



CANADIAN SUPPLY CHAIN FOOD SAFETY COALITION

COALITION CANADIENNE DE LA FILIÈRE ALIMENTAIRE POUR LA SALUBRITÉ DES ALIMENTS

**Food Safety Auditor Qualifications and Competencies Project
Dialogue on a Canadian Approach**

Report on the 1st Workshop

17 January 2012

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

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1.0 Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition

The Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition was formed in December 2000 and incorporated in 2007 by national associations representing all segments of the food chain from input suppliers through primary production, processing, manufacturing, transportation, distribution to final marketing at retail or in food service. It is a unique organization that is open to all national, provincial and local industry associations with an interest in food safety.

Our Vision: Canada's agriculture, fisheries and food industry will have a world-class reputation for producing and selling safe food.

Our Mission: The Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition will facilitate, through dialogue within the food industry and with all levels of government, the development and implementation of a national, coordinated approach to food safety to ensure credibility in domestic and international marketplaces.

Since its foundation it has undertaken a number of special projects and held several forums and other workshops to foster the discussion of food safety in Canada. Information related to these can be found on its website at: www.foodsafetycoalition.ca The Coalition also advocates directly with all levels of government, but particularly through a set of relationships with key federal departments (e.g. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada) and the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Food Safety Committee.

2.0 Project Background

As part of its mission to facilitate dialogue and to encourage the development of a national approach to food safety, the Coalition in 2008 initiated a project to engage the agri-food industry and governments in the development of a National Strategy for Industry-led Food Safety Programs. This project was completed and the report published in March of 2009¹. This final report identified a set of four (4) principles upon which the strategy is grounded:

Principle #1: Food safety is a shared responsibility of all participants in the supply chain, input suppliers, businesses involved with the production, processing, manufacturing, importing, distribution, retailing and marketing of food, all levels of government and consumers;

Principle #2: Governments at all levels, the agri-food industry and other stakeholders should foster and facilitate the development of an integrated, co-ordinated, and national approach to food safety policy and regulation based on sound scientific risk assessment and risk management principles and on international standards.

Principle #3: Industry and government food safety initiatives should encourage the implementation of HACCP and/or HACCP-based food safety systems by businesses all along the supply chain.

Principle #4: Food businesses, governments and other stakeholders have a responsibility to adequately resource, proactively manage, update, maintain and continually improve their individual and collaborative food safety systems and food safety initiatives.

The Strategy also identified:

- (i) a set of seven (7) goals for the Canadian food safety system in 2013;
- (ii) specific actions that could be taken to realize these goals;
- (iii) the parties responsible for implementing the actions; and,
- (iv) milestones that could be utilized to assess progress in achieving the identified goals and actions.

Goal #3 expressed industry's expectations for strengthening Canada's food safety training and auditing infrastructure and Action 3.2 spoke specifically to the matter of defining the requirements for 3rd party, industry and government auditors in the context of emerging international requirements.

¹ <http://www.foodsafetycoalition.ca/upload/File/National%20Strategy%20for%20Industry-led%20Food%20Safety%20Programs%20-%20Final%20Version%20-%2031%20March%202009.pdf>

Strategic Area: Industry		
Goal: #3 – Strengthen Canada’s Food Safety Training and Auditing Infrastructure		
Actions	Responsibility	Milestones
3.1 Strengthen food safety training programs by utilizing on-line tools, diversifying the availability of training across languages, and harmonizing protocols across jurisdictions	3.3 Industry associations as program owners, governments and other stakeholders, including educational institutions and training organizations	3.3 .1 Accessible food safety training for food businesses implementing industry-led food safety programs, employees, etc 3,3,2 National recognition of employee food safety training programs (e.g. foodservice, etc)
3.2 Define Canadian food safety auditor requirements for 3 rd party, industry and government auditors in the context of the emerging international requirements	3.2 CSCFSC initiative to engage associations, FPT governments and other stakeholders	3.2 National set of requirements for food safety auditors suitable for each segment of the supply chain and for both 3 rd party and government food safety auditors
3.3 Improve auditor training and audit consistency	3.3. Industry as program owners (through Working Groups if continued or established), and other stakeholders, including educational institutions and auditor training organizations	3.3 Greater sharing and alignment, where appropriate, of training programs and requirements

