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# COFFS WG

## *Newsletter*



CANADIAN ON FARM FOOD SAFETY WORKING-GROUP NEWSLETTER

## COFFS WG — Shared leadership....

This newsletter is dedicated to the COFFS working group and the amazing work they have done to develop, verify and deliver on farm food safety programs for agriculture and the country as a whole.

They include a unique combination of National Producer Organizations, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada.

They have worked together for 11 plus years to share to collaborate to brain storm to bring this program to life.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture has taken on the consuming role of secretariat for this collaboration.

And Canada's agriculture community is the winner. Whether the program is needed now , a tool to be ready when needed or the first step to more program developments — we have a system we should be very proud of.

Our next steps will widen our group and continue our collaborations.

This shared leadership should be a model we brag about. We are weak in this area. We instead put on our Canadian personality hat and do not brag. All of us should be promoting this success far and wide. Together we have armed the country with respected programs to address on farm food safety.

Inside is a summary of what we do and where we are at. It represents our national on farm food safety programs. No less should be accepted.



# History of COFFS

The Canadian On-Farm Food Safety (COFFS) Working Group was formed in October 1998 by the national producer organizations (NPOs) and general farm organizations. The Working Group provides a forum for research into and the collaborative development of national commodity-specific on-farm food safety programs and the Canadian approach to on-farm food safety (OFFS).

The objective of the COFFS Working Group is to work together so that producers will have available to them a Canadian approach to on-farm food safety. This approach includes government recognized, national, commodity-specific, auditable, HACCP-based on-farm food safety programs. It ensures these programs are technically sound, consistent, practical, producer friendly, affordable and meet the requirements of both the Canadian and international marketplaces.

The COFFS Program is a unique partnership between producers, their NPOs and government departments, in particular the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). This collaborative approach of industry and government working together to develop a voluntary HACCP-based on-farm food safety program is considered unique to most other countries. Built in collaboration by industry and regulators, the HACCP-based program design provides for consistency across all NPOs, while allowing for flexibility in commodity-specific requirements. This ensures that long-term benefits will be realized throughout the supply chain, including consumers.

The members unanimously agree that the Working Group is a success of its own, and has brought the entire agriculture community closer together. As a forum, it provides a unique opportunity for very diverse commodity organizations to have one voice and one common approach to address very complex issues. This has strengthened relationships and collaboration with various government departments and regulators. The Working Group also provides a means to address other program management issues such as auditor training, producer liability, various delivery options and models, and risk management development.

Over the years, the COFFS Program has resulted in many significant achievements and advancements across the entire agriculture industry, including 19 NPOs developing and implementing 29 commodity specific programs. The COFFS model of program development and partnership with the federal, provincial and territorial governments is leading edge and an example of the profits of collaboration. This voluntary national program is a proven model of success for other national program priorities and new innovations. The benefactors include the entire chain from producers to consumers, domestic and international.

## ***COFFS Vision and Mandate***

That farmers will have available to them a Canadian approach to on-farm food safety that is composed of government recognized, national, commodity-specific, auditable, HACCP-based on-farm food safety programs that are consistent, affordable and meet the requirements of both the Canadian and international marketplaces and such other supportive elements as are required to ensure its credibility and sustainability.

The Canadian On-Farm Food Safety (COFFS) Working Group has been established by the national producer organizations as a forum for research into and the collaborative development of initiatives related to the national commodity-specific on farm food safety programs and the Canadian approach to onfarm food safety.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Canada Grains Council Excel Grains Canada

The Canada Grains Council has gone through two technical reviews and are hosting their first training session. Each province, except Saskatchewan, is sending someone to be trained. Some provincial governments fully supported people coming, in other cases the industry was approached and have agreed to send people. The plan is to undertake audit training in the next period after March. A small audit group is ready to go right now, who could actually complete the program for farmers who have already been on the program. One retailer has taken on our program and has been using it for a few years and the Council has offered their farmers a chance to be certified on this program.

