanding is that the test that had been developed could be used only to validate the breed of chicken.

Further to what Alexander Lawton said regarding the inability of the DNA test to adequately identify spent fowl, Christopher Kyle and Geoff Lumby provided the Committee with a written response.¹ They maintained that the DNA test was able to distinguish between broiler chicken and spent fowl because the agriculture industry uses different genetic lines for the two types of poultry. In addition, they explained to the Committee that they intended to study the viability and feasibility of a bioanalytical test that determines the age of the poultry being tested.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada ask its agencies (the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Canada Border Services Agency) to implement a DNA test, developed in collaboration with Trent University, that can detect whether an imported poultry product contains spent fowl, broiler chicken or a combination of the two in order to detect illegal imports of broiler chicken declared as spent fowl.

1 Christopher Kyle, Geoff Lumby, Written response.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Canada Border Services Agency Alexander Lawton, Executive Director, Commercial Programs Directorate Cathy Toxopeus, Director General, Commercial Programs Directorate	2025/10/27	10
Canadian Food Inspection Agency Diane Allan, Associate Vice-President, Policy and Programs Branch	2025/10/27	10
Chicken Farmers of Canada Tim Klompmaker, Chair Yves Ruel, Associate Executive Director	2025/10/27	10
Natural Resources DNA Profiling and Forensic Centre, Trent University Christopher Kyle, Director	2025/10/27	10
Sterisense Geoff Lumby, Founder	2025/10/27	10

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings ([Meetings Nos. 10, 15 and 19](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Coteau
Chair