The discussions leading up to the development of the National Strategy were not the first time that this issue had been identified. Earlier, in 2004, industry and government participants in a *Government/Industry Forum on Integrating Food Safety Systems in Canada*² hosted by the Coalition and three federal/provincial/territorial committees dealing with food safety considered the current situation in Canada respecting food safety auditor training and qualifications, including the on-farm food safety auditor training program recently established by the Canadian On-Farm Food Safety (COFFS) Working Group and global developments. While the Forum made no recommendations, the breakout sessions that reviewed this matter all concluded that ensuring a trained supply of qualified food safety auditors was a priority and that this could require:

- development of core competencies for auditors for all sectors along the food chain (perhaps through the use of national standards);
- credentialing for multi-sector or multi-commodity food safety auditors;

² <http://www.foodsafetycoalition.ca/upload/Forum%20report%20final%202004.pdf>

- identification of methods for determining equivalency;
- development of cost effective auditor training capacity; and,
- exploration of the need for government oversight.

The 2009 National Strategy allocated responsibility for following up on Action 3.2 to the Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition. After further discussions with its members, with other stakeholders and with governments, the Coalition applied for and received funding in the fall of 2011 from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada under the Canadian Food Safety and Traceability Initiative, a Growing Forward program, to undertake a project.

3.0 Project Objective

The Coalition's *Food Safety Auditor Qualifications and Competencies Project* is intended to engage its members and other stakeholders, including the federal, provincial and territorial governments, other industry associations, academic institutions, participants in the national standards system, etc. in a dialogue on food safety auditor qualifications and competencies in Canada.

The objective of this dialogue is twofold:

- First, it will provide an opportunity to share information and to identify issues with respect to private and public sector requirements, international standards and developments globally in the field of food safety auditor qualifications and competencies; and,
- Second, it will determine if there is a consensus as to whether or not a Canadian approach to food safety auditor qualifications and competencies is required and if so, how it can be achieved and what infrastructure needs there might be to implement and sustain it.

4.0 Project Process

This twofold objective is to be realized through two workshops and an iterative process of validation of the resulting recommendation(s).

The 1st Workshop was held on 17 January 2012 and focused on information sharing and issue identification. This report summarizes that session.

The 2nd Workshop will be held on 13 March 2012 and will focus on determining if there is a consensus on the need to develop a Canadian approach to food safety auditor qualifications and competencies. It will also consider, if there is an emerging consensus, how a Canadian approach could be achieved and what infrastructure might be needed to implement and sustain it.

Following the 2nd Workshop, the participants will be asked to review and validate a report. This report will then be electronically circulated to a broader audience, including stakeholders that could not participate in the workshops, for their consideration and electronic validation.

Subsequent to this consultation a final report will be prepared and published in the spring of 2012.

5.0 Summary of the January Workshop Presentations³

5.1 Welcome and Workshop Scope

Participants in the Workshop were welcomed by the Co-chairs of the Coalition, Ms. Jackie Crichton and Ms. Susan Abel.

Ms. Crichton outlined the role and history of the Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition, its major activities and set the scene for the Food Safety Auditor Competencies and Qualifications Project.

Ms. Abel focused in on the Project's objectives. She provided background information, noting that by 2004, it was apparent that new international standards were emerging (e.g. ISO & GFSI) and that some countries, such as Australia, had already begun to debate national standards for auditor competency. The outcomes of the Government/Industry Forum were briefly described:

- a need to clearly define competencies, qualifications, education requirements, experience, etc.
- the importance of recognizing different requirements along the supply chain; and
- an interest in further exploration of the certification issue.

