

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Report Highlights:

New Food Safety Bill Introduced into the Canadian Parliament * "Free the Grapes" Bill is Working its Way Through Parliament * Comments Sought for Guidance Document on Highlighted Ingredients and Flavors * Canadian Food Inspection Agency Locates Missing Sheep * Sodium Reduction Targets Established by Health Canada Published

This Week in Canadian Agriculture is a review of Canadian agricultural industry developments of interest to the U.S. agricultural community. The issues summarized in this report cover a wide range of subject matter obtained from Canadian press reports, government press releases, and host country agricultural officials and representatives.

Disclaimer: Any press article summaries in this report are included to bring U.S. readership closer to the pulse of Canadian developments in agriculture. In no way do the views and opinions of these sources reflect USDA's, the U.S. Embassy's, or any other U.S. Government agency's point of view or official policy.

New Food Safety Bill Introduced into the Canadian Parliament: On June 7, 2012, the Canadian Government introduced the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*, into the Senate. The proposed legislation seeks to consolidate the authorities of the Fish Inspection Act, the Canadian Agricultural Products Act, the Meat Inspection Act and the Food Provisions of the Consumer Packaging and Labeling Act. This is designed to support the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) efforts to modernize by standardizing its inspection approach to better provide consistent and appropriate oversight across all regulated food commodities. The bill implements tougher penalties for activities that put health and safety at risk, as well as improving traceability. It also seeks to improve controls over imports by introducing an importer licensing scheme and it provides CFIA with the authority to certify all food commodities for export. On the CFIA website, there is a note that the proposed legislation seeks to align Canada's food safety system with international trading partners, such as the *Food Safety Modernization Act* in the United States. The legislation, for the most part, was well received by industry.

The Safe Food for Canadians Act (short title) can be viewed at the following URL address:
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=5654899>

The press release by the CFIA is available at the following URL address:
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/acts-and-regulations/initiatives/sfca/eng/1338796071420/1338796152395>

"Free the Grapes" Bill is Working its Way Through Parliament: Bill C-311, also known as the "Free the Grapes" bill, was referred to the Senate of Canada's Standing Committee for Banking, Trade and Commerce on June 11th. The bill seeks to alter the 1928 *Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act*, which prohibits transportation or shipping of liquor across provincial borders for personal use, except through the provincial liquor boards. If passed, the bill would permit intra-Provincial movement of wine for personal use, which is expected to be beneficial to Canadian wineries since out-of-province visitors could take wine home and wineries could ship orders to out-

of-province customers. The amendment, expected to become law by the end of June, could boost sales of Canadian wineries by an estimated five to ten percent.

The entire text of the proposed amendment can be found at the following URL address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Docid=5651739&file=4>

Comments Sought for Guidance Document on Highlighted Ingredients and Flavors: The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is seeking comments on its *Guidelines for Highlighted Ingredients and Flavors*. The document was developed in order to provide additional guidance to industry in meeting labeling regulations, while providing consumers with meaningful information. The comment period closes on August 23, 2012. Comments can be sent to the CFIA Consumer Protection Division at the following e-mail address:
labeling_consultation_etiquetage@inspections.gc.ca.

The CFIA request for comments is available at the following URL address:

<http://inspection.gc.ca/food/labelling/other-requirements/highlighted-consultation/eng/1339421942081/1339422145856>. The Guidelines for Highlighted Ingredients and Flavors is available at the following URL address: <http://inspection.gc.ca/food/labelling/other-requirements/highlighted-consultation/highlighted-guidelines/eng/1339422936843/1339422996038>.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency Locates Missing Sheep: The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) issued a press statement on June 8, 2012 stating that some of the 31 heritage Shropshire sheep that had been illegally removed from a quarantined farm in Easter Ontario had been found. On April 2, 2012, a group calling themselves the "Farmer's Peace Corp" had unlawfully removed sheep from a farm placed under quarantine due to a confirmed case of scrapie. Scrapie can have serious impacts on the sheep and goat industry. This case received intense media attention due to the Ontario farmer's very public fight with CFIA over the order to destroy the infected sheep. While many sheep farmers empathize with the distress of facing a destruction order due to a scrapie investigation, serious concerns have been expressed by the industry over the tactics used. The Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency, the Canadian Sheep Federation, the Canadian Sheep Breeders Association and the Canadian Livestock Genetics Association published a joint open letter to the National Post (May 7, 2012) expressing their collective concern over the actions taken by the "Farmer's Peace Corp" and warned that, should the sheep not be returned, the survivability of the industry may be at stake as it could lead to the destruction of hundreds of potentially infected sheep and goats. The CFIA is providing few details on the investigation as it remains an open Ontario Provincial Police Investigation.

The CFIA press statement can be located at the following URL address:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/scrapie/2012-06-08/eng/1339191264003/1339191425181>.

Sodium Reduction Targets Established by Health Canada Published: Health Canada published its long-awaited *Guidance for Food Industry on Reducing Sodium in Processed Foods*. The Guidance document includes benchmark sodium levels for most types of processed food, with the aim of achieving the 2016 average sodium intake goal set by the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Health Minister of 2300 mg per day by 2016. Current sodium intake levels for Canadians are

estimated at 3400 mg per day, more than double the amount that Canadians require. The primary source of sodium in the Canadian diet is salt and 75 percent of sodium consumed by Canadians is found in processed food. The original recommendation of the Sodium Working Group was to establish regulations to reduce sodium levels in commercially prepared foods. The approach is now likely to remain voluntary. In the guidance document, Health Canada states that it will continue to monitor the progress of sodium reduction in the population through the Canadian Community Health Survey which allows Health Canada to measure the impacts of the overall changes in the food environment, and through changes in dietary patterns and consumer food choices.

The Health Canada Guidance for Food Industry on Reducing Sodium in Processed Food is available at the following URL address: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/pdf/legislation/guide-ld/2012-sodium-reduction-indust-eng.pdf.

Exchange Rate: Noon rate, June 15, 2012 (Bank of Canada): U.S. Dollar = C\$1.0244

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