



Canadian Food  
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne  
d'inspection des aliments

EMPOWER EQUIP REPORT INNOVATE



PROPOSED

# OPEN AND TRANSPARENT AGENCY FRAMEWORK

**2018-2021**

Open. Transparent. Accountable.

Canada

## Our Goal

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is open by design and supports the public interest by proactively providing useful, timely, and accessible information about its activities to preserve trust in Canada's regulatory system for food, plants and animals.

## Preserving Trust

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is dedicated to safeguarding food, animals and plants, which enhances the health and well-being of Canada's people, environment and economy.

In delivering regulatory programs and services, the CFIA seeks to excel as a science-based regulator that is trusted and respected by Canadians and the international community. To realize this vision, public confidence in its activities and decisions is paramount.

The proposed Open and Transparent Agency Framework 2018-21 is part of the CFIA's commitment to increase openness and transparency, accountability and citizen engagement.

Providing useful, timely and accessible information to Canadians will allow them to better understand how and why the Agency's regulatory decisions are made and, in turn, use this information to make well-informed choices for themselves, their families and businesses.

## Our Intent

Canadians expect openness and transparency about how their government delivers meaningful results fairly, efficiently and responsibly.

Through its 'Open Government' initiative, the Government of Canada is increasing openness and transparency by asking all departments and agencies to take steps to maximize the release of government information to Canadians.

The CFIA recognizes and understands the right of Canadians to information about its activities, given the role it plays in protecting their health and that of food, animal and plant resources.

Over the long term, in addition to making more information available, the CFIA will also strive to become 'open by design' by embedding openness and transparency into all of its programs and services.

## Our Objectives

This framework provides the blueprint for specific actions the CFIA will take to visibly increase openness and transparency from 2018 to 2021. It is also a foundational piece that supports the Agency in delivering on its five strategic priorities, as articulated in *Responding to Today, Building for the Future*:

- 1. **Modern regulatory toolkit**
- 2. **Integrated risk management**
- 3. **Consistent and efficient inspections**
- 4. **Digital-first tools and services**
- 5. **Global leadership**

As part of becoming ‘open by design’, our objectives are to:

- **Empower Canadians to make informed decisions by publishing more information about the CFIA’s activities, and provide more opportunities to engage with the Agency.**
- **Equip regulated parties with information that will help them navigate the regulatory system and in turn comply with regulations.**
- **Report on how and why the CFIA makes regulatory decisions as part of its compliance, enforcement, and scientific activities.**
- **Support innovation through sound scientific practices and sharing of CFIA research and technical information, including data.**

The framework is composed of four themes that together map out a program of work to achieve these objectives:

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# EMPOWER

Canadians have more information about food safety, animal health and plant protection to help them make informed decisions, and opportunities to engage with the CFIA

The public expects to be able to know how the Agency protects them from risks to their health and safety, and to have a say in and see how government policies, programs, and services are designed and delivered.

Therefore, we will:

1. **Describe clearly the Agency's role and how it delivers its mandate**
2. **Publish more information that will assist Canadians to make informed decisions about the food, animal and plant products they purchase and consume**
3. **Enhance transparency of and increase access to consultation and engagement activities**

## Informing and Engaging Canadians

We will work to provide more information to Canadians about our role and activities. Resources currently available on the CFIA website include:

- General information on CFIA's vision, mission, mandate and role, as well as answers to common questions
- Food recall warnings which provide information on food recalls and allergy alerts
- Information on current and completed consultations on our program, regulatory and modernization initiatives, as well as completed public opinion research
- 'Safeguarding with Science' videos that introduce the CFIA's business lines
- The CFIA's proactive disclosure page that shows completed access to information requests, as well as information about contracts, grants and contributions, and travel expenditures

## EQUIP

Industry has the information and tools to comply with regulatory requirements.

The CFIA, industry, and other partners all play a role in contributing toward a culture of compliance. Providing access to information, tools, and opportunities to engage with the CFIA help promote compliance with rules put in place to protect Canada's food, plants and animals.

Therefore, we will:

- 1. Provide up-to-date regulatory guidance to help industry comply with regulatory requirements**
- 2. Engage industry and service delivery partners on our regulatory and modernization agendas**
- 3. Publish more information about international and market access activities**

## Promoting Compliance

Protecting food, plants and animals is a shared responsibility and the CFIA will work with industry and other stakeholders to achieve this. Resources we already provide on our website include:

- The CFIA's 'Guidance Document Repository' that provides guidance to regulated parties about program and regulatory requirements
- The 'Ask CFIA' service, which provides certain food industry sectors with one point of entry to ask questions to help understand and comply with regulatory requirements\*
- 'My CFIA' that provides convenient and secure access to online services
- Interactive tools that provide explanations for understanding safety systems such as food labelling
- 'Notices to Industry' that provide information to industry and stakeholders about changes to CFIA programs and services, and upcoming consultations

\*The Ask CFIA service will eventually be rolled out to all industry sectors

## REPORT

Canadians can see how and why the CFIA takes action to safeguard their interests as part of enhancing their well-being, the environment and the economy.

The CFIA takes a risk-based approach to compliance management. When the CFIA identifies non-compliance with the legislation it administers and enforces, it has a number of tools it can use to respond.

Therefore, we will:

- 1. Demonstrate how we enforce the law and apply a risk-based approach to protect Canadians**
- 2. Communicate outcomes of compliance and enforcement across all three areas regulated by the CFIA – food, animals and plants**
- 3. Clearly explain reasons for our regulatory decisions**

## Enforcing Our Mandate

The CFIA will expand information about its compliance and enforcement activities and general operations. Information currently available on the CFIA website includes:

- CFIA's 'Compliance and Enforcement Activities' page, which houses quarterly reports for Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) issued under the Health of Animals Act and Plant Protection Act, and information about suspended and cancelled certifications
- 'Prosecution Bulletins' that provide information on convictions obtained from non-compliance with acts and regulations enforced by the CFIA
- 'Monthly Reportable Disease Reports' that provide information on the number of confirmed farmed herds or flocks affected by reportable animal diseases in Canada
- Departmental plans and performance reports
- Information about our inspection capacity: Annual full-time equivalents (FTE) dedicated to safeguarding food, animals and plants

## 4 INNOVATE

**Our stakeholders can learn more about regulatory science, and access research and information from CFIA scientists.**

The CFIA is one of Canada's largest science-based regulatory agencies. It works with scientific organizations in Canada and internationally, industry, academia and other partners to support and develop science that contributes to evidence-based decisions that better protect Canada's food, animal and plant resources.

Therefore, we will:

- 1. Provide more information about how the CFIA safeguards Canada's food, animals and plants through sound science**
- 2. Increase availability of CFIA datasets on the data.gc.ca portal**
- 3. Share results of scientific research led by CFIA scientists, researchers and experts**

## Safeguarding with Science

The CFIA is recognized internationally for its scientific rigour and expertise, and will share more information about its activities in this domain.

Resources currently on the CFIA website include:

- Information on the CFIA's 13 network laboratories and their areas of scientific expertise
- The 'Our Research' web page, which provides information and videos on published scientific research and fact sheets on CFIA science
- The 'Framework for Quality Management Oversight of Laboratories Conducting Testing in Areas Under the CFIA Mandate'
- The Agency's 'Policy on the Responsible Conduct of Research and Development', which provides an ethical framework within which all research and development should be conducted by in, or for, the CFIA

**Open. Transparent.  
Accountable.**

The CFIA is committed to demonstrating its progress as it implements this framework.

We will publish an overview of our plans each year, as well as an annual report with our accomplishments.