

Mr. Kingston and I have something in
common, we've never been an inspector.

Gerry Ritz
August 28, 2008
Ottawa

www.foodsafetyfirst.ca

Briefing Note

To: Members of the Sub-Committee on Food Safety
Date: 17 April 2009
Subject: CFIA's Mission Impossible

The work you are about to undertake is critical to the safety of all Canadians. That's why it's important for you to know the unvarnished truth about the food safety inspection capacity shortfall at CFIA.

When it comes to delivering the legally required oversight of Canada's meat and food safety systems, it's mission impossible for CFIA. The Agency simply does not have the resources to do the job Canadians expect and the CFIA's own policies demand.

Food safety oversight will only get weaker and the risks to Canadians higher without decisive action from your committee. Consider:

- CFIA does not have an emergency fund to deal with outbreaks of food or animal-borne illnesses. For the first time, CFIA is setting aside existing resource for this purpose. Sources within CFIA estimate this will result in a 10 - 15% reduction in CFIA operational budgets. This will likely delay and/or cancel plans to hire additional food inspectors, reduce industry oversight and increase risk of an emergency outbreak.
- CFIA rarely conducts Full Systems Audits of federally registered meat establishments even though this was a mandatory annual requirement until April 2008. The inspector shortage has derailed these extensive audits because they require several CFIA staff for up to five days. For example, all Full Systems Audits require a senior CFIA inspector to lead the audit. In all of Western Canada, only one CFIA staff person is qualified to fill this role. With the introduction of the Compliance Verification System in April 2008, the CFIA reduced the frequency of these audits to once every two years.

It's important to note that the Maple Leaf facility, which was the source of the listeriosis outbreak last summer, was not subject to a Full Systems Audit for at least a year prior to the outbreak.

- Inspectors responsible for more than two Ready-to-Eat (RTE) meat plants do not have enough time to verify that a RTE facility is complying with food safety requirements, according to the following analysis of required food safety tasks.
- Yet, most RTE inspectors are responsible for three or more facilities. The inspector at the contaminated Maple Leaf plant in Toronto was responsible for seven facilities at the time of the listeriosis outbreak.

**Annual Hours Required to Complete Food Safety Inspection Tasks
per RTE Facility**

Task	Number/ Year	Required Frequency	Annual Hours Required
CVS verification	170	Various; annual	Average 3 hours each = 510
Product testing for listeria	6	Annual	72
Environmental testing for listeria	6	Annual	72
Corrective Action Request & Follow-up	Varies; average of 12/facility	N/A	100
Full System Audits ¹	N/A	Semi-annual	18.75
			772.75 Hours

- The tasks and time requirements outlined above do not take into account:
 - *Import/Export Requirements*
Inspectors are expected to place a priority on meat import/export inspection. This function conservatively accounts for 200 hours/year.
 - *Travel*
While travel time can vary considerably, RTE facilities tend to be located in large urban centres like Toronto and Montreal where travel through metropolitan traffic can consume a considerable portion of the day and can account for hundreds of hours a year.
 - *Leave*
Just like other employees, most inspectors take holidays. The typical processed meat inspector is entitled to at least 4 weeks annual leave

¹ Until the introduction of the Compliance Verification System (CVS) on April 1 2008, Full System Audits were required on an annual basis.

or 150 hours a year. In addition, sick, training and other forms of leave take inspectors off the job for a period of time every year.

➤ *Enforcement*

It's difficult to quantify the average time inspectors spend on enforcement actions but it can be significant.

➤ *Other*

We estimate inspectors spend dozens of hours every year completing tasks related to the CFIA's own Quality Management System and Canada Labour Code health and safety requirements.

- When you add it all up, the CFIA simply does not have enough inspectors to ensure RTE meat producers are in compliance with food safety protocols.
- Faced with budget constraints the CFIA has taken a variety of cost cutting measures including placing a ban on overtime before last summer's tragedy. As a result, CFIA inspectors were unable to verify that pre-operation and sanitation inspections at Ready-to-Eat meat processing plants in Ontario and Quebec were properly conducted by plant employees, including at the Maple Leaf plant that was the source of the contaminated product.

Prior to the introduction of HACCP in November 2005, pre-operation and sanitation inspections were conducted by CFIA inspectors and often resulted in orders to disassemble slicing equipment.