The continued importance of the issue in 2008/2009 was noted as was its inclusion in the recommended Actions in the Coalition's National Strategy for Industry-led Food Safety Programs. Ms. Abel set out the objectives for the project and indicating that the intent of the 1st Workshop was not to arrive at a consensus on a Canadian approach to food safety auditor qualifications and competencies but to provide an opportunity for sharing information and identifying issues. The presentations have been structured to provide updates on public and private sector requirements and to explore current international trends. And the expected results were to have a good discussion, to clarify issues and opportunities and to identify any additional information needs required to facilitate a good dialogue in the 2nd Workshop.

In conclusion, it was noted that in launching the project, the Coalition was following through on the responsibilities it was given in both the 2004 Forum and the 2009 Strategy to foster a discussion of this critical subject. It does not have a predetermined outcome in mind.

5.2 Competency Requirements and Assessment

Dr. Cynthia Woodley, Vice President of Professional Testing Inc. (Orlando, Florida), joined the Workshop by web link to make the first presentation. Dr. Woodley's professional background as a psychometrician includes extensive experience in the developing requirements and assessment

³ Presentations made that the 1st Workshop have been posted to the Coalition's website at www.foodsafetycoalition.ca

approaches for auditors and other professionals, including the new International Accreditation Forum (IAF) requirements for its assessors, for the US Conference for Food Protection's Certified Food Safety Manager Program and for the US government's National Renewable Energy Laboratory's energy auditor. She is also an assessor for the ANSI Personnel Certification Program based on the ISO/IEC 17024 Standard and a Technical Expert for the Standards Council of Canada for ISO 17024 audits. Dr. Woodley is the voluntary chair of several projects in the international standards system related to competency assessment, including on-going revision of ISO 17024:2003 *General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*.

Dr. Woodley's presentation focussed on using a competency based approach of verifying the competence of auditors. Starting with a series of definitions (e.g. psychometrics, psychometrician, assessment, evaluation, examination, credential, licensure, certification, certificate, etc.) she outlined the components of a competence based certification program. The process starts with the development of competence requirements through the identification of the appropriated knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) through a job, task or practice analysis by an expert group. These KSAs should then be validated by a broader group of practitioners, users, etc.. This is often done through a survey that also seeks information on the importance and the frequency of tasks so that this can be factored in the assessment approach. Another important activity is determining the eligibility criteria for the assessment. These should be designed so that the candidate has a "fair opportunity for success".

A personnel certification program is one option for managing the assessment of competence and Dr. Woodley noted that in this area the ISO standard ISO 17024 was becoming widely used as a basis for establishing and accrediting programs. It provides a structure and a recognized management system approach that provides impartiality and credibility. Accredited or not, a personnel certification scheme must have administrative policies and procedures, an objective assessment process based on the validated KSAs, tests and other assessment tools, post-examination process to ensure that the assessments are properly performing and being improved, can respond to complaints, etc..

In conclusion, Dr. Woodley summarized the common expectations ("should" and "should not") of a personnel certification organization:

- Should:
 - Ensure that only those individuals who have the knowledge/skills to be competent are certified.
 - Ensure that any measurement instruments used to measure the candidates are fair, valid, reliable and legally defensible.
 - Ensure that they separate their certification functions from all other functions they perform (membership, education, etc.)
 - Ensure that all certificants agree to and abide by a code of conduct.
 - Ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in the certification process (development, etc.)
 - Ensure that the confidentiality of all candidate data is maintained.

- Ensure that candidates with disabilities are given appropriate opportunities for success.
 - Ensure candidates are given information about any assessments that will be used to evaluate them.
 - Keep public protection at the forefront of thought when managing a credential
- Should Not:
 - Restrict access to a credential.
 - Insist that candidates complete “specific” educational requirements to gain access to a credential.
 - Use norm-reference standards for certification programs
 - Arbitrarily set the pass standard

5.3 Public Sector Requirements

A brief introduction to the requirements in the public sector for food safety auditors and inspectors was provided by two presenters. Mr. Vance McEachern, Executive Director, Inspection Modernization at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) spoke to the federal government’s recently launched inspection modernization initiative. Mr. Daryl Loback, Growing Forward Administrator, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, brought a provincial perspective.

