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ALLIANCE

The magazine for the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance



**The benefits of Nova Scotia
Seafood Alliance membership**

“Labour Pains are Productive”



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A new name and an expanded footprint, built upon a solid foundation

By: Leo Muise, Executive Director
Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance



The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance came into existence in early 2017, but you could put forward a case it was 42 years in the making. This new group is the result of the diligent work of the Nova Scotia Fish Packers, an association that began in 1975 to represent the interests of South West Nova Scotia companies in the salt fish business. It has been a fascinating journey from then 'til now, with more companies from more regions in the province handling more species coming to the table. We are now a province-wide organization, with member companies from every coastal region handling every species imaginable. Given this broadened base, it just seemed like the right thing to do to rebrand and expand into the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance.

Why an alliance? Why not treasure our independence? Well, in 2017 the world is a touch more complicated than a generation ago. We have a whole host of regulatory influences, we have an entire international marketplace, and the demands upon individual small and medium-sized land-based seafood companies are frankly incredible. You need a friend, you need a partner on occasion, you need like-minded entities who can work in the same direction and share some of the administrative burdens. The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance operates on a fairly straightforward mantra: "Working Together Works ". It is the essential recipe we try to follow faithfully.

The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance is particularly relevant for companies, as we engage on a variety of issues. Whether it be with the federal government, provincial government, harvesters or the media, there are questions which should be addressed and answered. Our issues-management work is helpful, particularly because we have 42 years of successful seafood-based engagement to draw upon. We have more than 50 member companies, and are on a recruitment drive for more company participation. We have extraordinarily reasonable annual dues, and the services of an experienced Executive Director, Leo Muise. We have just gone live with an extraordinary new website that provides each of our member companies with its own access platform. We have emphasized, more than anything, a desire to listen to the concerns of potential members.

We want to be that Go To Voice, and think we bring a great deal to the discussion on behalf of our membership.

The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance – a brand new name and an inclusive mind set. We believe Working Together Works, and we aim to prove it going forward.

For more information, please contact Leo Muise/ Executive Director: Tel 902-229-1039 or email: leo@novascotiaseafoodalliance.ca



The benefits of Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance membership

The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance provides its membership a venue and a voice for their needs. We advocate on behalf of our members to ensure the fisheries sector continues to be the number one industry in Nova Scotia and that Nova Scotia is the number one fisheries Province in Canada.

NSSA is always working for our membership's best interests. While our mandate includes direct communication and collaboration with governments, our independence allows us to remain non-partisan and critical when necessary.

The greatest benefit for NSSA members is the lobbying done on their behalf. We have regular dialogue with and advise on fisheries management issues and regulatory program development with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Province through the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture. We also dialogue with support industries, academia, opposition parties and seafood industry leaders. For example, when mandatory lobster quality training was imposed on the industry we 1st advocated for changes to the program and then worked with the Minister to make substantial improvements.

There are many benefits of NSSA membership beyond advocacy. They include:

- Networking with our members and other industry professionals including bankers, suppliers and harvesters
- Discounts on business, home and auto insurance, as well as a products and services including supplies, hotels and vehicle purchases
- Support with training and professional development
- Direct access to other industry associates like the Fisheries Sector Council and the Lobster Council of Canada through participation on their Boards of Directors.
- Attendance at our Annual General Meeting

Whether it's lobbying, advice, further help or simply some great perks, being part of the Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance has many benefits. For an annual fee of \$1500.00, members gain access to a wide variety of offerings that contribute to a stronger industry. Teaming with fellow buyers and processors creates a united front that is stronger together. We learn from each other, we advocate for each other and we provide wealth to our communities.

We have been blessed with access to the best quality seafood in the world. Working together our industry remains sustainable and our Province more prosperous. The Nova Scotia Seafood Alliance can speak on behalf of all of us. We would welcome you to join us immediately.



Message from the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture

*The Honourable Keith Colwell, E.C.N.S.
Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture*

What an exciting time to be working in the seafood industry in Nova Scotia. Harvesters are seeing their incomes improve. Exporters are working hard to satisfy the high demand for our premium quality seafood products in markets in North America, Asia, and Europe.