The Council also hopes to develop a website, with the onus on the farmers to check the website to get the latest details on the program, as it is a cost effective way of communication. There is a shift in the management group who now see a value in the program and are starting to aggressively promote it. Without funding support, this would not exist. This reflects the low market demand for the program.

Riddell is also working with Canada Grains Council, who have a post farm plan in place, to try and gain a clear understanding of what they do post farm and what the Council does on-farm. Initially, there were modules created for moderating the post farm process of grain, however they have gone beyond, for example, 95% of grain elevators in Canada now have an ISO designation. It is important to assure farmers that the chain is protected.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Canadian Cattlemen's Association Verified Beef Production™ Program

The Verified Beef Production program continues to expand in Canada, particularly in those provinces with Growing Forward funding for workshops and equipment purchase assistance. Participant numbers are updated in May of each year after the workshop season. There are about 15,000 producers trained on the program, which is about 35-45% of beef cattle production in Canada, with new numbers updated in May 2011. There are a lot of large feedlots and large cow/calf operations who have taken a training workshop. About 700 producers have been audited as of May 2010 but those numbers have expanded and will be adjusted in May. Over 750 operations have asked to take the online training, which is an option, however we still promote an in-person workshop because of the educational interaction in a group setting.

The beef industry has long supported its on-farm food safety program since the early 1990s, and we continue to try to ensure a low-cost VBP program for the producer. Working groups included several post farmgate stakeholders - where packers, processors and retail groups participated and provided input and direction. Now that the program is operational the program direction is guided more so by beef producers. We continue to check in with our customers to ensure we are on track and to continue to make sure they are aware of the beef industry's efforts. This program is all about enhancing confidence in Canadian beef. We also work with cattle agencies that work with packers/retailers and consumer groups - the Beef Information Centre and Canada Beef Export Federation. They have indicated continuous support for the VBP program, and once we reach a threshold of 50-60% of production from VBP-trained operations, they can more strongly promote within their materials and marketing campaigns. There are 80,000-90,000 producers of beef cattle in Canada so that is a big endeavour.

CFIA and CCA continue to develop the basis for a beef cattle biosecurity standard with several provincial chief veterinary officers and AAFC representatives. Education on this initiative is a potential complement to the Verified Beef Production program.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Canadian Herb Spice and Natural Health Product Coalition Good Agriculture and Collection Practices (GACP)

The CHSNC have been doing a lot of training, primarily in Alberta, BC, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan. They've had good success with a BC First Nations Group that are cold packers for wild mushrooms, who as a result of this program, have gone from supplying 26 stores to over 100. They are losing money by implementing this program but within 5 years, they project that their losses will be recovered. There are cross province issues in delivering training to the fiddlehead industry across Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick.

The CHSNC are exploring the full implementation of the management program because they would have difficulty managing it fully across the country at this time because of the provincial funding issues. They are working on a Traceability program. Step one the generic traceability module is finished and translated. Although it is not aimed specifically at producers and will be used primarily by those transforming product, producers will be able to use it if they need to. They are working with pilots to develop those modules and will apply for additional funding so the models can be developed electronically.

CHSNC have had good uptake on their program. Participants must redo their self-attestations on a yearly basis, redo their risk assessments and identify their top risks. These documents are submitted for an annual paper audit. If there are complete they get an annual certificate and are enrolled in the program. There are plans to reformat the producer manual layout after receiving feedback from producers that suggests that the practicing documents may be better used if they are incorporated within the document, rather than at the end. Down the road, CHSNC GACPs will include a food safety, traceability, post farm and possibly an ethical wild crafting module.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Canadian Pork Council CQA®

The Canadian Quality Assurance program is doing well but they can't access government funding. Although they don't have the 2010 projection numbers yet, based on 2009 numbers, 21.7 million hogs were marketed from CQA registered farms, which represents 94% of market hogs in Canada. They have a good relationship with packers and are on the advisory committee that is responsible for policy. This committee includes the Canadian Meat Packers, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and will be inviting CFIA back to the table as industry liaisons as well as the Animal Nutrition Association of Canada.

