

# Minutes

## PSAC National Union / Management Consultation Committee Meeting Canadian Food Inspection Agency

January 28, 2010  
Room T3-1-370  
1400 Merivale Road  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

### Present:

#### CFIA

Ms. Carole Swan  
Dr. Brian Evans  
Mr. Omer Boudreau  
Mr. Cameron Prince  
Mr. George Shaw  
Mr. Stephen Baker  
Ms. Sandra Wing  
Dr. Martine Dubuc  
Mr. Peter Everson  
Ms. Veronica McGuire  
Ms. Ginette Workman  
Ms. Lynn Burge  
Ms. Candice Mouchet

#### PSAC

Mr. Bob Kingston  
Ms. Debbie Forsythe  
Mr. Denis Sicard  
Mr. Howard Willems  
Mr. Fabian Murphy

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Bob Kingston, National President, Agriculture Union, PSAC

### Opening Remarks

Ms. Swan welcomed all participants to the meeting. She noted that there has been improvement in the organization of the NUMCC meetings and in the time taken to finalize the minutes.

Mr. Kingston noted that he and his colleagues were looking forward to the meeting and that they were pleased that these meetings were happening on a more regular basis. In addition, the National Union Executive has been meeting with the HR Management team and the Operations Branch Executive and finds these meetings to be very productive.

Mr. Boudreau noted that in the previous day's meeting between HR Management team and the Union Executive, there was agreement to ensure that the key issues arising from the meeting would be communicated to both the Union and Management teams, in advance of the completion of the Minutes.

## **1. Issues Arising from the Previous Minutes**

### **Succession Planning – Operations Branch**

Operations Branch is reviewing its succession planning programs as they currently exist in each of the Areas. These programs have evolved separately (Area by Area) and it is now time to deliver a national program for the Branch which builds on current best practices. The plan is to have a new framework established in fiscal year 2010/11 and to pilot the new approach in several Areas. Mr. Prince assured that the selection process for participants in these programs will be open and transparent.

**Action: Operations Branch to have a succession planning tool in place by April 2010.**

### **Minutes of Meetings**

Mr. Boudreau emphasized that all parties need to be diligent in respecting deadlines for comment on draft Minutes.

### **Employee Survey**

Mr. Baker provided an update on the actions taken to date with respect to the results of the Public Service Employee Survey. The CFIA has established a Union Management working group to develop an action plan with concrete deliverables to address along three themes: learning: respect and engagement. . The Working Group is coming to some conclusions about concrete actions which might be taken. These will be considered by the appropriate governance for action.

Mr. Boudreau noted that CFIA is poised to launch a joint Union/Management program on harassment prevention. Mr. Murphy noted that there appears to be similarities between the harassment prevention work and that of the violence prevention program, and encouraged CFIA to connect with the National Occupational Health and Safety Committee. The CFIA committed to review Regulation XX – Violence Prevention in the Workplace – to ensure it is in compliance.

Mr. Baker also noted that the CFIA has an outreach strategy in place to improve employee engagement. When Senior Managers travel across Canada they will take the time to engage employees in conversations to facilitate communication and engagement at the local level. In addition, work is being done to build the Management community across the organization.

Ms. McGuire noted that there are a number of events planned, including a new initiative entitled "Coffee with Carole and Brian." This would be an informal monthly event where employees would have the opportunity to engage in a discussion with the President and the Executive Vice-President.

Mr. Kingston and Mr. Sicard emphasized that clarity around communication of decisions is critical and used the example of the Code of Conduct and acceptance of gifts as a policy which needs to be better communicated to managers and employees. Ms. Swan concurred that dialogue between managers and employees is important.

**Action: CFIA and PSAC to work together to ensure that the Harassment Prevention Training includes Violence Prevention.**

#### **Staffing Recourse Working Group**

Mr. Boudreau noted that several meetings have been held to date and the next meeting of the working group will take place on February 8, 2010. Both Union and Management know that the remaining issues are the most fundamental and that 100% agreement may not be possible; however, 80% agreement could be reached and a better recourse policy could be implemented as a result.

#### **Classification**

See item 6 below.

#### **Term Employees**

Mr. Boudreau noted that the issue of term employees was discussed the previous day at the HR Management/Union meeting. Management has agreed to reinstate the process of reviewing term employees (in excess of 3 years) on an annual basis. CFIA is targeting the end of March to have the completed analysis and plans for these employees to the Union. Mr. Kingston noted some situations where terms have been employed with the CFIA continuously for more than 10 years.