It's a perfect time for Seafood Alliance to launch its new name and new magazine to tell the story of the industry's success.

For the second year in a row, Nova Scotia was Canada's leading exporter of seafood in 2016. Our seafood exports grew seven percent from \$1.68 billion in 2015 to \$1.8 billion in 2016.

The province and industry have new tools to support export growth with the introduction of our new international brand, "Nova Scotia Seafood, Pure." Establishing an effective seafood brand gives Nova Scotia and its seafood processors a competitive advantage in key global markets. It communicates a clear message about our seafood's exceptional taste and premium quality.

We continue to look for new and innovative ways to work with the industry to promote access to international markets. In addition to showcasing our new brand, an agreement

with the leading Chinese online retailer TMall-Alibaba will pilot a quality program for shipping live Nova Scotia lobsters to consumers in China starting in May 2017. Perennia, the not-for-profit corporation with expertise in food quality and safety, is developing a strict quality certification procedure, including a quality standards manual, a training program, and regular audits at participating export plants in Nova Scotia and at receiver sites in China. As Canada's leading exporter of live lobster, we are working to increase the value we derive from those exports with a focus on innovative partnerships like this one, and even higher quality.

I want to congratulate the Seafood Alliance as they launch this new magazine. I know we share a commitment to seeing our seafood industries grow and reach new markets as we build a bright future for our coastal and rural communities and our province.





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What is GFSI

and what does it mean to the Seafood Processing Industry in Nova Scotia?

By: Freeman Libby



Background

During the mid-1990s there were a series of high-profile international food crises such as BSE (mad cow disease) and *Listeria* (in fish, meat and other foods). Internationally, retailers decided that there needed to be an enhanced audit system to provide additional assurances for food safety and quality, other than regulatory-driven inspection systems.

The world's food retailers agreed to a unified approach to food safety, and in May 2000 the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) was created.

The GFSI is an industry/retailer-driven initiative to provide leadership and guidance on Food Safety Management Systems, providing assurance for food safety along the supply chain. The GFSI has been developed and is managed through collaboration among the world's food safety experts from the retail, processing and manufacturing industries; governments, science leaders and service providers.

The mission of the GFSI is to "Provide continuous improvement in food safety management systems to ensure confidence in the delivery of safe food to consumers worldwide." Key Objectives include:

1. Reduce food safety risks by delivering equivalence and convergence

between effective food safety management systems

2. Manage cost in the global food system by eliminating redundancy and improving operational efficiency
3. Develop competencies and capacity building in food safety to create consistent and effective global food systems
4. Provide a unique international stakeholder platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange and networking

The GFSI is not an audit system in itself, but rather the umbrella organization that oversees the worldwide process through the approval of acceptable "Audit Schemes", monitoring progress. That ensures that its mission and objectives are delivered through the accreditation and certification activities, and continual improvement.

GFSI continues to provide a rigorous, scientifically based method that recognises competent food safety schemes. It allows food businesses to select a food safety management system or scheme that is recognised by leading retailers and manufacturers internationally.

The following schemes have been approved and are available for certification by processors:

- BRC Global Standards
- FSSC22000
- SQF Institute
- Global Aquaculture Alliance
- IFS - International Feature Standards

Once a processor develops a Food Safety System and is certified the benefits include:

- Improved consumer confidence and safer food
- Less audit duplication
- Comparable audit approach and outcomes
- Continuous improvement in recognised food safety schemes
- Cost efficiency through reduced failure and waste.

The GFSI is recognized by both the USDA and CFIA. The agency's modernized inspection program is now accepting third-party certification, resulting in less CFIA involvement.

How does this potentially affect the seafood processing sector in Nova Scotia?

