



CANADIAN SUPPLY CHAIN FOOD SAFETY COALITION

COALITION CANADIENNE DE LA FILIÈRE ALIMENTAIRE POUR LA SALUBRITÉ DES ALIMENTS

National Strategy for Industry-led Food Safety Programs 2009-2013

31 March 2009

1.0 Introduction:

The Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition was formed in December 2000 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.

As part of its mission to facilitate dialogue and to encourage the development of a national approach to food safety, the Coalition initiated a project to engage the agri-food industry and governments in the development of a National Strategy for Industry-led Food Safety Programs.

The Project's Objective was to identify both gaps and opportunities in the current Canadian approach to food safety and goals which could be set and actions which could be taken to improve the system between 2009 and 2013, a timeframe that coincides with the federal, provincial, territorial Growing Forward Initiative.

Financial assistance for this project is being provided by members of the Coalition and by a contribution from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada under the Canadian Food Safety and Quality Program, an Agriculture Policy Framework program.

2.0 Process:

The National Strategy project was conceived as an iterative process to ensure that associations representing the agri-food industry and their members have ample opportunity to provide input and comments on the strategy document as it developed. The process involved two Workshops (February and December 2008) and the circulation of three drafts of the Strategy prior to its finalization through a web-based validation in February 2009.

3.0 Deliverables:

The final output of the project includes two documents. First, this national strategy document which identifies:

- (i) a set of four (4) principles upon which the strategy is grounded;
- (ii) a set of seven (7) goals for the Canadian food safety system in 2013;
- (iii) specific actions that could be taken to realize these goals;
- (iv) the parties responsible for implementing the actions; and,
- (v) milestones that could be utilized to assess progress in achieving the identified goals and actions.

A final report on the project was also prepared and circulated to the participants and other interested parties.

4.0 Background on Industry-led Food Safety Programs

Over the past decade and a half, a partnership involving industry associations, governments and other stakeholders has developed a set of HACCP and/or HACCP-based, industry-led, national food safety programs and the infrastructure required to launch their implementation by food businesses all along the supply chain. This National Strategy for Industry-led Food Safety Programs seeks to chart a course for the sustained development, implementation and improvement of these programs and the supporting infrastructure over the next four years, through 2013

4.1 Industry Initiatives:

In the mid-1990's important food safety developments had already begun to materialize under the leadership of industry associations. The importance of food safety was a primary concern of post-farmgate businesses, particularly federally registered establishments. In the fisheries sector, companies were implementing the mandatory Quality Management Program (QMP) and meat and poultry establishments were voluntarily implementing the Food Safety Enhancement Program (FSEP) in part to maintain access to the American market.

In primary production, efforts on behalf of the "national producer organizations" to advance food safety were also meeting with some success, as evidenced by the early development of the first HACCP-based program - CQA™ - by the Canadian Pork Council and the introduction of food safety programs by the national poultry and egg agencies. In 1997, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's proposal for a Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Program was established with authorization from the Minister of Agriculture and new program funding.

Between 1997 and 2008, substantial gains were achieved. National HACCP-based programs were developed covering ninety-nine (99) percent or more of primary production. Program implementation within the on-farm sector also moved in a positive direction. This trend is largely attributed to the demands for on-farm food safety implementation from the processing and retail sectors. Furthermore, the national Federal/Provincial/Territorial recognition program, developed through extended negotiations between governments and the Canadian On-Farm Food Safety (COFFS) Working Group is currently operational.

For the pre and post farmgate sectors three major types of programs encompassing a broad depth of activities evolved. These are: site-specific HACCP; HACCP-based programs; and training programs. The majority of these HACCP-based programs and training programs are either at the stage of implementation or nearing it. Industry associations and governments have also designed but not yet implemented a national (FPT) recognition scheme for programs beyond the farm.

4.2 Initiatives by Other Stakeholders:

The agri-food industry's rising interest in food safety also triggered significant activity by other stakeholders. Food development centers designed to provide businesses with guidance in the area of food safety were created in most provinces. The general trend towards greater food safety awareness also resulted in a growing pool of food safety experts such as consultants and trainers. And, the demand for conformity assessment services spread among businesses seeking some form of recognition for their food safety practices.

The International Standards System introduced the new ISO 22000 family of standards covering food safety management system requirements, traceability requirements and audit and certification. There has also been a considerable increase in the number of private standards and benchmarking

schemes. Certification schemes for food safety auditors have been established internationally. Within the Canadian national standards system, the Standards Council of Canada established an accreditation program for bodies providing food safety certification and these firms are developing their food safety capacity. Important developments in the area of traceability and bio-security are also underway through other related initiatives.

