



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Canadian Food Inspection Agency



Science and regulation...

working together for Canadians

Canada 

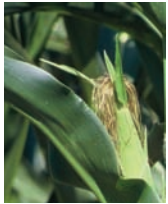


Our vision:

To excel as a science-based regulator, trusted and respected by Canadians and the international community.

Our mission:

Dedicated to safeguarding food, animals and plants, which enhances the health and well-being of Canada's people, environment and economy.



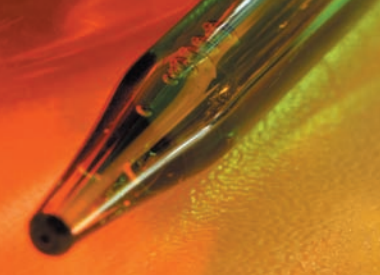
Who we are

At the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the safety of Canada's food supply is central to everything we do. That's why the CFIA works from the farm gate to the consumer's plate to protect public health. We safeguard not just the food supply, but also the plants and animals upon which safe and high-quality food depends.

In carrying out its mandate, and in support of Government of Canada priorities, the CFIA strives to:

- Protect Canadians from preventable health risks
- Protect consumers through a fair and effective food, animal and plant regulatory regime that supports competitive domestic and international markets
- Sustain the plant and animal resource base
- Contribute to the security of Canada's food supply and agricultural resource base, and
- Provide sound agency management

CFIA works from the farm gate to the consumer's plate to protect public health.



Products that may be subject to inspection certification by the CFIA range from agricultural inputs, such as seeds, feeds and fertilizers, to fresh, prepared and packaged foods.

Our People

Approximately 6000 dedicated and highly trained professionals work for the CFIA in a wide range of scientific, technical, operational and administrative positions. Experts in their fields, our employees are committed to protecting Canada's food, plants and animals and to meeting the demands of domestic and international consumers and markets.

CFIA employees are stationed in field offices, laboratories and food processing facilities across the country. Created in 1997 by the *Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act* and reporting to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the CFIA delivers inspection and quarantine programs related to foods, plants and animals in 18 regions and 160 field offices across Canada.

Products that may be subject to inspection certification by the CFIA range from agricultural inputs, such as seeds, feeds and fertilizers, to fresh foods (including meat, fish, eggs, grains, dairy products, fruit and vegetables) and prepared and packaged foods.



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The CFIA enforces policies and standards, set by Health Canada, governing the safety and nutritional quality of all food sold in Canada.



What we do

Managing food safety risks

In Canada, food safety begins with strong laws. The CFIA enforces policies and standards, set by Health Canada, governing the safety and nutritional quality of all food sold in Canada.

The CFIA verifies industry compliance with federal acts and regulations through activities that include the registration and inspection of abattoirs and food processing plants and the testing of products. The CFIA encourages industry to adopt science-based risk management practices to minimize food safety risks. If a food safety emergency does occur, the CFIA, in partnership with Health Canada, provincial agencies and the food industry, operates an emergency response system.

The CFIA does not handle these tasks alone. We collaborate with public health authorities at the federal, provincial and municipal levels to monitor and analyze food related outbreaks and potential hazards in the food supply. Based on health risk assessments, the CFIA works with stakeholder partners such as industry associations and consumer protection groups to implement food safety measures that protect Canadians. We rely on the cooperation of stakeholders such as producers, processors, distributors and retailers when actions such as disease control quarantines and food recalls become necessary.



In partnership with universities and special interest advocates, the CFIA promotes the research and development used to improve and refine food safety and disease control systems.

It is through this cooperative structure that the CFIA helps maintain Canada's excellent reputation for safe and high-quality agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries, and agri-food products.

Food safety is everyone's business

Consumers have a key role to play in keeping food safe. To help them in this role, the CFIA informs Canadians about safe food-handling practices and various food-safety risks through its website, food safety fact sheets, and the Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education (www.canfightbac.org).

Helping consumers make healthy food choices

By enforcing Canada's fair packaging and labelling laws – checking labels for accuracy in product identity, contents, weight, purity and grade, as well as nutritional labelling and health claims – the CFIA verifies that the information provided to consumers is truthful and not misleading, enabling them to make healthy food choices.

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CFIA scientists conduct risk assessments of diseases and pests that have been, or could be, introduced into Canada and threaten its plants and animals.

Food recalls

Food recalls are centrally coordinated with CFIA staff across Canada and external partners. CFIA officials provide timely and effective response to food safety emergencies across the country.

- The CFIA manages about 275 food recalls each year. Approximately a third of these recalls are the result of undeclared ingredients that may cause severe allergic reactions. In cases where the product poses a serious health risk, the CFIA issues a public warning, advising consumers through the media. Canadians can sign up for the CFIA's "Allergy Alerts and Food Recalls" e-mail subscription service available at www.inspection.gc.ca.

Promoting science-based regulation

The regulatory system to promote food safety and protect Canada's plant and animal resource base is respected around the world. The system applies rigorous standards to regulate and monitor food, to prevent the introduction and spread of pests and diseases of plants, animals and their products and to eradicate or control those pests and diseases as required.