These are some of the symptoms of the critical budget shortfall at the CFIA which undermines the safety of the food Canadians eat.

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For more information, please contact:

Jim Thompson
613-567-9592

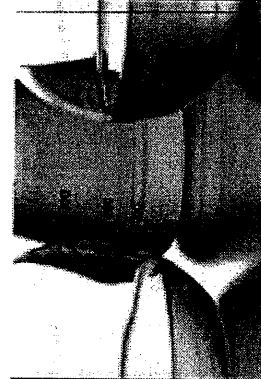


Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

SECRET

Canadian Food Inspection Agency



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.

Listeriosis Outbreak Response

Summary of Findings and Action Plan

Minister – President Meeting

26 January 2009 - Final

Canada

Summary of Findings (cont'd)

- Meat inspection program – new protocol
- Compliance Verification System (CVS) is;
 - well designed to address food safety issues
 - fully implemented nationally
 - widely viewed by inspectors and industry as a more integrated inspection approach
- USDA supports the implementation of CVS
- CVS supports the new enhanced listeria control measures
- CVS monitoring activities and training continue to be developed
- Inspection program experiencing workload challenges in meeting delivery requirements

"We are targeting another 58 people to be on the front lines with CFIA in this particular calendar year, this fiscal calendar year for the government. That would be by the end of March of this, of 2009. There would be another 58 added on to the 200 that we've hired since we became government."

Gerry Ritz
August 27, 2008
Ottawa

"The number of 58 is related to the additional funds we received under the Food and Consumer Safety Action Plan. The 58 personnel would be included in that overall 200 increase since 2006. These new resources are primarily focused on enhancing our capacity to look at, inspect and monitor imported foods, and also to do some work domestically in plants where we do not have a great deal of presence."

Cameron Prince
CFIA Vice-President of Operations
Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
March 24, 2009

Paul Mayers: *"So the issue of the staffing that's been noted, we've added a significant number of new meat inspectors over the last two years."*

Question: How many?

Paul Mayers: 175.

Paul Mayers
Acting Associate Vice-President for Programs, CFIA
August 28, 2008

“CFIA’s current tracking and information systems do not allow us to accurately identify all inspection staff dedicated to meat inspection.”

CFIA Memo to the sub-committee
March 2009

WORKING CFIA FOOD INSPECTORS

Position Title		Number of Inspectors
MEAT HYGIENE, SLAUGHTER		
Developmental Inspector	EG-01	161
	EG-02	4
Inspection Supervisor	EG-04	19
Modernized Poultry Inspection Program Inspector	EG-03	124
Slaughter Inspector	EG-02	505
		808
FOOD PROCESSING		
Food Processing Inspector	EG-03	39
Food Processing Specialist Inspector	EG-04	403
Food Processing Supervisor	EG-05	53
Meat Hygiene Inspector	EG-03	18
Meat Hygiene Supervisor	EG-04	37
Shell Egg Inspector	EG-03	5
		555
FOOD RECALL/EMERGENCY		
Fair Labeling Practices Program & Food Safety Inspector	EG-03	46
Fair Labeling Practices Program & Food Safety Specialist Inspector	EG-04	8
Fair Labeling Practice Program & Food safety Supervisor	EG-05	1
Fresh Products Program Inspector	EG-03	26
		81
OTHER		
Import Specialist	PM-02	26
Point of Entry Import Specialist	PM-02	7
		33
Total		1477
Less supervisors and trainees		300
TOTAL WORKING FOOD INSPECTORS		1177

Source: Essential Services Agreement July 19, 2007

Meat Inspectors available to work in meat processing & cold storage facilities

Area	Number of Meat Inspectors	Meat Inspectors lost to leave (average of 25% ¹)	Meat Inspectors on the job	Number of meat facilities	Facilities per inspector
Toronto	34	8.5	25.5	117	4.6
Montreal	45	11.25	33.75	160	4.7
Northern Alberta	10	2.5	7.5	38	5.0
Greater Vancouver	9	2.25	6.75	21	5.9

April 2009

¹ Most human resource experts allow for a 30% leave factor.

Email from CFIA Media Relations

April 26, 2009

Question: For 2007/08, can you provide a list of registered meat establishments that were to be subjected to Full System Audits, and dates of each?