Mr. McEachern’s presentation was the first made to industry on CFIA’s new inspection modernization initiative. As such it covered the background for the initiative as well as its major components prior to providing some details on training and future competencies of inspectors. The vision articulated by CFIA is that it will:

- move from the delivery of eight different food inspection programs that have evolved independently to one food inspection program based on a common suite of inspection activities supported by standardized processes and tools, based on science and risk;
- have the ability to assess and address risk consistently and to use existing resources more effectively;
- shift efforts and resources to areas of greatest risk; and,
- be applied to Plant and Animal, where possible.

With respect to training, CFIA intends to consolidate multiple training programs for inspectors based on different commodity requirements (e.g. meat, fish, dairy, etc.) to an improved training program that keeps inspectors current of best practices and scientific advances. Currently CFIA focuses on technical competencies that include:

- knowledge of various food processing tools, equipment and technologies;
- understanding of scientific disciplines associated with food processing;

- knowledge of CFIA, other government departments, Canadian private and public sectors, international public and private sectors; and,
- knowledge of legislation under which the inspected organization operates.

The expected non-technical competencies include:

- thinking and judgement;
- planning and organising one's own work;
- teamwork;
- initiative;
- effective interpersonal relations;
- persuasiveness and negotiation;
- adaptability and flexibility; and,
- communication.

The new requirements for inspector competencies have not yet been developed. Mr. McEachern indicated that CFIA would be working on this critical matter over the course of 2012. He stated that the CFIA work would involve:

- a review and analysis of international food safety inspection systems and inspector competencies to identify international best practices and standards ;
- establishing networks with New Zealand, Australia and United States to facilitate consultation and on-site visits to observe and analyze inspection systems, methodologies, tools and approaches; and,
- an analysis of competencies required by Canadian inspectors which, when completed, will be integrated into the horizontal approach to training and recruitment.

Mr. Loback spoke from notes. He indicated that there was not a common set of inspector/auditor competencies across all provinces and that within some provinces there was likely variation between those set by the agriculture and the health departments if they each had responsibilities for discrete segments of the supply chain. Some provinces have adopted certification by the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors⁴ for some inspectors. He also noted that in the provinces that have established HACCP certification programs for small processors (Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta) criteria had been set for the 3rd party auditors. These conform to the federal/provincial/territorial recognition program protocol and covered such elements as:

- personal, includes communication skills, behavior;
- thorough understanding of HACCP Reference standard;

⁴ <http://www.ciphi.ca>

- adequate auditing skills based on the completion of a recognized auditor training course based on ISO 19011 audit principles and methodologies;
- demonstrated understanding and experience of particular industry/commodity area(s);
- food safety and HACCP knowledge demonstrated by successful completion of a recognized HACCP training course or equivalent experience with designing and implementing HACCP programs; and
- appropriate education as demonstrated by a diploma or degree in food safety, food microbiology, food science, veterinary science or a related field.

In closing Mr. Loback indicated that he and Mr. Martin Firth of CFIA were participating in the Coalition's project as liaisons from the FPT Food Safety Committee. Mr. McEachern in his remarks welcomed the Coalition's initiative and expressed the hope that there could be continued dialogue during the CFIA's modernization initiative on the subject of auditor/inspector qualifications and competencies.

5.4 Private Sector Requirements

Two presentations were made to illustrate requirements in the private sector. Mr. Frank Schreurs, President, Guelph Food Technology Centre, provided the perspective of a certification body active in the audit and certification of food safety management systems as well as in the provision of 2nd party food safety audits for various companies. A review of international trends in food safety auditor competencies and qualifications, based on the background paper circulated prior to the Workshop, was presented by Mr. Albert Chambers, Executive Director of the Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition.

Mr. Schreurs presentation on **certification bodies** covered three main topics:

- Qualifications and Competency;
- Requirements and challenges from Scheme owners; and,
- Future Industry and Stakeholder Expectations.

In doing so, he noted that many of the concepts outlined in Dr. Woodley's presentation were being actively used by certification bodies at this time.