4.3 Government Initiatives:

Governments' commitment to improving food safety systems was evident prior to 1997. The FPT initiative to establish the Canadian Food Inspection System in 1995 represented an important step and the CFIS Blueprint outlined the basic goals and principles for food safety in Canada and emphasized industry's central role in upholding food safety standards and providing consumers with sufficient product information. A set of responsibilities was also described for FPT governments. These included setting and enforcing food safety standards and managing the distribution of food safety resources in an effective manner, to name only a few.

Aside from the CFIS blueprint, governments were advancing various other initiatives to harmonize the national food safety system. During this period, three major FPT food safety committees were in operation (CFIS-IG, FPTAFIC, and FPTFSPC). At the federal level, the CFIA was established and given the central role of overseeing activities related to the inspection and enforcement of food safety standards in interprovincial and export trade. The federal government also assisted industry with the development and implementation of HACCP and/or HACCP-based programs. At the provincial level, despite inconsistencies between provinces, progress was being made in the implementation of national codes and legislative reform.

Moving ahead to 2008, FPT food safety initiatives had covered considerable ground. Although the 1995 CFIS blueprint remains at the core of FPT initiatives, the Agriculture Policy Framework – 2003/2008 - broadened the scope of its application. Funding programs were put in place to aid both on-farm and post-farmgate sectors with the development and implementation of food safety programs. Gains have been made in the advancement of recognition schemes. The creation of a single FPT food safety committee in late 2007 has also been instrumental in improving the structure and accountability of these intergovernmental initiatives.

On the federal side, the Public Health Agency of Canada was formed to support and compliment CFIA operations. Food safety regulations have also been amended to extend mandatory HACCP to meat and poultry establishments. Other key federal initiatives take the form of animal identification schemes, substantial funding programs, and bio-security related projects, to name only a few. At the provincial level, new and/or revised regulations along with the development of certification schemes have strengthened food safety networks in many provinces. Additionally, in several provinces, a growing pool of resources has been channeled into the implementation of food safety systems at various points in the supply chain.

4.4 Collaborative Initiatives:

In 1997 collaboration was already materializing with respect to industry-government and the industry-to-industry initiatives. In the case of the former, it played an instrumental role in advancing the development of food safety tools, improvements to the national codes system, generic HACCP models, particularly in the processing sector, and the foundation of the Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education.

As of 2008, governments and industry groups continued to strengthen their ties through collaborative food safety initiatives. Industry groups are often called upon by government bodies to provide their expertise on matters pertaining to food safety. Government funding has also facilitated significant improvements in food safety throughout the supply chain. Considerable gains in food safety have been made through industry-industry collaborations. There is greater industry recognition of food safety programs along the supply chain. Other joint industry contributions include the COFFS Working Group “milestone” of ten (10) years of activities and the establishment of the Canadian Supply Chain Food Safety Coalition in 2000, to name only two.

5.0 Guiding Principles

This National Strategy for Industry-led Food Safety Programs is grounded in four (4) principles:

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.

6.0 Goals

The participants in the first workshop (7 February 2008) identified three strategic areas - industry initiatives, other stakeholder initiatives and government initiatives. Specific goals were then formulated, reviewed and revised for each strategic area and actions, responsibilities and milestones were identified in successive drafts of the strategy and during the second workshop (9 December 2008).

6.1 Goals for Industry:

Three goals have been identified in the Strategic Area for Industry:

Goal: #1 – Facilitate Food Safety Program Implementation at MSMEs

Goal: #2 – Support Canadian Food Safety Programs by Promoting Awareness

Goal: #3 – Strengthen Food Safety Training and Auditing Infrastructure

Strategic Area: Industry		
Goal: #1 – Facilitate Food Safety Program Implementation by Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Canada		
Actions	Responsibility	Milestones
1.1 Ensure equitable access by MSMEs to national industry-led food safety programs or other nationally recognized programs (e.g. materials, training programs, etc)	1.1 Industry associations as program owners as well as governments and other stakeholders	1.1 Increased adoption of industry-led food safety programs by MSMEs across all segments of the food supply chain
1.2 Ensure equitable access to financial assistance for implementing national industry-led food safety programs or other nationally recognized programs by MSMEs all along the supply chain	1.2 FPT governments through the Growing Forward Initiative or other programming	1.2 New FPT funding programs to assist MSMEs all along the supply chain (not just for farms and processors) to implement national industry-led food safety programs or other nationally recognized programs
1.3 Clarify and communicate the logistics of implementation to MSMEs	1.3 Industry associations as well as other stakeholders and FPT government bodies involved in funding program implementation	1.3 New communications initiatives directed at MSMEs