Answer:

- * Both regulatory system audits and the CVS are tools used by CFIA inspectors to verify compliance.
- * Prior to 1999, the CFIA conducted full system audits on an annual basis. In 1999, the CFIA moved to an approach that spread this work into more frequent quarterly audits, known as regulatory systems audits.
- * The last four regulatory systems audits were conducted at Est. 97B on:
 - 2006/03/17
 - 2006/07/05
 - 2006/11/22
 - 2007/03/20
- * With the full implementation of CVS at Establishment 97B in December 2007, these quarterly audits were incorporated into daily, weekly, and monthly CVS tasks.
- * As part of CVS, the CFIA evaluates HACCP System Design and Reassessment Procedures once every two years at a minimum. We are well within the required time frequency for this task.
- * Because CVS was only implemented at Establishment 97B in December 2007, no evaluation of HACCP System Design and Reassessment Procedures has been completed there to date. We are still within the required two-year timeframe.
- * During the Listeria follow-up activities conducted at Est. 97B, a team of CFIA inspection staff conducted an in-depth Listeria review. While not officially an evaluation of HACCP System Design and Reassessment Procedures, the in-depth review included many of the same activities.

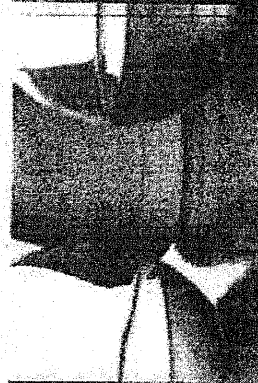


Canadian Food
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SECRET

Canadian Food Inspection Agency



Our vision:

To ensure that Canadians have access to safe, nutritious and quality food products that meet their needs and expectations.

Our mission:

To protect and promote the health of Canadians by ensuring the safety, quality and availability of food products.

Listeriosis Outbreak Response

Summary of Findings and Action Plan

Minister – President Meeting

26 January 2009 - Final

Canada

Summary of Findings (cont'd)

- Operational review of Est. 97b – Lessons learned
 - No single cause identified, rather a convergence of factors (consistent with MLF's independent panel findings)
 - Contributing factors were identified and addressed by MLF
 - MLF risk controls not fully aligned with marketing strategy (e.g. hospitals and nursing homes)
 - In depth assessment of plant revealed that MLF experienced challenges in environmental control and sanitation in May and June 2008

"And it is true, as you indicated, Monsieur Bellavance, that the one inspector on the day shift had seven facilities that he was looking after. His primary facility was the Maple Leaf Bartor Road plant. He had his office there. He operated from that plant. He spent most of his time at that plant....

"Four of the seven facilities, in fact, were not really plants as we think of them. They were cold storages. Those cold storages are registered with the federal government, and the work at those cold storages is for export certification and the inspection of imports. It's important work. It's not as time-consuming as in-plant inspections....

"Our records indicate that about 50% of their time is spent on the plant floor. They're looking at the whole system. They're looking at the plant records and making sure that they're all appropriate, and then they're going out onto the plant floor and verifying that those things are done correctly."

Cameron Prince
CFIA Vice-President of Operation
Testimony to the Food Safety Committee
April 20, 2009

From: VP FAIT
To: All Managers
Subject: Spending Restraint Measures

As you are aware, the government is facing severe fiscal restraints and has asked Departments and Agencies to curb all non-essential spending. As well, this year, the Agency has faced many challenges that have put increasing demands on our resources. As a result of these factors, this email will confirm that the following measures are being put in place effective immediately:

Defer, scale down, or cancel all non-essential staffing, training, conferences, hospitality, professional services, travel and overtime;

Review and reduce, where possible, spending plans for the remainder of this fiscal year;

Elevate level of authority require to initiate spending: all transactions will require the signature of the current delegated manager **and** of his/her superior; acquisition card purchase of a value greater than \$500 (GST included) must be supported by written authorization from the delegated manager;

Transfer non-pay to pay: as much as possible, transfer non-pay free balance to cover current pay requirements to year-end.

We will review these measures at year-end. More details will be provided by Financial Services to your Branch Finance Committee representative.

