

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SAFE FOOD FOR CANADIANS ACTION PLAN FOR INDUSTRY

This month, the Government of Canada announced the launch of the “Safe Food for Canadians Action Plan”, which follows up on the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* (the "Act"), a new federal legislation that comes into force in 2015 and that aims to modernize the Canadian food safety system.

The Act consolidates four statutes that govern food inspections and the packaging and labeling of food products into a single overarching legislation. The four pieces of legislation that will be consolidated are: (1) the *Fish Inspection Act*; (2) the *Canada Agricultural Products Act*; (3) the *Meat Inspection Act*; and (4) the *Consumer Packaging and Labeling Act*. The new legislation will:

- institute greater consistency in the inspection regime across all food commodities;
- target unsafe practices;
- implement tougher penalties for activities that risk health safety;
- provide better control over imports; and
- strengthen food traceability.

The Action Plan indicates that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will take initiative to make changes to the food safety system before the new Act comes into force through existing authorities and guidelines. As part of the "Action Plan", CFIA commits to working with consumer groups and industry to develop regulations for the Act over the next two years. This is a good opportunity for food industry members to play an active role in the development of upcoming regulations that will govern their sector.

In addition, CFIA proposes to initiate and implement the following concrete changes over the next two years, which are relevant to food industry members:

- develop a new food inspection model;
- replace more than 100 commodity-based manuals with a new set of compliance education documents;
- establish 16 centres of expertise to bring together knowledge in specific programs or food commodities;
- modernize science facilities and equipment;
- develop an integrated food laboratory network with other partners involved in food safety (eg. provinces and municipalities);
- build an electronic interface to share information and conduct transactions more effectively with industry and international partners; and
- require all manufacturers to be licensed and have preventative control systems such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) or the equivalent.

For more information about this article or other food & drug law related matters, contact Colleen Spring Zimmerman or Yadira Flores.



Colleen Spring Zimmerman,

Partner

416.941.8884

cspringzimmerman@foglers.com



Yadira Flores, Associate

416.365.3744

yflores@foglers.com