The Canadian Pork Council did a survey over a year ago of retailers, processors, and producers and program validators to get a feel for the program. The results were used as input for an administrative review of program and they are working with a consultant on the resulting recommendations. They are reviewing validator, producer and staff training and have put mandatory training for site managers of production units into place. The program materials will be reviewed and put together in a new way to make the printed materials less unwieldy. They will focus on communications and including others, such as CFIA.

They are working with processors to help them develop a better understanding of the program. There's been a request for use of niche products at farmers markets. The animal care program has been in place for a few years. The Board of Directors decided that for 2011, producers registered in the CQA program and have completed their self declaration which is equivalent to partial validation on the CQA program, will be accepted. As of January 1, 2012, the two programs will be merged in such a way that the producer will have to meet all the animal care program requirements to have their program registered.

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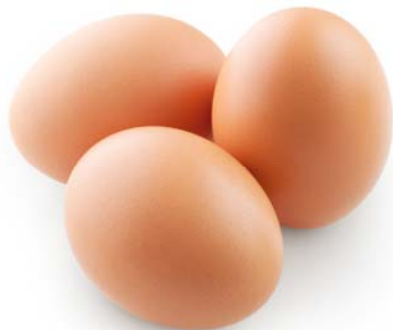


# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Egg Farmers of Canada Start Clean – Stay Clean™ Clean Start (Pullet Program)

The Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) are in the midst of updating their producer, management, and GMP manual. There have been a number of modifications and improvements to the Start Clean Stay Clean program, and they are looking at combining the producer manuals. Once that is complete, they will go to CFIA for review of their technical review and to go through the process to be accredited. Training started last January for all provincial and national delivery agents for the OFFS program. Ontario and BC deliver the program provincially and the Egg Farmers of Canada audit it. The EFC and the Provincial Egg Boards are exploring various insurance programs that will meet the needs of the pullet and egg layer producers, primarily if there is a need to depopulate due to *Salmonella enteritidis*. The Animal Care program is now a Pass or Fail program and producers will be given a certificate upon passing the audit. EFC is working with organizations within the supply chain in discussing their needs relative to the EFC OFFSP, Animal Care Program and Traceability.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Canadian Cervid Alliance

The big priorities currently include completing technical review Part 1. It has been a challenge in trying to identify what should be delivered, with two clients – producers and CFIA. Given the rigor of the on farm and post farm environment that this industry has to deal with, it is not difficult to make a case for good management dealing with all hazards. There has been a lot of effort put into accommodating CFIA with the HACCP plan and accommodating producers with the producer manual. Another emphasis is the on farm software management package, which gives producers the ability to report and other management benefits.

Currently at the post farm level, a unique identification system using a bar coded hook system, is in place at major slaughterhouses. Although this was put in place due to chronic wasting disease and so far has a limited application because of that focus, ultimately it is expected to follow through for quality purposes, which is a shared objective for both on farm and post farm. The goal is to get everyone on side so that everyone would be buying from OFFS certified herds but there is no concrete agreement at this time.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## **Canadian Hatching Egg Producers Canadian Hatching Egg Quality CHEQ TM**

The OFFS program implementation across the country will be nearing completion by the end of 2011, and the process of ongoing implementation will continue after that. In 2010, a program review was completed and the 2010 program version changes distributed to producers. The next review is slated for 2011 into 2012. With respect to program administration, work continues on the management manual, which is still at committee level, and the processes for auditor training and national producer resources. A draft of the management manual is expected to be completed by the end of the year for approval by the Board of Directors, which they plan to take it to CFIA for the GAP Analysis.