Expéditeur : Vice-président de la Direction générale des finances, de l'administration et de la technologie de l'information (DGFATI)
Destinataires : Aux gestionnaires de l'ACIA
Objet : Mesures de réduction des dépenses

Comme vous le savez, le gouvernement doit composer avec d'importantes contraintes budgétaires et a demandé aux ministères ainsi qu'aux organismes de freiner toutes les dépenses non essentielles. De plus, l'Agence a dû composer cette année avec bon nombre de défis qui ont exercé une pression croissante sur ses ressources. Par conséquent, l'Agence, par le présent courriel, confirme l'application immédiate des mesures suivantes :

Reporter, réduire ou annuler toutes les activités non essentielles, notamment la dotation, la formation, les conférences, l'accueil, les services professionnels, les déplacements et les heures supplémentaires.

Examiner les plans et en réduire les dépenses prévues, si possible, pour le reste du présent exercice.

Élever le niveau d'autorisation nécessaire à l'engagement des dépenses : toutes les transactions doivent être approuvées et signées par le ou la gestionnaire délégué(e) du moment **et** par son ou sa supérieur(e); les achats d'une valeur de plus de 500 \$ (TPS comprise) qui sont effectués à l'aide de la carte d'achat doivent être autorisés par écrit par le ou la gestionnaire délégué(e).

Transférer le solde disponible pour les dépenses non salariales au budget des dépenses salariales : dans la mesure du possible, utiliser le solde disponible à des fins de dépenses non salariales pour faire face aux exigences salariales de l'heure d'ici la fin de l'exercice.

Nous examinerons ces mesures à la fin du présent exercice. Les Services financiers fourniront de plus amples détails au représentant de votre direction générale siégeant au Comité des finances.

Listeria found in deli meat

January 24, 2009

Robert Cribb

STAFF REPORTER

Meat from a Maple Leaf Foods-owned plant has produced positive listeria tests, now under investigation by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the *Toronto Star* and CBC have learned.

Cappola Food Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of the food processing giant, has a team of CFIA inspectors on-site after test-result data showed positives for the potentially deadly pathogen.

Tainted meat tested within the past month has been destroyed and a CFIA "listeria review team" arrived at the plant yesterday to help determine what caused the problem, an agency spokesperson said.

Maple Leaf Foods president Michael McCain said last fall listeria is everywhere in the environment and positive test findings in meat plants are common.

There is no evidence anyone was sickened by the product.

As of yesterday, the CFIA had issued no warnings or recalls to the public about Cappola, which produces deli meat in its Toronto plant for the Canadian and U.S. markets.

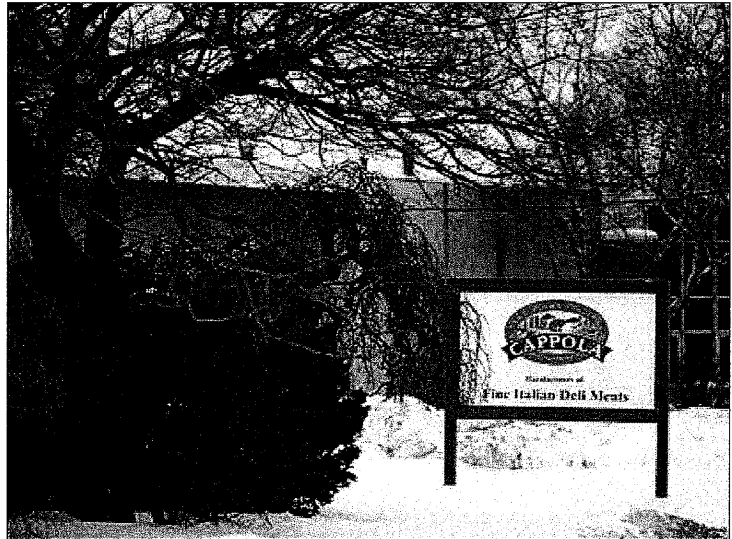
"There are positive tests results," said Linda Smith, a Maple Leaf spokesperson. "We have the most stringent protocol now, so of course we're getting positive tests. "We have created a huge amount of data and have shared that data with the CFIA."

Paul Mayers, associate vice-president of programs with the CFIA, confirmed the agency has sent additional inspectors to the Cappola plant to investigate the positive listeria findings.