1.4 Simplify and condense food safety program materials to facilitate accessibility and implementation by MSMEs	1.4 Industry associations as program owners	1.4.1 Simpler program materials 1.4.2 Greater use of on-line delivery of program materials
1.5 Harmonize food safety program requirements and develop delivery mechanisms such as management systems and conformity assessments in order to ensure appropriate implementation	1.5 Industry associations as program owners and Canadian On-Farm Food Safety (COFFS) Working Group and a new working group for post farm programs or a new joint working group.	1.5 Set of harmonized, standardized or benchmarked food safety requirements for each commodity or segment of the supply chain
1.6 Identify and share industry best practices concerning the delivery of programs and implementation assistance	1.6 Industry associations as program owners (through Working Groups if continued or established) and in collaboration with other stakeholders	1.6 Adoption of best practices for program delivery and implementation by industry-led programs
1.7 Integrate food safety and other program requirements to reduce costs and to increase success of implementation	1.7 Industry associations as program owners (through Working Groups if continued or established) in collaboration with other stakeholders	1.7.1 Integration of food safety and other management systems or components (e.g. enhanced record keeping) where applicable in on-farm and/or post-farm settings 1.7.2 Availability of integrated audit and certification options in on-farm and post-farm sectors

Strategic Area: Industry		
Goal: #2 – Support Canadian Food Safety Programs by Promoting Awareness		
Actions	Responsibility	Milestones
2.1 Develop evaluation framework and the tools needed to quantify the benefits associated with food safety program implementation initiatives	2.1 Task force established by FPT Food Safety Committee with industry association participation (on-farm and post-farm)	2.1 Increased awareness of food safety programs and the national, integrated and co-ordinated Canadian approach among all concerned parties

<p>2.2 Engage associations along the supply chain in a dialogue about mutual recognition of industry-led food safety programs</p>	<p>2.2 Industry associations and CSCFSC</p>	<p>2.2.1 Top-to-top process developed, initiated and completed</p> <p>2.2.2 Recognition of suppliers' industry-led food safety programs by customers and their associations along the supply chain</p>
<p>2.3 Strengthen and coordinate efforts to market and communicate the Canadian food safety approach both domestically and abroad</p>	<p>2.3 Industry associations as program owners in collaboration with AAFC, CFIA and Health Canada and with support from P/T governments</p>	<p>2.3.1 Industry/government activities to promote OFFS and PFFS programs in Canada and internationally (e.g. Codex, FAO, bilateral relationships, etc.)</p> <p>2.3.2 Industry initiatives to market industry-led programs in Canada and internationally</p>
<p>2.4 Harmonize Canadian industry-led initiatives with national and international standards and international benchmarking schemes</p>	<p>2.4 Industry associations as program owners</p>	<p>2.4.1 Use by industry-led programs of national standard system components (e.g. accredited certification bodies)</p> <p>2.4.2 Engagement of international and national partners by industry associations in collaborative benchmarking or mutual recognition activities</p>
<p>2.5 Encourage consumer awareness and engagement in food safety initiatives</p>	<p>2.5 Industry associations in collaboration with Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education and FPT governments</p>	<p>2.5.1. Consumer communication strategy re Canadian approach (including roles of government, industry, industry-led programs and other stakeholders)</p> <p>2.5.2 Increased communications (consumer food safety information, fact sheets, etc) by FPT government departments and agencies (Health Canada, PHAC, CFIA, PMRA and P/T counterparts)</p>

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

6.2 Goals for Other Stakeholders

Two goals have been identified in the Strategic Area - Other Stakeholders (e.g. consultants, audit and certification bodies, training bodies, the national standards system, etc):

Goal: #4 – Increase the Pool of Qualified Food Safety Personnel

Goal: #5 – Establish Quality Consistency across Food Safety Specialists

Strategic Area: Other Stakeholders		
Goal: #4 – Increase the Pool of Qualified Food Safety Personnel		
Actions	Responsibility	Milestones
4.1 Review the demand for qualified personnel (industry employees and external auditors, trainers, consultants, etc.) in the private sector	4.1 CSCFSC, industry associations, educational institutions and training organizations	4.1.1 Discussion paper on options for project form, funding, etc. 4.1.2 Project involving research and a workshop to review industry's future needs and the expected supply of qualified food safety personnel 4.1.3 Stakeholder consensus on future needs/demand and Action plan for joint efforts
4.2 Develop a database of existing capacity to facilitate access by industry and other stakeholders	4.2 Industry, governments and other stakeholders, including educational institutions and training organizations	4.2.1 Needs assessment 4.2.2 Database requirements, criteria, etc 4.2.3 Body identified to maintain

