

RCC Agriculture and Food 2 Working Group: Mutual Reliance of Food Testing Results Work Plan

Canada Leads: Neil Bouwer, Vice President, Policy and Programs, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

U.S. Leads: Murray Lumpkin, Commissioner’s Senior Advisor and Representative for Global Issues, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Deliverable outcome	Development of jointly acceptable processes and tools (e.g., food safety laboratory accreditation criteria) with a view to ensuring testing conducted in one country would be acceptable to regulators in both countries, and to facilitate cross-utilization of laboratory results by industry and regulators while maintaining confidence that the test results provide reliable evidence that regulatory requirements have been met for food products within the mandates of CFIA, Health Canada (HC) and the FDA.	
Action items	Action Item 1: Develop and implement Guiding Principles for mutual acceptance of laboratory accreditation	Action Item 2: Establish a permanent mechanism to maintain mutual acceptance of laboratory accreditation
Timelines	Interim Deliverables	
3-6 Months	<p>1. Mobilizing People:</p> <p>a) Create Joint Canada-USA Committee: Diane Allan Canada Lead/ Samuel Godefroy Canada Co-Lead/ Timothy McGrath US Lead (monthly teleconference)</p> <p>b) Create Internal Task Teams (bi-weekly teleconference)</p> <p>c) Develop a plan to engage stakeholders : Active List of Stakeholders ; Web Bulletin (regular updates to stakeholders)</p> <p>2. Developing Inventory of Tools:</p> <p>a) Draft Inventory of current processes and tools used in each country with regard to acceptable accreditation criteria (such as proficiency testing and other requirements to demonstrate laboratory competency)</p> <p>b) Share Inventory with Stakeholder and Consult through the Active List of Stakeholders (email and conference calls, as needed to clarify position)</p>	<p>1. Developing a continuous communications plan for engaging and consulting with stakeholders (applicable to all action items)</p> <p>a) Share plan with stakeholders (Web Bulletin and email Active List of Stakeholders)</p>

<p>6-12 Months</p>	<p>3. Conducting Gap Analysis:</p> <p>a) Complete a gap analysis to identify differences among accreditation criteria used by regulators which present barriers to acceptance of each other's test results. The gap analysis will inform the Guiding Principles identify acceptable criteria, guidance principles, quality management tools and gaps</p> <p>b) Stakeholder Consultation Sessions in order to prioritize gaps and find means for reconciliation of laboratory accreditation of both countries (email and workshop sessions to elaborate means)</p> <p>c) Implement means to fill the gaps</p>	<p>2. Developing options of permanent mechanism to maintain mutual acceptance</p> <p>a) Draft options of a permanent mechanism (process) that will allow continuous review and update of mutual acceptance of laboratory accreditation to eventually expand to include laboratory competency, technical competency, method validation harmonization, method standardized performance level, etc.</p> <p>b) Stakeholder consultation sessions in order to optimize process for establishing a permanent mechanism that would allow continuous review of recognizing each other's system as being equivalent (email and workshop sessions to optimize process)</p>
<p>12-18 Months</p>	<p>4. Establishing Guiding Principles:</p> <p>a) Develop Guiding Principles</p> <p>b) Share Guiding Principles with Stakeholder and Consult through the Active List of Stakeholders (email and conference calls, as needed to clarify position)</p> <p>c) Implement Guiding Principles and develop agreements of acceptance criteria that will enable both countries to recognize each other's food safety laboratory test results</p> <p>d) Sign Agreement on Guiding Principles</p>	<p>3. Establishing Permanent Mechanism:</p> <p>a) Pilot permanent mechanism (3-Month period to run a pilot with full review and approval cycle; 2-Month period for analysing and incorporating required changes to permanent mechanism)</p> <p>b) Develop and sign agreement on permanent mechanism</p>
<p>Beyond 18 Months</p>	<p>5. Acceptance of each other's laboratory accreditation to permit mutual reliance on food test results</p> <p>6. Share insights learned with other trading partners and international groups (e.g., Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation)</p>	<p>4. Implement the permanent mechanism for reviewing and updating the agreed upon system(s), including the need to address new technologies or changes emerging from food safety needs.</p> <p>5. Further discussions required on any unresolved items such as regulatory tools which might impact the agreed upon criteria for accreditation equivalence.</p>

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