

RCC Agriculture and Food 1 Working Group: Equivalence of Meat Safety Systems

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Deliverable Outcome	Simplify associated procedures for products produced under Canadian and U.S. equivalent meat and poultry product inspection systems, and attempt to better align those systems consistent with law while ensuring that those systems are at least as effective at protecting human health as current approaches. Ensure public health goals are met by sharing information, including data, on performance indicators to verify control of key system components, such as government oversight, HACCP (Hazard analysis and critical control points) systems and microbiological and chemical residue testing programs. Reduce where possible, certain specific regulatory requirements as they pertain to inspection and re-inspection activities.	
Action Items	<p>Action Item 1: Streamline requirements and procedures related to equivalency.</p>	<p>Action Item 2: To develop a proposal that outlines the process by which the agencies will seek to align the framework of the two countries' inspection systems, FSIS and CFIA will formalize an ongoing communication structure on technical and regulatory food safety matters.</p>
3-6 months	<p>FSIS and CFIA will identify key elements necessary to align the framework of the two countries' inspection systems by the following procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a bilateral working committee consisting of representation from Canada (CFIA) and the U.S (FSIS) to conduct an inventory and assessment of each country's food safety inspection standards for determining equivalence in a side by side comparison review. This assessment would serve to identify similarities (enablers), differences (barriers), and gaps (barriers) between the respective systems and include consideration of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Government Oversight of the Overall Meat Inspection System, b) HACCP and SSOP (Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures) Requirements, c) Microbiological and Chemical Residue Testing, d) Compliance and System Verification, 	<p>Develop Terms of Reference (TOR) document for a joint CFIA-FSIS high level forum for regular engagements that will formally establish:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Purpose b) Responsibility of Agencies c) Frequency of meetings

	<p>This assessment would specifically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Reviewing the availability of data collected by each system under existing regulatory requirements. f) Developing a combined set of objective and quantifiable regulatory performance indicators, which are outcome based (i.e. public health and food safety) and that include operational measures. g) Identifying linkages to public health and food safety outcomes to determine if alternate approaches can provide a similar or higher level of protection. h) Regulatory basis for requiring "continuous inspection" (e.g. daily inspection presence) in federally registered meat processing facilities. <p>2. Initiate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Canada-U.S. conference calls with stakeholders on an as needed basis, with a minimum frequency of at least twice a year and b) Regular stakeholder events as driven by the milestones of the project, i.e. public meetings or other avenues to be identified. 	
<p>6-12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete assessment above and communicate results. 2. Continue stakeholder engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Canada-U.S. conference calls with stakeholders, on an as needed basis, b) Regular stakeholder events as driven by the milestones of the project, i.e. public meetings or other avenues to be identified. 3. The agencies will address the barriers that were identified during the 3-6 month assessment exercise by developing options for amending, replacing, or removing requirements (existing or proposed) related to the differences or "gaps" between the FSIS and CFIA food safety inspection equivalence requirements. 4. Identify how enhanced compensating control data/information sharing could 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalize the TOR document between the two agencies. 2. Conduct the first official meeting established under the TOR document.

	be used to support modifications to existing regulatory requirements.	
12-18 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop work plans and milestones, and implement recommended changes. This will include identifying the mechanism and the frequency for how data can be exchanged on an on-going basis. With regards to equivalency, this will include pilot(s) as necessary to test out deeper regulatory and policy alignment, as well as new cooperation on compliance and enforcement. 2. Report to the joint CFIA-FSIS high level forum on recommendations for progress towards short term or interim solutions to enhance equivalency, as well as longer term issues that will require regulatory change. 3. Continue stakeholder engagement: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Canada-U.S. conference calls with stakeholders, on an as needed basis, b) regular stakeholder events as driven by the milestones of the project, i.e. public meetings or other avenues to be identified. 	The Agencies commit to continuing these structured meetings to resolve matters of regulatory interest as agreed to in the TOR.
Beyond 18 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the outcomes of any policy, regulatory or administrative changes and issuance of a formal report evaluating the effectiveness of pilot programs, recommendations for next steps (if any) would be offered. 	

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