Strategic Area: Other Stakeholders		
Goal: #5 – Establish Quality Consistency Across Food Safety Specialists (Consultants, Trainers, etc)		
Actions	Responsibility	Milestones
5.1 Strengthen consistency of food safety training for food safety specialists, consultants, trainers, etc on a national level.	5.1 CSCFSC, industry associations, professional associations, educational institutions and training organizations	5.1.1 Establishment of task force 5.1.2 Review of existing requirements, certifications, etc. and development of training expectations/criteria 5.1.3 Review of options for ensuring quality and consistency

6.3 Goals for Government

Two goals have been identified for the Strategic Area of Governments:

Goal: #6 – FPT Harmonization of Food Safety Program Requirements

Goal: #7 – Strengthen FPT Support for Food Safety Initiatives

Strategic Area: Government		
Goal: #6 – FPT Harmonization of Food Safety Requirements		
Actions	Responsibility	Milestones
6.1 Revised FPT “vision” for a national approach to food safety (replacing the 1994 Blueprint) based on an agreed to set of principles	6.1 FPT Ministers of Agriculture and Health with support from FPT Food Safety Committee and with involvement from industry and other stakeholders	6.1.1 Establishment of FPT task force or consultation process with industry and other stakeholder involvement 6.1.2 Draft of new national “vision” or “strategy” circulated for public comment 6.1.3 New national food safety vision or strategy agreed to by FPT governments, industry and other stakeholders
6.2 Establish national (FPT) decision-making mechanism for food safety policy and regulation in Canada	6.2 FPT Ministers of Agriculture and Health with support from FPT Food Safety Committee and with involvement from industry and other stakeholders	6.2.1 Ministerial commitment to establishing a new decision-making mechanism (re-affirmation of APF 22.1.4) 6.2.2 FPT consultations on options with industry and other stakeholder involvement 6.2.3 FPT agreement on new transparent decision-making mechanism for food safety policy and regulation in Canada 6.2.4 Formal inclusion of industry in FPT food safety decision-making processes
6.3 Clarify the role and the scope of national codes, industry-led food safety programs, food safety objectives and other food safety requirements	6.3 FPT Food Safety Committee and FPT Governments	6.3 Harmonized interpretation of food safety program requirements across jurisdictions and within governments

6.4 Integrate food safety related discussions across departments within government	6.4 FPT Governments	6.4 Improved food safety coordination within governments and/or amongst levels of government (e.g. provincial/municipal)
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Strategic Area: Government		
Goal: #7 – Strengthen FPT Support for Industry-led Food Safety Initiatives		
Actions	Responsibility	Milestones
7.1 Complete the development of government recognition programs for industry-led programs to foster domestic and international credibility and stimulate implementation	7.1 6.2 FPT Ministers of Agriculture and Health with support from FPT Food Safety Committee and with involvement from industry and other stakeholders	7.1.1 FPT Food Safety Committee recommendation 7.1.2 Ministerial endorsement of national recognition programs 7.1.3 Launch of FPT national recognition programs for industry-led food safety programs all along the chain by 1 June 2009
7.2 Promotion of national recognition programs in multilateral and bilateral discussions	7.2 Federal government departments (AAFC, Health Canada) and Agencies (CFIA, PHAC)	7.2.1 Bilateral discussions (particularly with US FDA and USDA) 7.2.2 Multilateral discussions (e.g. Codex, FAO, OIE, Quad, OECD, etc)
7.3 Open lines of communication between government and industry groups in order to encourage collaboration on future evolution of food safety policy, objectives, systems, initiatives and programs	7.3 FPT governments	7.3 On-going mechanisms for government industry consultation and collaboration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National - Industry participation in FPT Food Safety Committee processes • Federal - Re-establishment of CFIA advisory committee and industry participation in other federal processes (PHAC, Health Canada, etc) • Provincial/Territorial – comparable initiatives
7.4 Sustainable funding for industry-led food safety program administration, maintenance and updating and implementation	7.4 FPT governments and industry associations as program owners	7.4 On-going food safety funding programs for industry-led program administration and implementation (to 2013 and beyond)

7.5 Continued funding for the development of industry-led food safety programs and for collaborative initiatives to strengthen infrastructure, etc.	7.5 FPT governments and industry associations as program owners	7.5 Inclusion of development funding for industry-led programs and collaborative initiatives in the Growing Forward Initiative
7.6 Allocate resources required for the continued development of a science- and risk-based food safety approach	7.6 FPT governments, industry and academic institutions	7.6 Increased: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funding of food safety research • Activity by Canadian research institutions • Canadian participation in multilateral research projects
7.7 Increase government involvement in and funding for food safety surveillance initiatives	7.7 FPT governments	7.7.1 Improved food safety surveillance 7.7.2 Increased number of PulseNet sites in Canada
7.8 Ensure on-going allocation of human and financial resources to meet government food safety responsibilities	7.8 FPT governments,	7.8.1 Continuation of high level of government food safety activity with competent human resources