Retailers and food buyers are moving more and more towards requiring their suppliers to be third-party audited, resulting in less reliance on government programs to ensure food safety and consistency (although that is not to say the government standards are not required). The number of retailers and food buyers requiring third-party certification is growing at a very fast rate internationally, and it is expected that most processors will soon be asked by their buyers to be certified. Retailers such as Walmart, Costco, Loblaws, Safeway and many others are



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already there; others such as McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Burger King, and Wendy's are now requiring independent third-party audits as well. Also, seafood processors who provide product to other GFSI-certified seafood processors may need certification as well.

How does a processor become Certified?

A processor needs to choose a scheme that best fits their organization. As an example, if a processor ships product to the European Union, the EU leans towards the BRC Global Standard. The FSSC 22000 is a more recent scheme that aligns itself to the ISO requirements and is less prescriptive.

In point form; here is the best method to achieve third-party certification:

- 1) Chose your scheme**
- 2) Perform a "GAP analysis" which is a review to determine the processor's QMP plan and what can be sued in the new scheme**
- 3) Develop a written program to meet the new scheme**
- 4) Implement the program and monitor to ensure its workability**
- 5) Apply to a "Certifying Body" for certification (i.e. Sillickers, SAI Global, NSF International, Intertek)**
- 6) Have the audit performed and receive certification**

There is no need to have two systems, as a processor's third-party certification will meet all QMP requirements and the new requirements of the CFIA's modernized inspection system.

In summary, GFSI is going to continue to expand in the food sector. As of now it's in place for packaging and ingredients suppliers, storage and distribution facilities, and pet food and feed manufacturers. If a processor is interested it should be noted that to move from Step 1 through to Step 6 an average of 12-18 months is required, depending upon the complexities of the processing plant's operations.

For more information on GFSI there are a number of websites available:

- 1) <http://www.mygfsi.com/>
- 2) <http://www.22000-tools.com/gfsi-certification.html>
- 3) <http://www.nsf.org/services/by-industry/food-safety-quality/global-food-safety-certification/>

Written by: Freeman Libby,
Ocean Agri-Food Solutions Ltd.
Certified in BRC and FSSC22000 (GFSI)



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“Labour Pains are Productive”

Is attracting and retaining labour a problem? Are market opportunities impacted by labour shortages? Manufacturing and processing facilities in rural Nova Scotia experience labour shortages on a regular basis, and it is hampering growth. It is a chronic obstacle across Nova Scotia, and seen as an epidemic in the seafood harvesting and processing sector.

Through its BusinessNow program, Western REN (Regional Enterprise Network) can verify the same thing is happening in Western Nova. Labour force is identified as one of the top three challenges facing seafood processors and manufacturers in the region.

BusinessNow lead, Victoria Brooks, meets directly with business owners and has heard firsthand the stories and concerns: “Owners tell me they want to increase their exports, expand production, or open new product lines. The raw materials are there and the infrastructure is in place, but the workforce is not.”

Some employers have relied heavily on the federal Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) program. That program is only intended to be short term and, in an already complex labour situation, employers are finding their access to TFWs reduced.

In response to these findings and anecdotes and to examine the complexities of the is-

sue, Western REN has established a working group of service delivery and government partners to find sustainable solutions. Western REN CEO Angélique LeBlanc explains the outcomes of those examinations: “With a very clearly identified problem, the working group focused on solutions. However, such a complex issue can have a myriad of solutions and we recognized the need to apply a multi-pronged approach.”

The following questions were posed:

1. How can we produce more with the people we already have?
2. Can employers access the locally available, not-participating labour force?
3. How can we encourage more permanent immigration into our region and labour market?

Enter the Seafood Productivity Continuous Improvement Initiative Pilot (SPCIIP).



Making more efficient use of the existing workforce comes by doing something rural Nova Scotians understand and have been innovating around for years: doing more with what we already have. This is a strategy that can be implemented now!

In the fall of 2016 Western REN, in partnership, contracted Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) to deliver a pilot project on Continuous Improvement (formerly known as LEAN manufacturing). As Canada's largest trade and industry association, CME are experts in building more competitive business environments, including training and supports for companies adopting a Continuous Improvement (CI) culture.