The program is currently funded within the organization, but there is a federal funding application with AAFC. One of the challenges is trying to find the time to complete the application process while still completing day-to-day work expectations. When resources become available, auditor re-training will be offered around the country. With respect to interactions with post farm programs, the Association does have a link with hatchery HACCP programs. The Canadian Hatching Egg Producers ask that hatcheries and feed mills are either HACCP certified or provide a letter of assurance to producers. Some of the birds get processed at federal establishments and there is a connection with HACCP programs there. There is also an animal welfare program and there are continued efforts towards traceability for continual improvement.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Canadian Horticultural Council

### CanadaGAP – On-Farm Food Safety for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) has submitted documents to CFIA for the 18 month review and is waiting for new resources to complete the review. CHC has a close working relationship with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), which has a repacking and wholesale program for fresh produce. The two organizations are looking at ways to integrate the programs. This project is being presented at the upcoming CHC annual meeting.

CHC also has a direct relationship with retailers and other marketers and processors. All potato processors except one is mandating the CanadaGAP program for their growers. There have been mandates for CanadaGAP from Loblaws and other retailers since CHC received their GFSI recognition. Sobeys, Wal-Mart and Metro have endorsed the program. CHC has received a letter of support from the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors stating their members' support for CanadaGAP

Internationally, customers recognize the CanadaGAP program as a result of formal GFSI recognition in the spring of 2010. Nine hundred companies have been certified after two years of program. GFSI recognition is valid until the end of 2011; CHC will be resubmitting the program for benchmarking by end of 2011 because GFSI released a new guidance document and recognized schemes have to rebenchmark each time a new version is published. There are some fairly substantial and new requirements including a food defense component. New requirements indicate that scheme owners are expected to have a more hands on approach with respect to auditor competency, creating some duplication between CHC and certification bodies' responsibilities.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Canadian National Goat Federation

The OFFS program is becoming an attainable program and the Canadian National Goat Federation is moving forward on the process. There is still some internal work to be completed before an OFFS application can be made, which includes staff and management changes. There is a motion on the books to name the program the Canadian Goat On Farm Food Safety Program. Goats are meat, milk and fibre, so it is not just one type of industry. Milk is very big, particularly in BC, Ontario and Quebec.

The Canadian National Goat Federation will be developing biosecurity volunteer standards. Myrna Coombs, who has been heavily involved in biosecurity in Alberta in recent years as well as the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare meetings, is officially the Federation's OFFS chairperson.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Canadian Sheep Federation Food Safe Farm Practices

The Canadian Sheep Federation has finished their face to face meeting of technical review part one. They have made a lot of good amendments to the program and pending CFIA approval, will be delivering a more concise manual to producers. The first draft of the Management manual is complete. They are going to the provincial association and their OFFS WG this month and are seeking risk assessment for organization legal advice. There is a lot of connection with the post farm sector and currently are only filling 47% of the domestic market.

The Canadian Sheep Federation is struggling with variations in funding across the provinces. Manitoba has made it a requirement that producers get audited in order to obtain funding. Many producers were not aware of the change and the miscommunication is creating some challenges. The Manitoba Sheep Federation doesn't have any full time staff to help address the increased interest in the program, which is placing increased demand on the national organization's time and resources. However, the interest in the program is encouraging.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## Dairy Farmers of Canada Canadian Quality Milk (CQM)

The Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) launched their revised producer manual in November. The revisions were mainly for clarification and more information. DFC also made minor revisions to the registration system manual including more guidelines on closing producers' corrective actions, such as the timeline to complete them and how many extensions can be given.

The CQM program is still working with the Veterinary Natural Health Products (vNHPs). The industry notification process for vNHPs for companion animals and horses not for slaughter is moving ahead and DFC would like that process extended to food animals as soon as possible. DFC is also continuing to develop the National Electronic Administration System and plans to start testing and rolling it out provincially soon. Most of the internal audits will be done online with a follow up conference call for clarification, and witness audits in the province with validators. Regarding post farm, many provinces have a tank sealing program for milk trucks, which is HACCP-based. At the processor level, some processors are extremely interested and would like to process milk exclusively from CQM registered farms, if they could.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## **Ontario Veal Association**

### **Verified Veal: The Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Program for Veal**

The Ontario Veal Association is trying to get their producer manual edited and printed by end of March. The next step will be to accept consultant proposals to develop the management and audit structure. They recommend that producers purchase input animals from Verified Veal farms but some buy from dairy farms so that is hard to enforce although they are considering accepting CQM registration as an equivalent.