**Action: Management to complete review of term employees employed in excess of 3 years and share results with the Union.**

#### **Meat Reform Committee**

There was agreement to broaden the committee to a "Food Inspection Reform Committee", ensure that there are up-to-date Terms of Reference in place, that regular meetings are scheduled twice per year and that appropriate managers with decision-making authority are members of the Committee.

**Action: Policy & Programs Branch to ensure Meat Reform Committee is broadened to a Food Inspection Reform Committee, that the Terms of Reference are updated, that the committee meets regularly twice per year and that members will include Managers**

**with decision-making authority. Lead: Karen McIntyre**

## **2. CVS and Employee Resources**

Mr. Prince noted that a fair amount of work has already been done on conducting a field-level assessment of CVS, with visits to begin in February with a completion date targeted for March. Mr. Prince acknowledged that there have been some challenges. Given that the AERO branch would be conducting an audit of CVS, it was thought that Operations Branch could capitalize on the process to complement the CVS review, but emphasized that the audit was never intended to be a replacement for the review. There is a need to meet with the Union to clarify the revised Terms of Reference.

The Operations Branch/Union assessment work will be led by Vance McEachern and Karen McIntyre, who will meet with inspectors at the field level in five different cities. Regional vice-presidents from PSAC will participate in the meetings. A report (separate from the audit report) will be produced and the Union will have opportunity to review and provide input.

Mr. Kingston noted that the proposal for the assessment is not what the Union had originally envisioned and expressed the view that the Union should have been consulted earlier. Mr. Kingston asserted that the original design of the review could have helped to focus the audit and could have captured additional information, and that further discussion with Management is required. Mr. Prince responded that he is prepared to meet with the Union to clarify the Terms of Reference. Ms. Swan requested that Mr. Prince and Mr. Everson meet with Mr. Kingston as soon as possible.

**Action: Cameron Prince and Peter Everson to meet with Bob Kingston to clarify the Terms of Reference for the CVS field-level assessment. (Lead: Operations Branch)**

## **3. Weatherill Listeriosis Report**

Ms. Swan noted that there were 57 recommendations from the Weatherill report, with additional recommendations from parliamentary committees and internal lessons learned for a total of 107 recommendations related to the listeriosis outbreak in 2008. She noted she has asked Stephen Baker to take on the responsibility for organizing and coordinating the CFIA work on the recommendations.

Mr. Baker explained that the recommendations have been analyzed and grouped by themes, resulting in 22 projects that involve three departments and agencies. These projects are a sum of work that will take two to three years to complete. Three year funding was approved by the government and will be available starting

in 2009/2010

#### Inspection Staff (Hiring)

Mr. Prince noted that the Agency has received funding to hire 30 ready-to-eat meat inspectors this fiscal year. To date, we have hired 13, with the remaining to be filled by the end of the fiscal year. He clarified that most people hired to date have been from existing pre-qualified pools, which have now been essentially exhausted. New pools are being established through a competitive process and the new pools should be established within the next two to four weeks. Mr. Prince clarified that most of these 30 positions would be filled internally, mostly from inspectors from slaughter positions, and that in turn, the slaughter inspection positions would be backfilled. Mr. Prince acknowledged that it was a challenge to keep inspector positions filled, but that CFIA is making every effort to meet this target date.

Mr. Kingston noted his concern over whether the CFIA would be able to staff all the positions it needs to by the summer of 2010. He remarked that it was the Union's understanding that the CFIA had committed to hiring 120 new inspectors by this date: 70 for ready-to-eat meat, and 50 to address the additional demands resulting from the USDA requirements.

Ms. Swan clarified that the 70 ready-to-eat meat inspectors to be hired over the next three years are the only confirmed numbers at this time. She noted that the CFIA recognizes the pressure that the USDA requirement is putting on its inspection staff, and that the current situation is challenging. The CFIA is working on phasing in the requirement and will try to get relief as soon as possible.

Mr. Sicard noted that it takes six months for new inspectors to be fully trained and that they may not be effective for a long period of time. Ms. Swan noted that there is dedicated funding for training and recognizes the challenge of getting staff fully trained; however the CFIA is committed to ensuring that inspectors receive the training required to carry out their duties. Mr. Boudreau clarified that after their initial training period, inspectors can be productive and contributing, while learning on the job.