"We have added some staff ... in terms of review," said Mayers, who would not confirm the extent of contamination. "We investigate any positive results and work with the company. ... All of the products tested positive were destroyed."

He acknowledged, however, that not all meat products undergo testing before leaving meat plants.

Maple Leaf is still recovering from last summer's listeriosis outbreak that killed at least 20 people and triggered the largest



PAWEL DWULIT/TORONTO STAR

Meat from Cappola Foods Inc., tested positive for listeria recently. Cappola has faced food safety problems before.

meat recall in Canadian history.

Company officials said in the aftermath of the tragedy that listeria monitoring would be increased.

Cappola has had other food safety problems in recent years. U.S. officials turned back meat from the company in 2007 after it proved positive for listeria in a random test.

"The product never left our control, so there was no recall," Maple Leaf spokesperson Smith said.

Doug Powell, a food safety expert at Kansas State University, said the U.S. findings speaks volumes.

"Having stuff picked up at the American border rather than in Canada doesn't speak highly of the food safety system (in Canada)."

Last year, U.S. inspectors raised concerns about the Toronto plant during a 2008 audit. As part of a series of inspections of Canadian meat plants that export to the U.S., inspectors noted three deficiencies at Cappola's plant on Lepage Court in Toronto in June 2008, audit documents show.

U.S. officials found the plant was not properly monitoring food temperatures and noted employee's work boots were coated with "residues of product from the previous day's production."

"One boot had raw meat residue in the cleats of the bottom of the boot," the report states.

In 2005, Cappola was the subject of a CFIA public warning about salami that contained wheat not declared on the French ingredients label. The company voluntarily recalled the meat. In 2002, Cappola recalled 1,062 kilograms of cacciatore sausage due to a risk of salmonella.

"It's not uncommon to have recalls" in the meat business, Smith said about that case.

This week, the federal government announced an investigation into the Maple Leaf outbreak will be led by Sheila Weatherill, former head of Edmonton's Capital Health Region. The move has come under criticism from politicians, food safety experts and inspectors for falling short of a full inquiry.

Amir Attaran, a professor of law and medicine at the University of Ottawa and an editor at the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, said the latest listeria findings reinforce the need for a full public inquiry into food safety in Canada.

"When we had Walkerton, we got an inquiry. When there was tainted blood, we got an inquiry. When there was SARS, guess what? An inquiry. None of those incidents made the government of the day particularly happy or look particularly good," he said.

"The difference was the government was willing to take its medicine. Even governments, knowing they were going to take a publicity hit over those episodes thought, on the one hand we take a publicity hit, on the other hand we stop Canadians dying. And they chose let's stop Canadians dying."

Maple Leaf Foods sends tainted meat in 'error'



REUTERS

A woman works to sterilize meat processing and packaging equipment at a Maple Leaf Foods plant in this Aug. 21, 2008, file photo.

February 25, 2009

Robert Cribb

STAFF REPORTER

Maple Leaf Foods, still recovering from last summer's deadly listeria tragedy, yesterday recalled more than 26,000 packages of hot dogs "inadvertently shipped" after positive listeria tests.

Shopsy's Deli Fresh All Beef Frankfurters and Maple Leaf Hot Dogs Original sold in 450-gram packages reached distributors and stores "in violation of the company's rigorous food safety protocols," said Michael McCain, president and CEO of Maple Leaf foods, in a statement.

"Unlike other situations, this event occurred as a direct result of human error and did not uphold our stringent, industry-leading protocols," said the statement.

"We are taking immediate action and will not condone anything other than strict adherence to our protocols."

The wieners had been quarantined in the company's Hamilton plant last week after producing some positive listeria tests.

While they were awaiting further testing, 1,100 cases (each with 24 packages inside) were mistakenly shipped to distributors and stores in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, said company spokesperson Linda Smith.

It amounted to three days worth of production from one line of the Hamilton plant, she said. Most of the product remained with distributors, she said, but about 13 per cent had reached stores.

Two employees of the plant have been sent home pending an investigation, Smith said.

"It should not have gone out. It's clearly unacceptable to us given we have such stringent protocols in place for detecting listeria."

No illnesses were reported and the risk to human health is "extremely low," the company said.