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## **Canadian Honey Council**

### **Canadian Bee Industry Safety Quality Traceability (CBISQT)**

The Honey Council is seeking Technical Review. After some substantial changes to their HACCP model and manual, they are now getting ready to go through technical review. They have re-grouped and need assistance with communications, ways to apply for funding and to find a consultant to work with.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## **Chicken Farmers of Canada Safe, Safer, Safest**

The Chicken Farmers of Canada started the implementation of their food safety program in 1998. They have approximately 2,800 farmers in Canada and the provincial boards deliver the program. Close to 100% of farms are certified. They are now in the process of adding the free range process review for part one – the producer manual. CFIA has reviewed part one and two of their management manual

They have also started discussions with CFIA on the third party audit full recognition. They are interested in doing the pilot project and have been assured they will be able to do it this year. All of their processors are HACCP certified, and just like CHEP, and Turkey, they ask that the chicks come from certified hatcheries. They also ask whether or not the feed mills are HACCP certified. Farmers are asked to keep a sample of the feed. They also have a separate Animal Care program, which is audited at the same time as the OFFS Food Safety Program.

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## **Turkey Farmers of Canada TFC On-Farm Food Safety Program**

The Turkey Farmers of Canada have close to 70% of producers certified under their OFFSP and just under 90% of producers have received training on program implementation. The Provincial Turkey Marketing Boards have been handling the training and farmer audits very well. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has approved the 2010 Producer Manual edits for the 18-month review and the Management Manual has been screened and recommended by CFIA to undergo Technical Review – Part II. A face-to-face meeting with CFIA is expected to take place in mid-May. Following the successful completion of Technical Review – Part II, the manual will be printed and distributed to all provincial boards and TFC OFFSP administrators.

The Turkey Farmers of Canada have a good post-farm relationship with the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council and in the pre-farm area; the TFC OFFS Program requires that any inputs from hatcheries or feed mills are produced under a HACCP certified program. In addition, all records for inputs acquired from HACCP certified facilities are inspected during on-farm audits and record reviews.

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# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## CFIA Update

*Martin Firth and Peter Worthylake*

### Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Food Safety Subcommittee

The Subcommittee has been meeting regularly, with some participants very new to the process. Early in 2011, CFIA shared two documents with the subcommittee concerning the third party audit and the final implementation assessment piece. One area of concern was where the two documents fit relative to the recognition process. Going back to the FPT Protocol document, the material under discussion replaces what currently is section 9 of that protocol. That was a real concern and some parties were concerned that new protocols were being developed, but that is not the case. There is ongoing monitoring and they are making forward progress.

Firth mentioned that on the last subcommittee call, there was discussion that it will be important in the near future to bring together the subcommittee and the COFFS WG to compare notes. CFIA is attempting to blend the two documents into section 9 and will share that as well with the COFFS WG. Firth wants to continue to cooperate because CFIA and the Subcommittee will need the COFFS WG's assistance as they move along. He would also like the COFFS WG to communicate back to CFIA if they are having issues.

### Part 1 – Technical Review Update

Currently, the Canadian Sheep Federation finished the face to face requirements in November and are awaiting the ANRs before the end of this month. The Chicken Farmers of Canada Free-range program is in week two so the call letters have gone out. There was a call with the Canadian Honey Council last week and it appears they will revamp the program to increase buy in by their producers because it is too complicated and will re-submit. The Canadian Cervid Alliance and the Canadian National Goat Federation have been screened and sent back for changes. In the post farm sector, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association has undergone a pilot, they have completed a screening that was sent back for changes and are expected to re-submit.

