



Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Working Group Groupe de travail du Programme canadien de salubrité des aliments à la ferme

Meeting Report - April 2006

The Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Working (COFFS) Working Group met in Ottawa on 27th & 28th April 2006. This report highlights the matters discussed, key issues and the directions taken during the Working Group meeting.

On-Farm Food Safety Programs and CFIA

The Working Group continued its dialogue with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Krista Mountjoy, the recently appointed Vice President of Programs and Martin Firth, Manager of Policy and Strategies, joined the meeting for an extended discussion of the role of on-farm food safety programs, the approach the Agency could take to stimulate participation in the programs and reduce or eliminate disincentives and a range of specific issues. The latter included updates on the medicated feeds regulations, bio-security initiatives, information requirements and inspection expectations, extra label use of medications and gFARAD, etc. There was also a discussion of possible new areas for collaboration, including improved awareness within the Agency about the programs, joint work on international recognition, etc.

Update on the Canadian Food Safety & Quality Program and the On-Farm Implementation Program:

Ms. Anita Stanger, Director, Food Safety and Quality Programs Division, AAFC, joined the Working Group to continue discussions. She noted that the department had reviewed the preliminary results of the joint Working Group/AAFC survey and decided that some changes could be made to the CFSQ Program. The industry review committee would be informed that could be more flexible concerning funding caps on the Phases providing the requests were justified and that consideration would be given to funding updates to generic models and producer manuals for those groups that had completed Technical Review Part 1.

New Task Group on Sustainability

The survey results on Canadian Food Safety and Quality Program funding and future funding needs through to 2013 were reviewed in the context of both current programming and the agreement by federal, provincial and territorial ministers of agriculture to launch a process to determine the nature and scope of the next generation of agricultural policy and programming. The survey results indicated that national commodity groups have been fully utilising the existing systems development funding to the full extent but that as they move further and further into the implementation of their programs they are encountering new program elements and the need to revisit existing one. On the implementation side, a significant number of groups expect to be ready to apply for funding during 2006, but with the termination of funding as of 31 December 2007, some groups and a great many farms will not have been through this part of the CFSQ Program. Looking ahead, the Working Group decided to establish a new task group on program sustainability. The mandate of the task group would be to provide the Working Group and its member organizations with research and recommendations in the

context of both the new generation of agricultural programming (post 1 January 2008) and the transition from the current programming. This work would be similar in content to that undertaken by the Working Group at the time of the development of the current programming and the Agriculture Policy Framework and through the transition from the 1997 Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Program to the CFSQ Program. The task group was asked to report on transition issues in June and on the longer term issues at the fall meeting. This work would be reviewed and circulated to the member organizations prior to the commencement of public consultations by governments in late 2006.

Recognition Update:

A report on the recent meeting of the FPT subcommittee on on-farm food safety was provided by Germain Brazeau (CFIA) and the Working Group representatives. It was noted that a revised version of the Technical Review Part I procedures manual would be released in June and that it would have a new section concerning the review of updated materials. This section will be open for comment and implemented probably in September 2006. National producer groups will be asked to provide information on their generic models and producer manuals on a regular basis (every 18 months following Technical Review Part 1) until such time as they gain full recognition. They will also be able to consult at any time between the regular reviews on changes to their programs.

A brief report was provided on the completion of the Technical Review Part II pilot by Dairy Farmers of Canada. As a result of the pilot the screening checklist will be revised and a new protocol developed. The second pilot on the Chicken Farmers of Canada program was progressing well and the face to face meeting was scheduled for early May. The current auditor training course will be reviewed in this pilot and any recommendations would be available for changes prior to the completion of the new distance learning modules.