Maple Leaf officials could not say whether the meat was laced with the specific species of listeria – called listeria monocytogenes – that is potentially deadly to humans.

While there should be no health risk from hot dogs that are properly cooked, that doesn't always happen, said Doug

Powell, a Canadian food safety expert at Kansas State University.

"People, especially kids, eat ... processed hot dog wieners all the time (without cooking them) or just give them a quick zap in the microwave."

Last summer's listeria crisis, traced to cold cuts from the company's North York plant, triggered the largest meat recall in Canadian history.

At least 20 people died from the tainted meat and hundreds – perhaps thousands – were sickened.

Critics charged the company and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency were both slow to recognize the risk and to warn Canadians.

In the aftermath of the crisis, Maple Leaf overhauled its listeria testing and monitoring protocols.

A *Star*/CBC investigation recently reported the CFIA is also set to unveil tough new listeria monitoring standards after fierce criticism from the public and its own inspectors over the handling of the Maple Leaf tragedy.

The tragedy is the subject of two probes – one by the federal government and another by the federal agriculture committee.

Maple Leaf recently settled a class-action lawsuit filed against the company by victims of the outbreak, agreeing to pay up to \$125,000 to those who suffered ill health.

Last month, meat from Maple Leaf-owned Cappola Foods Inc. in Toronto produced positive listeria tests, which were investigated by CFIA inspectors.

Bob Kingston, president of the agriculture union that represents federal meat inspectors, says the incident illustrates the dangers of the move to industry self-regulation over the past several years.

"In the old days, if a CFIA inspector had placed a hold tag on the product, it wouldn't have moved until they were told it could move. Now, 1,100 cases go out the door. The more control industry has, the more we see this crap happen. It's inevitable."

More stories:

Listeria forces Maple Leaf to recall wieners

Former health exec to lead listeriosis probe

Emails a window on listeria outbreak

Inspectors fear repeat of listeriosis outbreak

>>> Vance McEachern 2009/03/17 9:54 am >>>

Veillez svp vous assurer de circuler cette note aux Inspecteurs concernes (etablissements prêts a manger) de votre Centre operationel. please circulate this message to Inspectors responsible for RTE plants.

Note de service au personnel d'inspection d'établissements agréés en viande et volaille prêt-à-manger (PAM) – Plan d'échantillonnage M205 - Dépistage de *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm) dans le milieu de transformation des établissements produisant des produits prêts-à-manger

Un plan d'échantillonnage pour le dépistage de *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm) dans les milieux de transformation des établissements produisant des produits prêt-à-manger (plan M205) a été distribué au personnel d'inspection par l'entremise de la Division de la salubrité des aliments de l'ACIA le 20 février 2009. Dans cette note de service, il était fait mention de la mise en œuvre immédiate du plan et l'achèvement de cet l'échantillonnage provenant de chaque établissement produisant de la viande et/ou volaille PAM était escompté d'ici le 31 mars 2009.

Les inspecteurs de l'ACIA sont priés de ne pas procéder à la collecte d'échantillonnage environnemental relatif au plan d'échantillonnage M205 pour le reste de l'année fiscale en cours qui prendra fin le 31 mars 2009.

Cette note de service s'applique précisément au plan d'échantillonnage environnemental M205 distribué le 20 février 2009 et n'affecte en aucun cas les autres plans actuellement en cours ou tout autre nouveau plan qui serait distribué pour la prochaine année fiscale 2009-10.

Memo to Inspection Staff in RTE Meat and Poultry Establishments - Sampling Plan M205 - Verification of *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm) in processing environment of establishments producing Ready-to-Eat (RTE) products

A sampling plan for Verification of *Listeria monocytogenes* (Lm) in processing environment of establishments producing Ready-to-Eat (RTE) products (Plan M205) was distributed to the field by Food Safety Division of CFIA on February 20, 2009. In the memo, the implementation was noted as immediate and sampling was expected from each RTE meat and poultry establishment before March 31, 2009.

CFIA Inspectors are requested not to proceed with collection of environmental sampling under the sampling plan M205 for this fiscal year ending March 31, 2009.

This memo is related specifically M205 environmental sampling plan distributed on February 20, 2009 and does not affect any other sampling plan currently being implemented or the new plans that will be distributed for 2009-10.

Merci

Vance McEachern
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