For 18 month reviews, currently, they are working on Turkey Farmers of Canada (TFC) and the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC). In terms of Part 2, TFC will be initiated shortly. CFIA is doing a screening of their management system and CHC is expected to submit shortly. CFIA is hoping to add two staff people in the next couple of months to speed up the process. Firth noted that TFC did a good job in making the changes very clear with the amended text, dates of changes and justification and would like to encourage future changes to be done like this because it saves a lot of time. NPOs are encouraged to look at Form 9 to see if there is any re-search or things that are now practical that can be implemented.

### Proposed Changes

The OFFS recognition has three major steps prior to recognition, which consists of technical review, management review, and the next major step is industry implementation. Once there is sufficient implementation of an NPO program, they can proceed to a third party audit. The purpose of the third party audit is to provide information back to CFIA that shows the NPO pro-



# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## *CFIA update continued...*

gram is working to the management system that has been previously technically reviewed, and gives provides evidence that the program is being delivered in accordance with the system as well as the national requirements.

Once the audit is complete and everything is in accordance, then NPOs can move to the final step (part 3), which is called Government Assessment for short and is where CFIA works with FPT to review the entire system. The purpose is not to tear open all the technical portions of the NPO process, but to make sure any loose ends are tied up. They require a copy of the final report and any non-conformities around the third party audit and then do an 18 month review. This would include a review of the logbook of changes and any changes undertaken to the NPO program technically, with a quick look at the training manual and look at the management and the administration of the program. So it is a final check. Once that is complete, a letter of recognition is issued.

In the existing protocol, it is not quite that simple, so CFIA have come up with two documents to be subsets to section 9 to clearly identify the steps needed and clarify it. There is some terminology that doesn't match the protocol and will be revised and incorporated into section 9 of the protocol. Post-farm recognition is currently in Section 9, but is expected to be split out into Section 10, and has yet to be amended.

1. The first document is the **NPO Implementation Audit**, which would be section 9.1 of the protocol. This document should identify the industry steps to carry on the implementation. The bulk of the document is about how to search and contract a third party audit, the criteria and process involved. Several documents are referenced in order to keep it brief. This document also explain the purpose of what this step takes in the recognition program, and outlines the roles and responsibilities for both the Agency and the NPO. In this case, the Agency is to provide guidance in choosing and securing a third party audit organization. There is also a section on the audit service provider and what their roles and responsibilities are. Requirements for the audit service provider are quite brief and are designed for the NPO to choose with a set of known criteria.

2. The second document, the **Government Implementation Process Document**, asks the NPO to submit current evidence that their technical documents and management system have maintained the OFFS requirements and technical soundness. Therefore, the audit service provider audits to the NPO management system. Although a management system is recommended to be in place for one year before an audit is completed, it is dependent on the management system. Concerns about funding were raised. Although unconfirmed, Firth said that it could be possible that it could be funded under the program.

The second document also outlines the final step of recognition and CFIA is proposing to call it the Government Implementation Assessment Plan because it is an assessment not an audit. In general, this should be a painless exercise as it is a formal assessment to do the i's and cross the t's prior to issuing a letter of recognition. Once an NPO has



# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## *CFIA update continued...*

achieved this point, they will already have been through several hurdles. The final page contains a schematic of the assessment piece. It's a 7 week process, not including any reports at the end.

The assessment picks up from the point of where an NPO has completed or received the third party audit reports and all the supporting documents are submitted. Then it's up to the NPO to contract CFIA again and request the final step of the recognition process. Once CFIA receives the document described in the process, then they notify their FPT partners. The messages from the provinces indicate a lack of willingness to participate in this step due to lack of resources. However, CFIA has committed to keep the provinces in the loop. There would be a team put together, with the size depending on interest, and then there would be a document review process, which should take 2-3 weeks. This would be followed by a discussion and any ANR's will be identified. Once the ANR's are addressed and off the books, the program would be finished and the letter of recognition would be issued. Firth noted this is the product of one and a half years work and many drafts to get it to a straightforward process.

CFIA will be making the document available to working group members for questions and comments and may be calling people for their expertise and would like to keep the doors for discussion open.



# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## **CFIA Post-farm Recognition Program**

*Paul Kittner, CFIA*

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is developing a Post-farm Recognition Program, a sister program to the OFFS recognition program using an identical delivery process. The purpose of the program is to strengthen food safety programs across the continuum and close gaps where industry did not have access to inspections programs at federal and provincial levels. The post farm program could lead to better oversight at a high level.

CFIA is using a unique approach to this program by targeting national associations that have food safety systems developed, similar to OFFS systems, to develop programs. The Associations will implement the program, then they take a high level overview of how the program is working and provide a recognition status to those organizations. It is a unique way for the agency to conduct business at the food inspection level.

Although the program policy initiative has been around for a long time, 14 months ago they got the go ahead to seriously pursue it. The development of the program is at the request of the Minister of Agriculture and not something prompted by the Agency. CFIA is trying to develop and implement a food safety recognition program similar to the OFFS Program which will target National Associations or equivalent organizations involved in organization, marketing, or distribution of food and who have developed sector specific food safety programs. It is not aimed at individual processing facilities, or at the inspecting regime.

The program's process will take into consideration the industry's needs and CFIA likes to see input from the COFFS WG. The Post-farm Recognition Program will be modeled on the OFFS program. It will meet Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) requirements similar to OFFS and will be a voluntary program built using Codex and will use the ISO audit and management system. It complies with the FPTs Food Safety Committee draft HACCP Protocol, and the mirror system and program should be welcomed by FPT stakeholders.



# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

*CFIA update continued...*

Five or six associations have come forward to develop the program, which did not previously have access to CFIA food safety recognition programs such as the food safety enhancement program and the quality management program or OFFS. For associations that don't fit into those federal inspection programs, they can consider the post-farm recognition program, eg, Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), Packaging Association of Canada, Trucking Association and Bottled Water Association. There are also provincial programs that exist, such as the Ontario HACCP Advantage or Alberta Advantage.

The Inspection system section of the Agency is currently completing the development of the program requirements as per OFFS model and FPT developments. Implementation staff will be responsible for leading program reviews. They will be inviting commodity subject matter experts to participate in the review process, along with FPT stakeholders and colleagues.

Stage 1 has been completed, which included the development and distribution of the draft program manual to stakeholders. Several workshops were held last year with government partners, such as Health Canada, to make them aware of the program and distribution of materials to industry. They are now prioritizing the first part of the process and hope to complete the program manual over the next year. CPMA has agreed to take part in the pilot. Stage three and four still have to be written into the manual and the goal is to complete the design of program with colleagues and stakeholders within the next 12 months. Full program implementation is anticipated after 2012.



# National On Farm Food Safety Programs

## AAFC Update

### Mathieu Rochefort, Program Manager, Food Safety and Traceability Program

AAFC has received about 50 applications for food safety, with about half food safety related and half on the traceability side. There were 19 agreements for food safety and a total commitment of between \$6.5-6.8 million. One project has been completed. For traceability, there are about 20 approved projects with a total commitment of \$18.8 million, which is due to the nature of the projects and developing the infrastructure. This update is for 2009-2013 and includes committed amounts.

On the Food Safety side, AAFC is currently reviewing four applications, one of which is the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) to go through the post farm recognition process that CFIA has recently developed. They will be piloting the program with CFIA.

AAFC recently announced that the Livestock Auction Traceability program is available and they are accepting applications and will be funding as of April 1. It is a \$20 million initiative to help industry set up traceability infrastructure to help with the movement of livestock throughout the chain. This will specifically affect auction houses, feedlots, community pastures and exhibits, which are high risk areas where animals from different herds co-mingle. The program will pay for equipment and infrastructure to set up traceability capacity in those areas.



# CFIA On-Farm Recognition Program

## General Overview

### *Steps of the CFIA OFFS Recognition*

The "recognition" process is 3 Steps. A National Producer Organization (NPO) must complete all three steps to be granted official CFIA Recognition of their On-Farm Food Safety Program. After "Recognition" the NPO will under go "on-going monitoring".