Certification bodies can operate under one or more **ISO standards for accreditation**. In GFTC's case, it is accredited by ANSI under ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996 General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems (or CAN-P-3G December 1999). This standard requires a certification body (CB):

- to have personnel that are "competent for the functions they perform ...";
- to define "minimum relevant criteria for the competence of personnel"; and,
- to maintain records "on the relevant qualifications, training and experience of each member of the personnel involved in the certification process".

In addition, CBs working within food safety certification schemes (e.g. BRC, SQF, CanadaGAP, etc) must meet the **requirements of the schemes**. From a generic perspective, these schemes have the following requirements related "**qualifications**":

- Food Science or equivalent degrees;
- Lead auditor certification (IRCA, CHA, RABQSA, Schemes);
- Scheme specific training (covers the standard to be audited, reporting requirements, etc.);
- HACCP training;
- Industry specific training in specialized areas such as microbiology, sanitation, thermal processing, fresh produce, etc..

With respect to current **competency requirements**, Mr. Schreurs summarized these under three headings:

- Technical Skills which include work experience, process specific experience and auditing experience;
- Observational and Communications Skills which include process and risk assessments, analytical skills, interviewing and observation, time management (organizational), information technology, etc; and,
- Behavioural and Business Skills which include such attributes as being open minded, ethical, tenacious and diplomatic as well as knowledge related to business processes and organizational structures.

Mr. Schreurs noted that **meeting scheme requirements** could be challenging and, in some cases, added significant new costs. Schemes frequently set different qualifications for auditors active in the same food categories or required training that was in many respects a duplication of training in other schemes. He noted that the administrative requirements of schemes (reporting, databases, etc.) were all different and this presented challenges as well.

He also indicated that there were **industry expectations**. These range from reduced costs for travel (clients and auditors were not always geographically close) to availability of qualified auditors for schemes and food categories. Industry also had differing expectations of the audit – shortest time to obtain a pass on a certificate to in-depth to provide value to the audited organization as well as to assure certification.

Certification bodies were also facing **new expectations and requirements**. He noted that the US Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) will see the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) become involved in “accrediting” certification bodies and that GFSI’s current project to develop auditor competency requirements for inclusion in its benchmarking scheme will also generate significant change.

The final presentation, made after lunch, **covered international trends in food safety auditor qualifications and competencies**. As noted above this presentation was a summary of the 115 page first draft of a background paper prepared for the project by Mr. Chambers. He noted, that while by no means comprehensive or even finalized, the project background paper covered a wide range of both private and public sector requirements for food safety auditor, international and national standards, personnel certification schemes, government requirements for both public sector and 3rd party auditors and included examples from Europe, Africa, Australia, the US and Canada.

His presentation then quickly walked through the following areas:

- Definitions
- ISO/TS 22003 – the Emerging Core
- GFSI Proposals – Key Elements
- IRCA Types & Grades
- US Developments – What our neighbours are doing?
- Australian Example.

Starting with definitions from the international standards system, Mr. Chambers proposed that the qualifications and competencies set out in ISO/TS 22003:2007 *2007 Food safety management systems – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems* had emerged since their publication as the core of private sector expectations of food safety auditors. These requirements, based on both qualifications and competencies, were now centrally planted in the major private sector benchmarking scheme, the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and their role was being strengthened by the tightening of the relationship between the revised accreditation standard for management systems (ISO/IEC 17021:2011) and the new draft accreditation standard for product certification (ISO/IEC 17065:201x) which will replace ISO/IEC Guide 65. Looking ahead, he noted that ISO/TS 22003 will be revised in 2012 to bring it into line with the 2011 revision of ISO/IEC 17021, which introduced major changes to the requirements of certification bodies vis-à-vis their assessment of food safety auditor competence. This ISO review is also expected to see detail added respecting the competencies for food safety auditors, but also for other personnel involved in food safety certification decisions.