The 3rd Party Audit project is moving ahead slowly due to unavoidable delays in the government contracting process. A consultant was under consideration and the Working Group members were requested to provide additional input on the questionnaire circulated by the task group in late 2005. Preliminary information on the costs of 3rd party audits of national programs was provided. These were based on an early survey of interested groups. The primary costs identified were auditor costs, number of sites/offices involved in delivering a national program and the number of witness audits proposed. Further work on costing would be undertaken as the risk model was refined and more details developed about the expected process. A report is expected by the fall meetings of the Working Group and the FPT subcommittee.

National Auditor Training Module - Renewal

The task group chair - Chris Palmer - reported on progress. He noted that discussions were well advanced with the two colleges concerning the delivery of the food safety training portion of the module. This web-based course would be delivered in English by one college and in French by another. A conference call with the two colleges and the task group had been scheduled prior to the next meeting. This should result in the task group making a recommendation to the Working Group at the June meeting. On the auditor training component of the module, the task group recommended that SGS Systems & Services Certification - North America be contracted with to provide the new on-line course for a three year period. This recommendation was accepted by the Working Group and it is expected that the new distance learning facility will be available in the early fall of 2006.

Delivery Options Project - Phase IV

The chair of the task group - Connie Kehler - reported on its progress to date. The consultants had been engaged (Scott Wolfe Consultants from Manitoba) and were already in the field with their first survey of the nine (9) national and eleven (11) provincial groups that had agreed to participate. An adjustment to the completion date for the project - October 2006 - was agreed to and there was a discussion of how best to communicate the final results. It was suggested that web conferencing might present an effective and economical tool. The expected results were reviewed and additional guidance was provided to the task group.

Producer Risk Management Project

The final version of application for funding under AAFC's Private Sector Risk Management Program was approved for submission following a discussion with Bruce Stephen (AAFC). The Working Group agreed that nominations for the task group/project team would be considered at its next meeting and that the project, if funded, would be launched by July with the circulation of a request for proposals for consultants on risk management and legal issues.

Other Working Group Activities

The 2006/7 workplan quarterly report was reviewed by the Working Group. The timing of various activities was considered in light of the work of the task groups, the scheduling of meetings and other external initiatives. The undertaking of a revision to the international scan - with particular emphasis how other countries are dealing with official recognition and the degree of implementation by producers was discussed. The Working Group will be consulting with CFIA and AAFC concerning their activities and research in these areas and the possibility of establishing a joint project. A report will be provided to the June meeting.

Integrated Management Systems - Results of the CFA Conference (December 2005)

The Working Group was briefed on the results of the CFA's December 2005 conference on *New Farm Management Systems: Next Steps in Taking Control* by Shannon Watt, CFA policy analyst. The conference concluded with three key messages: integrated management systems, value, and producer leadership. She noted: that the participants had strongly advocated for management systems to be integrated, to be able to accommodate single and multi-commodity farms, and to incorporate a single audit scheme; that the value of management systems needs to be readily apparent and accessible by producers; and, that the conference participants had stressed that management systems must be an asset, not another layer of administration taxing producer resources. The CFA board had recently considered the conference outcomes in the context of its initiatives related to the next generation of agriculture policy (APF II) and established a technical working group that would be open to both members and non-members to develop a roadmap,

Roundtable on Commodity-specific Projects

Working Group members provided brief updates on the status of their national programs. There was an exchange of views on audit costs, opportunities for cross-training of on-farm auditors (including facilitating shadow audits by trainees as more groups reach the implementation phase), exchanges of materials used in the development of management system policies and procedures and signals from the market concerning program acceptability and producer implementation. The Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance indicated that the

CFIA recognition process for its finfish program had restarted. Dairy Farmers of Canada indicated that the Technical Review Part II for its project had been completed. The Canadian Herb, Spice and Natural Products Coalition informed the group that pre-screening of its generic model and producer manual had started.

Several groups indicated an interest in pursuing the development of common forms for use in their respective certification programs and it was agreed that time would be set aside during the next meeting for a separate discussion of this opportunity.

Next Meeting Dates

The Working Group's next meeting will be held on June 8th and 9th in Ottawa.

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