#### **Step 1: Technical Review Part 1 & 2**

- Technical Review Part 1 is a review of the NPO generic HACCP model and the producer manual.
- Technical Review Part 1 is carried out with the participation of the provincial, territorial, and federal governments.
  
- Technical Review Part 2 is a review of the NPO management system manual and associated documents.
- Technical Review Part 2 is completed by CFIA On-Farm Food Safety Recognition Program staff. The provinces and territories are informed of the initiation of the Technical Review Part 2.
- The tool used in the accomplishment of the Technical Review Part 2 is the Gap Analysis Check list. It is comprised of a reference column, a requirement description column and a check-off column.
  
- Letters of completion are given to the NPO upon the completion of technical review Part 1 and Part 2.

#### **Step 2: Implementation by the National Producer Organization**

- This step is the responsibility of the NPO.
- Using their management system the NPO implements the OFFS program and fills out records to show that tasks and procedures are being completed.
- It is proposed that the NPO will be responsible to contract a 3rd party auditor to conduct a complete assessment of the NPO On-Farm Food Safety Program. The report from this audit will be submitted to CFIA by the NPO as part of the "implementation assessment".

#### **Step 3: Implementation Assessment**

- Although in draft form it is expected that the final assessment will be conducted with the participation of CFIA OFFSRP, Federal, Provincial and Territorial government representatives.
- The proposed objective of the implementation assessment is to ensure that the NPO entire On-Farm Food Safety Program meets all CFIA requirements.

#### **On-going Monitoring**

- Upon completion of Technical Review Part 1 an NPO will be subject to a "Review of Changes" every 18 months.
  
- Once an NPO OFFS program has received official "recognition" it will be monitored at regular intervals to ensure that the program continues to meet the CFIA OFFSRP requirements and criteria.

Questions may be directed to;

#### **James Sefton**

National Coordinator / Coordonnateur national Food Safety Recognition Program /  
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## The Canadian Approach to On-Farm Food Safety

Today, there are four main drivers for on-farm food safety: consumer concerns, government initiatives, customer demands and the actions of Canada's competitors. To respond to these demands, and to demonstrate that Canadian food is among the safest in the world, the agricultural community worked with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to develop on-farm food safety programs. The farm organizations have also worked with the federal, provincial and territorial governments to establish a process through which these programs can be officially recognized by the CFIA for technical soundness and administrative effectiveness.

### *On-Farm Food Safety Programs*

Today's national on-farm food safety programs are developed by national commodity groups working with industry experts and experts from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to ensure scientifically sound practices.

National producer associations follow a generic process for developing an on-farm food safety program. First, they develop a national strategy. Then they evaluate current production practices, develop a generic HACCP model and determine how to control food safety hazards through Good Production Practices (also known as Best Management Practices or Good Agricultural Practices). The program developers use a science-based set of principles known as HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) to identify food safety risks and determine how to monitor, control and prevent the food safety risks. HACCP principles help the program developers to identify which good production practices should be employed to ensure that food safety hazards are minimized on the farm. Lastly, they develop a Producer Manual which explains the program requirements to producers.

Following that, National producer associations, often with cooperation from provincial producer associations, help producers implement the on-farm food safety program. National producer associations can also offer certification or verification services to producers because the program requirements are designed to be auditable. Certified or verified farms can demonstrate to customers that they meet program requirements and are committed to maintaining them.

The Canadian Approach is resulting in technically sound programs that are based on a rigorous "HACCP-based" approach which is consistent with the Codex Alimentarius Commission's approach to HACCP. Almost every project has made use of input from suppliers and customers, and have availed themselves of both reviews by CFIA and by farmers and other experts. Farm organizations have openly shared information amongst the projects - both successes and challenges. As a consequence, the On-Farm Food Safety (OFFS) programs that have resulted and are being developed are technically sound, practical, producer friendly and auditable.

For more information about the Canadian Approach to On Farm Food Safety

**Visit**

[www.onfarmfoodsafety.ca](http://www.onfarmfoodsafety.ca)

Or

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