Continuous Improvement (CI) is an ongoing effort to improve products, services, or processes. These efforts seek 'incremental' improvements over time or 'breakthrough' improvements all at once. CI focuses on eliminating waste, refining skills, and improving work flow. Using simple tools, CI coordinators help identify where workflow is being slowed or bottlenecked - anywhere from office paperwork to layout of store-rooms to transportation logistics.

Working directly with business owners, management and staff, LEAN Facilitators support companies to adopt a culture of Continuous Improvement, where everyone participates in making the work flow more easily. Fostering a climate of innovation and communication, CI recognizes the goals of increased outputs and improved customer experiences; that everyone has a direct role in the company's increasing success.

Performance indicators from CI adopters speak to the value of this work's ability to improve the company's bottom line, increase innovation, and improve production capacity. Testimonials speak specifically to the improved morale and workplace satisfaction experienced in a CI culture.

SPIIC Participants.

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Bringing about this change takes more than simply a workshop. Participants come to recognize their valuable contributions - even those not in management positions. This shift takes time.

The Opportunity:

In Western NS, a Continuous Improvement pilot project is in full swing. Seven companies ranging from Pubnico to Digby Neck are beginning their 52-week program, shifting towards a corporate productivity culture. Early indications of the shift are already evident:

Two firms have added Continuous Improvement to job descriptions. Two-way production planning has been implemented, maximizing supervisory and production capacity. CI is becoming a catalyst for realizing of growth targets.

One company has instituted a morning huddle showing production targets and order commitments for the day, as well as expected deliveries and a motivational quote called

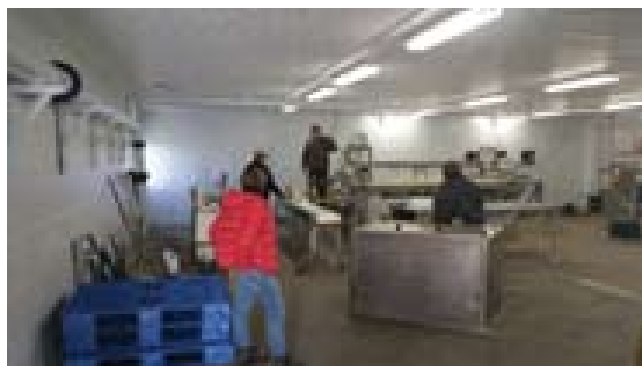
“Betty’s Words of Wisdom”. With a meeting limit of 15 minutes, this huddle saves time by providing production instructions and clarity about daily expectations.

Another company has collectively brainstormed the production floor layout for a new product line. Having input from staff who work the line is critical to the success of this effort: they are the ones with the knowledge of what works and where time and energy are used.

The experience of a third participant included a quickly identified bottleneck in the layout of their storeroom. Their focused effort to more effectively use the space will save time in processing materials in and out of the room.

This pilot project gives these seven businesses access customized, on-site CI training, and supports at a fraction of the full cost. Group training will also be received as a cohort, creating a shared experience.

The group is experiencing an atmosphere of collaboration and a willingness to continue sharing best practices. A culture of excellence is developing in the seafood harvesting and processing community. Not only are there benefits to each company’s production and bottom line, there are relationships developing in an attitude of collaboration and best practices. These companies are modelling exactly what rural Nova Scotians are so good at: adaptation, innovation and collaboration.



The Golden Age of the Fishery in Nova Scotia? Not entirely...

By any standard and any measurement, we might well consider this the province's Golden Age of the Fishery. Stock abundance and values have both reached incredible levels; never in the history of commercial fisheries has our wild caught seafood resource been so well received and so highly valued.

A trip to the seafood counter is the best indicator. Seafood achieves higher price points than beef, poultry or pork on any day of the week - scallops, crab, halibut, shrimp, lobster and so forth. So many choices, such great dining experiences, and all at top-shelf pricing. For a sector that not so long ago was challenged on many fronts, this is, generally speaking, a good-news story and a welcome development for the seafood sector in Nova Scotia.