- CFIA scientists provide specialized laboratory testing, research, and expert scientific advice to Agency staff. They develop new technology needed to support the Agency's activities. This includes partnerships with universities, federal and provincial government departments, and private sector researchers.



- A network of laboratories across the country assists in investigating consumer concerns, and analyzing pest and disease survey results. More than 680,000 tests and analyses are performed in CFIA laboratories annually to verify that food safety, animal health and plant protection and quality standards are met. Close to 200,000 more tests are done under contract by accredited private labs.
- CFIA scientists conduct risk assessments of diseases and pests that have been, or could be, introduced into Canada and threaten its plants and animals.
- The CFIA is involved in setting national standards for laboratories, and participates in multilateral efforts to set international laboratory standards for animal health and plant protection.

Maintaining an effective regulatory framework

In order to maintain a competitive marketplace and provide consumers with a wide selection of affordable and high quality products, it is critical that the regulatory regime be both fair and effective. The CFIA is committed to maintaining an effective, transparent, rules-and science-based domestic regulatory framework. On an ongoing basis, the Agency develops and updates acts and regulations. The CFIA also leads or participates in a number of domestic and international agreements and arrangements.

The CFIA is involved in setting national standards for laboratories, and participates in multilateral efforts to set international laboratory standards for animal health and plant protection.



Through the Agency's safety assessment process, new agricultural products are evaluated for efficacy and for safety for animals, the environment and human handling.

Protecting consumers and the marketplace from unfair practices

To deter deceptive and unfair market practices, the CFIA enforces standards for food labelling, verifies compliance with the *Seeds Act*, and grants plant breeders' rights.

Certifying exports

The CFIA certifies food, plants and animals and their products that are exported around the world. This helps protect the excellent international reputation of Canada's agricultural, forestry, and agri-food exports, worth billions of dollars annually.

Regulating Biotechnology

The regulation of biotechnology is a shared responsibility in the federal government. The CFIA regulates biotechnology-derived products, including novel plants, livestock feeds, fertilizers, and veterinary biologics. Through the Agency's safety assessment process, new agricultural products are evaluated for efficacy and for safety for animals, the environment and human handling.

Health Canada is responsible for assessing the safety of all new foods, including those derived from biotechnology.



Protecting Canada's plants and animals

The CFIA works with Canada's importers and producers of fish, plants and animals, helping to protect these commodities from diseases and pests. Animal diseases can wipe out entire herds while an infestation of something as small as a beetle or fungus can destroy our forests or crops.

- Agrologists, biologists and inspectors visit commercial nurseries, lumber mills, grain storage facilities, farms, public parks and other locations to carry out inspections and conduct surveys for pests. If a new alien pest is found, they impose quarantine and other control measures to restrict spread or eradicate the pest. They also inspect and assess imports of plants, plant products and soil to prevent the entry of pests that could affect Canada's plant resource base and market access.
- Animal health specialists control the importation of live animals, their genetics and products to protect Canadian livestock. They also verify that livestock feeds manufactured and sold in Canada or imported into Canada are safe. Inspectors impose internationally accepted disease control methods when outbreaks occur, and monitor to verify that livestock identification requirements are being met at livestock markets, that humane transportation is being carried out through roadside checks, and that animals are treated humanely at slaughter.

The CFIA works with Canada's importers and producers of fish, plants and animals, helping to protect these commodities from diseases and pests.



The CFIA works to prevent or minimize the potential impact of zoonotic diseases (diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans), e.g., BSE and avian influenza.

Preventing the transmission of animal diseases to humans

The CFIA also works to prevent or minimize the potential impact of zoonotic diseases (diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans, e.g., BSE and avian influenza). The Agency conducts disease surveillance, inspections and laboratory analysis, responds to outbreaks and participates in collaborative research with the Public Health Agency of Canada, provincial partners, regulated stakeholders and the broader animal health community in Canada.

A presence at our borders

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is responsible for the initial import inspection of food, agricultural inputs and agricultural products. The CFIA sets the policies and regulations for these importations and they are enforced by CBSA at Canadian entry points. As required, shipments are referred to the CFIA for follow-up action. A CFIA veterinarian inspects most importations of live animals on entry.

Security from threats to Canada's food supply and agricultural and forestry resource base

The CFIA is an integral part of the federal government's capacity to respond rapidly and effectively in the event of a food safety emergency or a threat to agricultural or forest biosecurity. Agency surveillance and inspection programs are designed to detect the presence of hazards in food, animals and plants and their products, and provide an early warning for problems whether they are accidental or intentional.



In addition, stringent border controls, enhanced surveillance and early detection activities, and increased laboratory capacity enable the CFIA to rapidly identify disease agents or substances associated with agro-terrorism, tampering and vandalism.

We work closely with our federal and provincial partners to share expertise, and collaborate with the international community for intelligence sharing to identify risks posed by foreign plant and animal diseases and pests.

Through emergency response exercises and the lessons learned from past emergencies, the Agency enhances and refines its emergency response planning continuously. These emergency preparedness activities allow the Agency to anticipate and prepare for potential problems before they occur.

By safeguarding the food supply and the plant and animal resource base, the CFIA contributes to the quality of life of all Canadians.

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For more information, reach us at . . .

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