



18 April 2005

Action Update #2 - Final



Integrating Food Safety Systems in Canada: A Government/Industry Forum

As the hosts of the May 18, 2004 Government/Industry Forum, we committed to provide participants with an indication of the actions taken to follow-up on the suggestions made during the Forum. This update is the second of two and concludes our plans for specific updates.



The purpose of the Forum was to provide opportunities for both industry and government to network and share information on food safety issues of common interest, in the domestic and international arena, to explore the challenges ahead and the expectations surrounding the integration of food safety systems in Canada and to identify opportunities for new industry/government collaboration. The suggestions made by the participants were reviewed by the Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition and the three intergovernmental food safety committees - Federal/ Provincial/ Territorial Agri-Food Inspection Committee (FPTAFIC), Canadian Food Inspection System Implementation Group (CFISIG) and, Federal/ Provincial/ Territorial Committee on Food Safety Policy (FPTCFSP) - at meetings in late 2004 and then discussed jointly.



Actions to be taken:



Theme 1: Advancing Collaboration on National Food Safety Standards, Codes and Recognition



Governments: The intergovernmental committees will be moving forward in the following areas and seeking increased industry input or involvement in these and others:



Code Development, Implementation and amendments:

CFISIG has completed a survey on the implementation of its model codes in the various jurisdictions and is developing criteria to prioritize its efforts towards future code development. Industry needs will be one of the considerations for these criteria. It is anticipated that this topic will be further discussed at the CFISIG Spring 2005 meeting. Until there is clarity on priorities, code development has been put on hold.



The amending processes for each code are posted on the CFISIG website www.cfis.agr.ca. Industry is represented on amending sub-committees. Industry was also represented on the working groups that developed existing codes. CFISIG is open to suggestions on how to better increase the transparency of code development and amendments.



Recognition of HACCP and HACCP-based Programs: A CFISIG Working Committee is developing a Post-Farm Recognition Protocol for government recognition of HACCP systems and HACCP-based programs developed by the non-federally registered food processing establishments, as well as technical manuals for these systems and programs. First drafts of the Protocol and technical documents are anticipated for the Spring of 2005. Consultation on these documents with stakeholders will be the next step.





International Acceptance of Canadian Food Safety Programs: The FPTAFIC would be interested in pursuing the dialogue with the Coalition on how to best collaborate on this issue.



Additional industry involvement: The intergovernmental committees will be sharing information on their working groups/sub-committees with the Coalition to indicate where industry is already represented, and where additional industry participation would be beneficial to the advancement of the initiatives.



Industry: In a survey in early 2005, the Coalition's members identified a number of areas where industry action is required. These included, amongst others:



- New governance mechanisms and processes for food safety policy and regulatory decision making;
- Improvements to national code process;
- Expansion of recognition program for industry-led food safety programs to include non-farm programs; and,
- Development of certification capacity for industry-led food safety programs.



To advance these initiatives, the members have supported the establishment of task groups of interested stakeholders and the nomination of industry participants to FPT sub-committees, working groups. Further information on these will be posted on the Coalition's website [www.foodsafetycoalition.ca].



Theme 2: Towards National Food Safety Training Programs for Industry



Governments: The FPTCFSP Sub-committee on Food Retail/Food Service Food Safety Education, which includes Coalition members will continue developing national criteria for education programs and anticipates seeking approval late this Spring 2005. Then the FPTCFSP would be open to discussing with industry how these criteria could serve as guidance in other sectors. It will also consider bringing these criteria to the attention of the stakeholders responsible for highschool education.



Industry: Coalition members indicated strong support for the completion of the food retail/food service project and a review at that time as to how its lessons could be adapted to other segments of the food chain. They also identified the importance of developing at an early date Canadian programs for food safety auditor training and certification. A Coalition task group is expected to be formed to advance this initiative.



The May 18th, 2004 Forum was the first government/industry event of this nature, an experiment in both dialogue and the exploration of common concerns. It clearly demonstrated a commitment on the part of governments and industry to furthering the integration of food safety systems in Canada. There are currently no plans to hold another Forum, however, both the intergovernmental committees and the Coalition are committed to maintaining collaboration on initiatives of joint interest. The opportunities for future industry/government face-to-face meetings will be considered as work proceeds on these initiatives.



The Forum report is published on the Coalition's website [www.foodsafetycoalition.ca].

Canadian Food Inspection System Implementation Group (CFISIG)
Federal/ Provincial/ Territorial Agri-Food Inspection Committee (FPTAFIC)
Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee on Food Safety Policy (FPTCFSP)