Chambers noted that the influence of GFSI's benchmarking scheme as a determinant of industry, particularly retailers' and major manufacturers' expectation of food safety management system schemes requirements was continuing to grow. Since 2009, it had emerged from a primarily European factor to one that was now very important in North America and of growing importance in South America, China and India. Food safety auditor competence was identified as a major GFSI concern and a project to develop more detailed competency requirements was nearing the completion of its first phase in February 2012⁵. It is expected that during 2012, GFSI will revise the 6th Version of its Guidance Document and incorporate an extensive set of competency requirements classified in three groups⁶:



The requirements for auditing knowledge and skills are drawn from the international standards system (e.g. ISO 19011, ISO 17021, ISO 22003). The technical knowledge and skills reflect the detailed

⁵ The detailed competencies developed by the GFSI Technical Working Group on Auditor Competence had been circulated to the Workshop participants in advance. At the conclusion of the consultation period, the draft materials were removed from the GFSI website: www.mygfsi.com

⁶ GFSI TWG Auditor Competence (2011), materials from Brussels meeting

requirements for schemes set out in the GFSI Guidance Document and those for behaviour and systems thinking (e.g. auditor conduct, personal behaviour, critical thinking, problem solving, root cause analysis, and organizational behaviour).

The first phase of the GFSI project had involved a task analysis undertaken by a group of experts which incorporated many of the elements outlined by Dr. Woodley as part of a systematic development of set of competency requirements based on the ISO 17024 approach. It was noted, however, that the draft document circulated for stakeholder input did not include auditor competencies for the key elements of the GFSI Guidance Document related to good agricultural practices (GAPs). The GFSI working group had not completed this work as of yet.

Moving on, Mr. Chambers provided examples of other international developments:

- The International Registry of Certified Auditors (IRCA) which is primarily European personnel certification scheme for quality, environmental and food safety auditors. At this time it is qualifications based. He noted the interesting structure that separates food safety auditors into two types (i.e. those working within organizations or undertaking supplier audits or working for governments, etc. and those providing audits for third party certification bodies) and six grades (i.e. Internal Auditor, Provisional Auditor, Auditor, Lead Auditor, Principal Auditor (Team Leader or Consultant paths) and Auditor for 3rd Party Certification). The background paper outlines other personnel certification schemes.
- Activities in the United States that are leading to establishment of both a national training system (through the Partnership for Food Protection initiative) and a personnel certification scheme for US government inspectors/auditors as well as state and other auditors undertaking regulatory audits for USDA and FDA.
- New requirements in US Food Safety Modernization Act that involve companies exporting to the US in 3rd party accredited certification and the specification by FDA of auditor qualifications and competencies.

The final example reviewed was the 13 year process in Australia that finished in 2011. This project also utilized the development tools (e.g. task analysis, etc.) described above and resulted in a National Framework including:

- auditor competencies (national units of competency);
- technical and educational qualifications;
- specialised auditing competencies;
- witness audits and legislative assessment;
- regulatory food safety auditor code of conduct; and,
- application of pre-approval additional provisions.

The Australian system is risk-based approach (high, medium, low) and is incorporated into the national training system through a core curriculum with assessments set out in national standards. The key training modules cover:

- Assessing compliance
- Communicating and negotiating audits
- Conduct of audits
- Identification, evaluation and control of FS hazards

6.0 Breakout Sessions

Following the presentations, the Workshop participants formed four breakout groups to discuss the presentations and the background paper.

6.1 The Questions:

- **Topic A – Role of Competencies & Qualifications:** Competencies are an increasingly important component of food safety auditor (and other certification personnel) requirements set by governments (e.g. Australian & US0, private sector benchmarking schemes (e.g. GFSI), international standards (ISO/IEC 17021/ISO 22003), etc..
 - What should the balance of competencies and qualifications be, in Canada, for i) public and ii) private sector food safety auditors (inspectors)?
 - Should there be differentiation in these requirements based on risk (e.g. high, medium, low) or type of scheme being implemented (e.g. regulatory vs voluntary or site-specific hazard analysis vs generic HACCP-based) or other factors?
 - Do any of the competency models discussed in the Background Paper or in the presentations have characteristics that should be considered for inclusion in a Canadian approach?

