

# Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Working Group

Meeting Report

13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> January 2003

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The Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Working (COFFS) Working Group met in Ottawa between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> January and dealt with a lengthy agenda. This report highlights the matters discussed, key issues and the directions taken during the meeting.

## **Management Manual Workshop: January 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>**

Gerry Knapp of Quenpro International Inc, the Working Group's consultant on the development of the model management manual of national on-farm food safety programs, led an intensive two day workshop. Also attending were officials from the Standards Council of Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

The workshop objectives were to:

- review the scope and content of the ISO/IEC Guide 62: 1996 (SCC CAN-P-10b) "General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification/registration of quality systems";
- review typical certification system documents against the requirements of the Guide; and,
- examine certification/registration, and accreditation functions, and relate these to the criteria against which HACCP-based on-farm food safety systems could be assessed for certification.

Over the two days, the participants developed a detailed understanding of key concepts relating to the operation of a Guide 62 certification body and discussed those elements that presented challenges to various models of delivering national on-farm food safety programs. These included: quality system documents (policies and procedures), implementation planning, internal and external audits, management reviews, etc. The sessions involved presentations and workshop exercises.

The overall management manual project is proceeding well. The development of the model ISO Guide 62 based policy and procedural manuals, using the Canadian Pork Council's CQA™ Program as a case study, is expected to be completed in April.

## **2003 Planning Session - Evening of 14<sup>th</sup> January**

Following the certification workshop, the Working Group reconvened for four hour session to develop its workplan for 2003. Nineteen (19) activities were identified, some of which are new and some of which, such as the management manual project, are approaching completion. The Working Group decided to seek funding for the following from the Canadian On-Farm Food Safety (COFFS) Program:

- regular Working Group meetings (5) between March and December 2003;
- finalization of the framework and criteria for the official recognition of national on-farm food safety programs;
- further research into the establishment of risk management tools for national programs, delivery agents, on-farm food safety auditors and producers;

- monitoring the emerging international trends in on-farm food safety and input into Canada's positions on international guidelines for the recognition of on-farm food safety programs;
- development of common GPP's for on-farm mixing of medicated feed;
- finalization of a template for the "management manual" requirements under a national recognition framework;
- further research into the adoption of a common information technology system for use by national programs, delivery agents and auditor/validators;
- monitoring the implementation of the training program for on-farm food safety auditors;
- further research into the establishment of a certification system on-farm auditors/validators;
- implementation of the action plan for the promotion of Canadian on-farm food safety programs;
- a characterization study of the requirements for program effectiveness studies (baseline research and on-going requirements);
- review of issues related to the sustainability of national on-farm food safety programs;
- liaison on on-farm food safety issues with the Federal/Provincial/Territorial On-Farm Food Safety Sub-committee, CFIA, AAFC, Health Canada, etc.;
- advice to CFA and AAFC on the evolution of the Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Program;
- on-going training needs;
- further research into a National Certification Body;
- a second National Farm Leaders Meeting to consider delivery options and other matters related to implementation;
- monitoring of emerging on-farm food safety issues (e.g. extra-label drug use, extra-label pesticide use, anti-microbial resistance, HACCP-based inspection systems in the processing sector, etc.); and,
- promotion of Canadian Approach in other countries.

At this planning session the Working Group also reviewed the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Farm Leaders meeting on on-farm food safety programs (December 2002) and that meeting's request that the Working Group undertake additional research on the development of a national certification body. As noted above it was agreed to include this in the workplan as a priority item. If funding is obtained, the team of consultants will be expanded and a new report prepared covering the following:

- overview of legal requirements;
- proposed governance structures;
- services to be offered;
- estimates of resource requirements;
- descriptions of competencies required;
- review of issues related to multi-commodity & multi-program auditing;
- discussion of "accreditation" as certification body;
- detailed cost estimates; and,
- advice on issues related to establishment and funding, including the "ramp-up" period.

If possible, the results of this project are to be made available at a 2<sup>nd</sup> National Farm Leaders meeting. It is hoped to that this meeting could be held in April 2003.

## Working Group Meeting - 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003

At its regular meeting, the following were dealt with:

### Implications of HACCP-based Inspection Programs:

Dr. Yves Labbé, Food of Animal Origin Division, Animal Product Directorate, CFIA (and a former member of the Working Group) made a presentation on the Agency's proposed expansion of its HACCP-based inspection programs from the poultry sector to other slaughter facilities, starting with hogs. Of particular importance is the plan to introduce new farm to plant information transfer requirements, similar to those included on the "flock sheets" as part of the Modernized Poultry Inspection Program and regulations. CFIA indicated an interest in involving the national commodity groups in this process and in ensuring a smooth fit with the on-farm programs. Members of the Working Group expressed concerns about the implications of these new information transfer requirements and about other CFIA initiatives, such as the proposed changes to the medicated feeds regulations, on the adoption rate for on-farm programs unless there is a differentiation between certified farms and non-certified farms. It was agreed that this matter would be pursued with the Agency on a priority basis.