Mr. Willems noted that the length of time it takes to staff a position using external hiring is complicating the situation, and suggested dedicating some managers full-time to this initiative. Mr. Boudreau responded that the CFIA will make hiring a priority and that we have put things in place to facilitate hiring, such as having teams that involve HR and line managers working together to expedite external staffing and establish pools as quickly as possible. Ms. Swan responded that CFIA would streamline as much as possible and encouraged the Union to provide any suggestions or best practices. Mr. Kingston commented that the Union recognizes that there are capacity issues and that there is good work being done.

Mr. Kingston expressed concerns regarding the ratio of establishments to Inspectors. Although there has been attention given to this, it appears that this is

still an issue due to absences (vacancies, illness, leave). Mr. Prince noted that this will be a consideration in the CVS review.

Mr. Kingston also noted that there are pockets across the country where inspectors have pagers, rather than cell phones. In these times, phones are an essential tool for their work. Mr. Prince acknowledged this and noted that the impact on available funds would need to be considered. The Union was asked to provide specifics on this issue.

**Action: PSAC to provide specifics on areas where inspectors are not equipped with cell phones.**

**Action: Union invited to provide suggestions and best practices on streamlining staffing process.**

**Action: Once CVS review completed, Operations Branch to re-examine number of plants assigned to Inspectors.**

#### **4. Science Branch Realignment**

Dr. Dubuc provided a debrief on the Science Branch realignment and explained that the Branch will integrate its work by business line, and that it has put processes in place to facilitate horizontal alignment across the Agency. Ms. Dubuc noted that the Branch has received positive feedback on this initiative. Mr. Kingston noted that this is a good initiative that is working well in many parts of the country; and encouraged CFIA to ensure the same integration and consistency is applied to the UMC and OHS forums. Mr. Kingston noted that not all Science Branch staff are aware of the work of their branch colleagues in other areas. Dr. Dubuc noted that the realignment will help to create these links, as well as a network of competencies that will support employees and provide mentoring opportunities and enable succession planning

#### **5. National Import Service Centre**

Mr. Prince discussed the imminent changes to the National Import Service Centre as the three existing Centres (Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto) will soon operate through one centre in Toronto, with services being provided on a 24-7 basis. Every effort is being made to place staff affected by this change and the CFIA is committed to work with the Union to ensure a smooth transition.

Mr. Kingston pointed out that there have been some issues that have arisen and that some of the messaging has been inconsistent, particularly in the area of employment opportunities for EGs and what constitutes a reasonable job offer. He noted that while the office facility is good, there has been some angst over the 24-

hour operation of the centre. He suggested that the local OHS committee be involved to assist in measuring the impacts of a 24-hour operation. Ms. Workman noted that a meeting will take place soon to discuss these issues. Mr. Prince committed to look into the issue surrounding reasonable job offers.

**Action: Cameron Prince to look into the issue of reasonable job offers for staff from Montreal and Burnaby import centres.**

## **6. Classification**

Ms. Workman noted that as committed at the last NUMCC meeting, PSAC and HR met in January 2010 to look at what is being done in the core public service and to determine if it could be applied at the CFIA. The group, consisting of Union, Management and classification experts, is developing the scope of the project, terms of reference, and identifying deliverables. The next meeting will be held on March 2, 2010. The scope will include a review of the CFIA's demographics. It is expected that this project could be long term. Mr. Kingston commented that he is optimistic about this initiative and noted that the right people were at the table.

## **7. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)**

### Governance Structure

Ms. Workman indicated that work is being done to develop a framework for the OHS Program across Canada. The framework will establish a standard approach for OHS committees at all levels (local, regional, area, national). Terms of reference, frequency of meetings as well as membership will be harmonized.

At the January 26 meeting of the National OHS Policy committee, there a sub-working group was struck to move this initiative forward. The objective is to bring this file to SCHR and SMC for approval of a revised governance structure before the end of fiscal year.

Mr. Boudreau acknowledged that there has been marked improvement on this file but that it is critical that the CFIA ensure that its managers are aware of their *Canada Labour Code* (CLC) obligations. That was supported by Ms. Swan and she stated that the CFIA has an obligation to ensure this happens. Mr. Kingston was also in support of this.