- **Topic B – Mechanisms for Improving Consistency & Credibility:** The models reviewed employ various approaches to developing requirements and to assessing qualifications and competencies: high level descriptions (e.g. ISO 17021/ISO 22003, Canadian Recognition Programs), detailed task analyses (IAF assessor, US PFP, Australia schemes, GFSI proposals), establishing certification schemes, etc..
 - Which approach or approaches should Canada consider?
 - Should Canada adopt one existing model and just add characteristics?
 - Should Canada adopt the same approach for public sector and private sector auditors (inspectors)?
 - What role, if any, should certification have?

6.2 The Comments:

With respect to **Topic A – The Role of Competencies and Qualifications**, the breakout groups reported a wide range of concerns but also expressed considerable consistency. Amongst the concerns/issue raised were:

- Flexibility – one size does not fit all – Canada has special considerations, particularly the existence of the HACCP-based on-farm and post-farm schemes where the auditors will have to have different knowledge and skill sets;

- Competency is important but may be hard to measure objectively;
- Qualifications get the auditor in the certifying body's door, but competencies get him/her in the facility to audit;
- Public and private sectors have different focus (inspection based on checklists and observation vs audits based on interviewing and records review) although there is likely a fundamental overlap in skills;
- Any auditor should strive for excellence ;
- Different qualifications are needed for low, medium, and high risk facilities – auditor must be competent no matter what level;
- Training programs need to be sure to include soft skills;
- Every audit must add value to the facility being audited;
- There is a need to recognize market demand, international requirements and public perception about the competency of food safety auditors in light of recent events;
- Canadian approach (e.g. HACCP-based programs) is not well understood elsewhere and developing competencies in Canada and exporting them would be beneficial;
- Emotional intelligence is important;
- Uniformity/consistency is needed to provide credibility;
- On-going calibration is needed but could create a cost burden;
- In public sector (e.g. CFIA) modernization must also involve sector specific competence;
- Incremental levels such as in the IRCA program should be explored;
- Certification of auditors will add cost but will it add value;
- For schemes using accredited certification bodies, the accreditation bodies need more guidance about competencies to do their job;
- Australian experience could be valuable; more information is needed for a better understanding.

Overall, the breakout groups indicated that competencies were as important as or more important than qualifications and that consideration be given to developing Canadian competencies.

On **Topic B – Mechanisms for Improving Consistency and Credibility**, there was a greater divergence of views amongst the breakout groups. These ranged from strong support for certification of food safety auditors based on competency to considerable scepticism about the concept, its value and cost. Another issue where there were contending viewpoints was on the requirements for public and private auditors. Here several groups supported a common approach but others noted that while core knowledge and skills existed, the different approaches (inspection vs audit) meant there were different bodies of knowledge and skills required. There was however greater agreement on the value of training programs to achieve uniformity and consistency. Other concerns/issues reported included:

- Close monitoring of the GFSI working group as the proposal provided looks very good.
- Need to evaluate and learn from other competency schemes;

- Importance of flexibility as it is unlikely that a one-size-fits-all approach will work for the whole supply chain. For example, SQF tries but a great deal of audit requirements simply don't apply to other sectors (like packaging) which can really skew scoring.
- Strengthen the capacity of certification bodies to assess/certify auditor skill sets, especially across categories/food sectors;
- Tools exist to facilitate developing consistency, such as uniform witness audit reports, on-site group training sessions, case studies, etc;
- Note was made of the challenges created by Canada's size/geography in establishing effective training and calibration activities;
- There are differences, from a credibility perspective, in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd party auditors that could impact on the need for certification, the level of knowledge required, etc. ;
- Personnel certification bodies are limited in what they can assess, the food safety certification bodies will still have a big role;
- Assessors for accreditation bodies need to be very competent to assess CB auditors and to provide credibility;
- CFIA has a similar role in the National Recognition programs;
- Mentoring also has an important role developing consistency.

Overall, credibility and consistency were recognized as very important issues, especially as both the public sector inspector/auditor and the private sector auditor are central players in the effectiveness of both systems.