### Update on Official Recognition:

**Protocol:** Martin Firth, CFIA reviewed the status of the recognition protocol. He noted that at the November meeting of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Agri-Food Inspection Committee, the responses to the protocol developed by its subcommittee on on-farm food safety had been positive. One outstanding issue of concern to the main committee had been the means of attaining recognition for commodities of provincial or regional interest. Following that meeting, CFIA and the COFFS Program had worked on an addendum to the protocol which had been circulated to the subcommittee. This provides an approach that is consistent with the overall objectives of recognizing only one program per commodity and of creating nationally accessible programs. The Working Group formally endorsed the addendum.

**Technical Review:** Germain Brazeau, Manager of CFIA's On-Farm Food Safety Recognition Program, reported on the recognition process. The technical review of the dairy program had taken place in December and the applicant is preparing its response to the requested changes. The review of the Animal Nutrition Association of Canada's program for feed mills had commenced, it was expected to be completed in the near future. Reviews of CEMA's "Start Clean Stay Clean™" Program and CBHEMA's "CHEQ" Program are scheduled for February and March. Also in the pipeline for review are CPC' CQA™ Program and the Canadian Horticulture Council's program for fresh fruits and vegetables. The technical review process was discussed and several suggestions were made to assist groups preparing for it were made. It is expected that the process will be evaluated later in 2003 and that some changes may be made at that time.

**Administrative Assessment Criteria:** The Working Group established a task group to work with CFIA officials on the a first draft of these criteria. The project will start with ISO Guide 62 as the basis for the criteria for the certification elements and then discuss other models for additional elements (e.g. standard maintenance by the national commodity group, auditor training, etc). CFIA agreed that substantial progress could be made by the end of April and an initial work plan was agreed to. The task group will also have representation from the FPTAFIC subcommittee.

**CFIA Accreditation of 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Auditors:** CFIA requested and the Working Group agreed to participation in a new CFIA/Standards Council of Canada committee to review the criteria for accrediting firms as 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditors of national on-farm food safety programs as required by the Whitehorse ministerial agreement (June 2001). The committee which will also include representatives from the FPTAFIC subcommittee and the registrar community was to meet on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

**FPTAFIC Subcommittee on On-Farm Food Safety:** The Working Group named three or its four representatives to the subcommittee (Anne Fowlie, Nicole Unger and Albert Chambers) and reserved one further nomination until members could determine their time commitments.

### **Extra-label Drug Use Survey:**

The Thomson Corporation has been engaged Health Canada to establish a data base to understand the scope of extra label drug use in Canada. Joe Thomsen and Gordon Dittberner made a presentation on this project. The design and pilot will occur during February 2003, field survey of producers and veterinarians during March to June 2003, analysis and report during July 2003. Health Canada will only receive reports of the aggregated results and participant information will be confidential. Health Canada will determine the next steps in Fall 2003. Assistance and support from national commodity groups was solicited.

### **Risk Management Projects:**

#### **Producer Risk Management Tools**

Trevor Mapplebeck, Marsh Canada, the findings to-date on the producer project. It is about 70% complete as the response to the producer surveys has been very low. The survey which has been circulated in the dairy, hog and horticulture sectors and will be circulated in the cattle sector, was reviewed and a demonstration was given of its results based on the responses to date. The Working Group discussed means of encouraging greater participation. A further report on and a discussion of next steps will take place in February.

#### **Risk Management Guide**

Steve Osselton, Marsh Canada, provided an update on the Risk Management Planning Guide project through a demonstration of the introductory PowerPoint presentation that has been developed to assist commodity group staff initiate the process inside their organization. In addition to this tool, the final product will include a printed handbook as well as a CD package. The latter have Word files for a risk register, risk analysis worksheet, several case studies, the training tool and a crisis communication guide. The draft materials were to be circulated following the meeting and comments were requested by 7<sup>th</sup> February to Marsh.

**Organizational Insurance & On-Farm Auditor Insurance** - It was agreed by the Working Group and Marsh that it was appropriate, now that the issues around on-farm auditor training and the criteria for administrative assessment were being clarified, that these two projects should be initiated in early 2003.

## **Anti-microbial Resistance**

The Working Group reviewed Veterinary Drug Directorate's draft response to the recommendations for the Advisory Committee on Animal Uses of Antimicrobials and the Impact on the Resistance and Human Health, and in particular the responses to Recommendations 23, 24 and 25 that pertain to on-farm food safety programs. It was agreed that a response would be forwarded expressing appreciation for Health Canada's strong support for the commodity-specific on-farm food safety programs and noting specific concerns aspects of both the recommendations and the proposed responses. It would also review the nature and capacity of the national programs, indicate an interest in exploring further Health Canada's expectations and comment on the inappropriateness of requesting the programs to incorporate a new function, that is data collection on antimicrobial usage. In addition, the Working Group would request a role in the development of any monitoring system.

## **COFFS Program Update:**

Joan Champagne, Program Administrator, updated the Working Group on the status of the January "pool" distribution of the final funds available under CARD2. Applications were being received and it was expected that final decisions could be taken by the COFFS Program Review Committee in mid-February. The applications would be reviewed in the following order, as announced in November 2002:

- Phase 1 applications
- Phase 2a & 3 applications from current projects within notional allocations
- Phase 2b applications
- Applications from groups that have attained their caps for:
  - the development of commodity-specific auditor training modules
  - other Phase 2a and Phase 3 activities.

Program staff indicated that an evaluation of the COFFS Program had been commissioned by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and that national commodity groups and Review Committee members would be interviewed as part of the process.

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