Ms. Workman noted that there is work underway to develop e-learning modules to inform CFIA managers of their CLC obligations. She suggested that Corporate OHS specialists would be willing to attend Management meetings to emphasize Management's role. Ms. Workman added that Corporate OHS will be seeking assistance from Public Affairs in finding the best way to communicate these messages.

### Health Services

Ms. Workman also raised the issue of Health Services at CFIA and that HR Branch will be coming forward to SCHR with a proposal (along with estimated costs) for a solution to replace services that used to be provided by Health Canada. The proposed solution will give CFIA the capacity to ask questions, liaise and coordinate. Mr. Kingston suggested that with the right training for managers this service should not cost more, if used appropriately. Mr. Boudreau added that CFIA now has an opportunity to gain efficiencies as we can customize the program to meet our needs.

**Action: Proposed governance for OHS to be presented to SCHR and SMC for approval by end of fiscal year.**

**Action: Corporate OHS to work with Public Affairs to best communicate messages on CLC responsibilities of managers and employees.**

### **8. Debrief from January 27 PSAC/HR Branch Meeting**

Mr. Boudreau noted that there were numerous items on the agenda at this meeting and that HR Branch and the Union executive had agreed to come back for a half-day session to discuss priorities. There was recognition on both sides that capacity is an issue, thus the need to prioritize.

### Communication

Mr. Kingston noted that there continues to be an issue at the local levels on accommodations issues and grievances where managers are not properly trained to handle grievances at the first and second levels. There is a need to reinforce the message to resolve issues as early in the grievance process as possible, and that managers should work with the Unions to do so. PSAC suggested the need for culture change. Mr. Prince was in agreement with this and added that the current approach and existing training is not resulting in early solutions.

Mr. Boudreau commented that the Union/Management relationship has evolved, and that it is not always adversarial. Managers need to recognize that we have a common interest in resolving issues. Mr. Boudreau further noted that we have an opportunity for culture change by using an engagement strategy with managers, as a forum for discussion about the relationship with Unions.

Mr. Sicard emphasized that joint training delivery can be an important tool in bringing about culture change. Ms. Workman agreed, but reminded everyone of the capacity issue to deliver and/or absorb all of the training delivery requirements.

**Action: HR Branch and Union to meet to prioritize action items arising from January 27, 2010, meeting.**



**Action: CFIA Management to explore using engagement strategy with managers as a forum for discussion about the Union-Management relationship.**

## **9. Olympics - Update**

Mr. Prince provided an update on CFIA's involvement in the preparation for the 2010 Winter Olympics. CFIA's presence has been good and we are proud of our contributions, including towards Exercise Gold that was held in November 2009. This has been a massive government effort overall, and Dr. Evans, as CFIA's lead at the DM Olympic Committee, received kudos for CFIA's role to date. Our main focus is on import clearance on goods and foods.

Mr. Kingston raised the issue of Canada Border Services Agency involvement and how it may impact our role. It was agreed to have a discussion on CFIA's relationship with CBSA as a discussion item for the next meeting.

**Action: CFIA's relationship with CBSA to be discussed at next NUMCC.  
Lead: Cameron Prince**

## **10. Scheduling of Next NUMCC**

It was agreed that the next NUMCC would be held on June 23, 2010, with the HR Branch/Union meeting to take place on June 22.

**Action: Ms. Workman to confirm the dates for the next NUMCC and the HR Branch/Union meeting.**

## **10. Closing Remarks**

Mr. Kingston closed the meeting and noted that the training currently being developed will help make improvements. He also expressed an interest in re-engaging in a discussion about informal conflict resolution. Ms. Swan concurred and noted that such a mechanism can be an instrument for culture change.

Ms. Swan noted that the meetings between the Union and HR Branch the day before are really helpful, and that identifying items for early communication is a good idea. She remarked on the good discussion that occurred and emphasized that it is these discussions that help us to improve.

Mr. Boudreau identified the two issues for both Management and PSAC to communicate quickly through their network:

1. The importance of engagement with Unions at all levels of the organization; and
2. A reminder to managers of their responsibilities related to OHS.

**Action:** Union and Management to commit to early communication of importance of engagement with Unions and to remind managers of their responsibilities under OHS.

Original signed by:

Original signed by:

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Mr. Bob Kingston  
National President, Agriculture Union  
Public Service Alliance of Canada

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Ms. Carole Swan  
President  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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