Our only real challenge at this moment is that pushback from the market on pricing remains substantial. Fishers welcome high pricing for obvious reasons, but local, national and international clients suggest the recent increases have been somewhat overwhelming. Nova Scotia companies, if they are not careful, can easily be caught in the middle. Many companies are paying prices that cannot readily be passed on to consumers and the marketplace, and in certain cases it can cause real shock and difficulty. Suffice it to say, the expectations of the fishers and marketplace have not lined up especially well lately.

With respect, our message for the moment might be that old refrain: Be careful what we wish for, in all respects. Yes, high pricing and strong values are terrific for the harvesting process, but we still need the support of that consumer group at the seafood counter. At certain price levels customers make other choices for their proteins, and as much as they like our wild caught seafood offerings, there are other fish in the sea so to speak. The next few years should bring these various interests together responsibly. The more transparent the business model, the easier it will be for all of us. Best of all, it should not be beyond our collective wisdom to find price points that can be digested by everyone successfully.



Premium Seafoods Group: Community Supporter and Industry Leader



COMPANY BACKGROUND

The Head Office for the Premium Seafoods Group of companies is located on beautiful Isle Madame, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. The company is a vertically integrated buyer, processor and marketer of quality fresh and frozen seafood. The Premium Seafoods Group began in 1984 as one company, Premium Seafoods Ltd., when three entrepreneurs - Edgar Samson, Brian Samson and the late John F. Samson - formed a small lobster and fish brokering company. The two remaining partners have expanded the original company to a group of companies employing over 200 workers, buying and or processing approximately 15 million pounds of seafood annually.

Today, the Premium Seafoods Group consists of the following companies:

- Premium Seafoods – Buyer/broker of fresh and frozen seafood
- Green Island Partnership – Distributor and groundfish processor
- Petit de Grat Packers – Snow crab processor
- Merry's Seafoods – Broker of fresh seafood
- Premium Trucking – Delivery/transportation
- Premium Choice Shrimp – Shrimp processor

PREMIUM AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

Since its establishment in the late 1700s the people of Isle Madame have depended on the sea and fishing for their very survival. At one point in the 60s and 70s the vast majority of the population - men, women and children - was employed directly or indirectly in the fishing industry. However, by the late 1980s fish stocks were seriously depleted and the local fish plant (which had employed as many as 600 workers) was bulldozed to the ground, leaving this rural area without a major employer. Also devastating for the community was the fact that the company took the fishing quotas with it, thus making it very difficult if not impossible for the community to attract another company to build a new fish plant.

Fortunately for the community of approximately 4000 people and other local entrepreneurs, by this time Premium had established itself as a strong player in the fishing industry. Also, Isle Madame meant a lot to Premium's owners because the island had been their home all their lives. Over the years both the surrounding community and Premium have benefitted from a close relationship. Premium relies on the community for its livelihood (employees and seafood) and the community relies on Premium for employment and

support for the numerous projects and events that they sponsor every year. The owners believe it is important to give back to the community and they want to play a role in helping build a healthier, stronger one.

PREMIUM SEA-FOODS AND THE FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY

Since their arrival on the shores of Cape Breton Island, the Acadians and the First Nations Communities have enjoyed a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation. After the fall of Louisbourg in the 1700s, some Acadians who fled from the English lived in Mi'kmaq communities and depended on them for survival. Some Acadians eventually left Mi'kmaq communities and established or moved to villages along the shores of Cape Breton Island.

Following the Supreme Court decision regarding the Marshall case in 1999, Mi'kmaq bands were granted fishing licenses and quotas for a number of fisheries. This was a new venture for the Mi'kmaq, who for the most part were not fishing commercially. However, the decision was also a business opportunity for Premium and the people of Isle Madame, who had many of the skills and infrastructure needed

for the Mi'kmaq to succeed. Thus began a commercial and social relationship that remains strong today.

PREMIUM: OPTIMIZATION OF TRAINING AND TECHNOLOGY

Over the years Premium has built its business by ensuring that employees are well trained. The company has built modern facilities and/or acquired the best technology available to process the fresh seafood that fishers bring to their plants.