7.0 Plenary: Conclusions and Next Steps

Following the breakout group reports, the plenary session considered **Topic C – Drafting a Consensus at the 2nd Workshop**. The purpose of this discussion was to seek input on the following questions:

- Are there other food safety auditor models that should be described and circulated?
- What additional background or synthesis materials should be developed and circulated?
- Are there other steps that should be undertaken prior to the 2nd Workshop?
- Do you have any suggestions about the format and conduct of the 2nd Workshop? (e.g. use of facilitator, stakeholders to be invited, agenda, length (1 day or more), etc).

The breakout groups had devoted the final portion of their discussions to these questions and the discussion of their suggestions produced several conclusions.

On the question of additional models – several groups noted that more information on the Australian model and its development would be of value. Mention was made of the certification program for health inspectors.

On additional background information, there was also support for inclusion in the background paper of requirements from more Canadian HACCP-based programs and of better information on the federal and provincial requirements. A matrix of requirements was requested, although it was noted that the significant differences between the qualifications approach of most schemes and the competencies approach of the GFSI project and some other schemes could make developing this matrix a challenge. Gaps in the current draft of the background paper should be filled in where possible and information on other scheme's or national requirements included, time and budget permitting.

Looking forward to the next Workshop, participants indicated that some key stakeholder groups, particularly retailers and provincial governments, were not well represented. Efforts should be made to encourage their greater participation as well as participation by more CBs and the Standards Council of Canada as the accreditation body.

There was agreement that the 2nd Workshop should be facilitated and it was reported that funds had been allocated for that purpose in the project's budget.

Annex A – Workshop Participants (29)

Susan Abel	Food & Consumer Products Canada
Candice Appleby	Small Scale Food Processors Association
Janice Arnold	ExcelGrains Canada
Albert Chambers	Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition
Erica Charlton	Canadian Poultry & Egg Processors Council
Judy Chong	Produce Smart Business Services
Andrew Clarke	Maple Leaf Foods
Jorge Andres Correa	Canadian Meat Council
Jackie Crichton	Consultant
Martin Firth	Canadian Food Inspection Agency & the FPT Food Safety Committee
Nadia Gagnon	ED Foods
Heather Gale	Canadian Horticultural Council
Heather Holland	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Tara Jowett	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Dawn Lawrence	Canadian Pork Council
Daryl Loback	Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development & the FPT Food Safety Committee
Vance McEachern	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Chris Nash	Egg Farmers of Canada
Greg Northey	Canadian Federation of Agriculture
Michael Nyisztor	Medina Quality Assurance
Johanna Oehling	Food Processors Human Resources Council
George Patterson	Food Processors of Canada
Rae Payette	Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
Julie Press	QMI-SAIGlobal
Sally Rutherford	Dairy Processors Association of Canada
Frank Schreurs	Guelph Food Technology Centre
Viki Sikur	Canadian Hatching Egg Producers
Michel Smith	Egg Farmers of Canada
Caroline Wilson	Chicken Farmers of Canada

Annex B – Workshop Agenda



CANADIAN SUPPLY CHAIN FOOD SAFETY COALITION

COALITION CANADIENNE DE LA FILIÈRE ALIMENTAIRE POUR LA SALUBRITÉ DES ALIMENTS

1st National Workshop on a Canadian Approach to Food Safety Auditor Qualifications and Competencies

Agenda

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Welcome
9:05 a.m.	Participant Introductions
9:15 a.m.	Meeting Objectives
9:30 a.m.	Competency Requirements & Assessment - Dr. Cynthia Woodley, Vice-President, Professional Testing Inc (weblink from Florida)
10:00 a.m.	Public Sector Requirements Auditors & Inspection Modernization – Vance McEachem, Executive Director, Inspection Modernization, CFIA Safety Auditor Requirements: A Provincial Perspective – Daryl Loback, Growing Forward Administrator, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
10:45 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m.	Private Sector Requirements Summary of International Trends – Albert Chambers, Executive Director, CSCFSC A Certification Body Perspective – Frank Schreurs, President, Guelph Food Technology Centre
Noon	Lunch
13:00 p.m.	Discussion/Breakout Sessions
14:45 p.m.	Break
15:00 p.m.	Plenary & Next Steps
16:00 p.m.	Adjournment