Today, value-added products are sold and shipped to customers around the globe. The technology at the crab processing facility in Petite-Grat is a good example of the company's philosophy regarding the acquisition of the most up-to-date technology and importance of a well-trained workforce. However, the most recent example is the construction of a new state-of-the-art shrimp processing plant in Arichat in 2013.

In this case, Premium owners firmly believe that they have one of the most modern and energy-efficient shrimp processing plants in North America. The production line ensures that the product is processed in a manner that maintains its quality and freshness. The facility and

equipment are designed to conserve energy so that the process consumes the least amount possible.

CONCLUSION

Premium Seafoods Group's success is an excellent testimony to how strong relationships between small rural communities and locally based companies can result in both the survival and development of the communities, and the growth of the company from a local and regional business focus to the international stage.



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Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) supports food businesses through stronger rules and new online services

A 2014 report by the Conference Board of Canada ranked Canada's food safety system first out of 17 countries that are part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Still, with advances in science and technology, a changing global marketplace and increased consumer awareness, Canada must be prepared to adapt to a changing environment and align with internationally-recognized standards. By strengthening its food safety system, Canadians can remain confident that the food they serve their families is safe.

That's what the proposed Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) are all about—better protecting Canadian families by placing a greater emphasis on prevention. They would apply to all foods imported into Canada, exported or sold across provinces. They would require food businesses to have preventive controls in place to identify and manage risks before products are sold to consumers. Preventive controls would reduce the time it takes to remove unsafe foods from the marketplace. Strong, flexible regulations that focus on prevention will go a long way in helping businesses uphold their reputation, keep customers healthy and loyal, and avoid costly recalls.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) knows that new rules can sometimes be difficult to understand and apply. That's

why it is taking steps to help food businesses understand how the proposed regulations may impact them, and transition to the new requirements once they become law. Exemptions and gradual implementation

Under the proposed new regulations, all businesses would need to have preventive controls in place but some businesses with \$30,000 or less in gross annual food sales would not be required to write these down in a written preventive control plan (PCP). Also, to support a smooth transition, some food sectors and small businesses would also be granted more time to prepare and comply with certain requirements. Plain language information

Though businesses are not required to make any immediate changes, the CFIA's website already has many resources to explain key elements of the proposed regulations in plain language. More tools and guidance will be added once the regulations come into force. Visit inspection.gc.ca/safefood, to find the following resources:

- Short videos, including one for importers, that provide an overview of the proposed regulations
- Understanding the proposed SFCR: a handbook for food businesses—describes the proposed SFCR in clear and simple language

- Interactive tools to help you quickly determine: Would you need a licence? Would you need a preventive control plan? What would your traceability requirements be?
- Fact sheets on licensing, traceability, preventive controls, importing and exporting
- Draft step-by-step guides to developing a preventive control plan, with templates
- Infographics that present international best practices in food safety

Business support services

Providing online support and services to businesses is another way the CFIA is improving service to clients.

Ask CFIA is an information service that provides industry with one point of entry to ask questions, and help them understand and comply with regulatory requirements.

This new service improves customer service to businesses, in particular small businesses, not only by streamlining where they go to ask technical questions but also by providing them with timely and consistent written answers. Only six months after being launched, Ask CFIA was recognized by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business with an Honourable Mention in its Golden Scissors awards during Red Tape Awareness Week. Ask CFIA is available now for many food sectors, and will be open to all food businesses by the time the proposed Safe Food for Canadians Regulations become law.

The CFIA is also supporting industry through new online business services called My CFIA. Different from Ask CFIA, which offers information services, My CFIA offers busi-

nesses easy access to online transactional services such as licences, permits, registrations and export certificates. While more services will be added through 2017, anyone can enroll now for a secure My CFIA account to access services and view/manage transactions. Once enrolled, transactions can be managed anywhere, anytime.

These services respond to industry needs. They will help food businesses conduct transactions with the CFIA now, and also get ready to meet new regulatory requirements in the future. For more information on the proposed Safe Food for Canadians Regulations or other CFIA initiatives and services, please visit www.inspection.gc.ca.



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