

Section 1: Program Basics and Occupational Safety

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Section 1: Program Basics and Occupational Safety

1.1 Objective of Section 1

This section is intended to define the program objectives and provide the basic fundamentals of the program. It will provide the inspector with a prioritized list of program activities as well as detailing the importance of inspection and the inspector's responsibilities. It also contains some valuable information on occupational safety which every inspector is expected to know and practice at all times.

1.2 Program Objectives

The program objective is to provide a means of securing an accurate report, based on an impartial inspection, of the quality and/or condition of fresh fruit and vegetables. The inspection is a means of describing the quality and/or condition in terms that will be readily understood by all interested parties and;

To ensure that fresh fruits, vegetables and edible fungi, exported, imported or marketed interprovincially,

- comply with federal regulations;
- are graded for economically significant factors; and
- are packaged, labeled and traded to avoid fraud.

An additional objective is to facilitate access to international markets by providing export certification to meet the import requirements of other countries.

1.3 Program Priorities

The activities in each column are not in any particular order. For example, all the activities listed in the High priority column take precedence over the activities in the Medium and Low priority columns. It is the responsibility of the inspector and supervisor to determine in what sequence the activities within each column will be done in order to ensure their completion.

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Health and safety complaints -Respond to any food emergency issues or recalls -Respond to inquiries from consumers or media.	Compulsory shipping point - domestic -Certify the products to meet the requirements of the Regulations, or issue Y-release.	Ministerial Exemption monitoring -Monitor products for compliance with the Regulations.

Chemical residue, micro and other sampling plan -Sample loads of fresh product for chemical residues, microbial contamination and detection of irradiation under monitoring and surveillance plans. -Detain loads of fresh fruits and vegetables that are on a compliance list.	Release from detention -Release all detained products that meet the requirements in the Regulations.	Administrative inspections -Monitor products for compliance with the Regulations.
Health and safety trace back -Investigate the origin of microbiological contamination of fresh fruits and vegetables.	Licensing, new and renewals -Renew all licenses or determine DRC membership status	Non-compulsory inspection -Monitor products for compliance.
Stakeholder inquiries -Respond to any inquiries by stakeholders regarding regulatory requirements.	RPW registration -Renew or issue RPW registration.	Non-compulsory export inspection to other countries -Inspect product going to countries other than the USA at the request of exporters.
Export certification to US -Provide certification of loads of potatoes, onions and field tomatoes going to the USA in order to meet international commitments.	RPW monitoring -Monitor products for compliance with the Regulations.	
Custom clearance certification -Certify that products meet the requirements of the Regulations.	Licensing complaints -Respond to complaints to ensure that licensees meet the requirements as set out in the Regulations.	
Issuance of Ministerial Exemptions -Certify that products meet the requirements of the Regulations.	Label review -Monitor products for compliance with the Regulations.	

1.4 Importance of Inspection

The fresh fruit and vegetable inspection service facilitates the marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables and assists the industry in promoting acceptance of Canadian products in domestic and foreign markets. To achieve this, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program regulates interprovincial and international trade, and establishes and maintains quality standards to facilitate orderly marketing and meet consumer needs.

Inspectors play a vital and important role in the delivery of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to the industry. The inspector is the primary, and in some cases, the only contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has with the members of the industry. Knowledge of the regulations, and of the inspectors' duties and responsibilities, are an integral part of this program.

Since the value of some shipments of produce can easily amount to thousands of dollars, carelessness, indifference, or a lack of knowledge on the part of the inspector can cause serious financial loss to industry and discredit the inspection service. Inspection certificates are very important documents that are crucial to the produce sector and they may be used as evidence by the courts. They also may be requested under the *Access to Information Act*.

Inspectors should take pride in their work and in their contribution to the business of a section that plays an important part in the welfare of Canada's agricultural industry.

Inspectors should conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner when dealing with members of the produce industry.

1.5 Responsibilities of an Inspector

The inspector has responsibilities to go along with the considerable authority given in the Act ([*Canada Agricultural Products Act*](#)) and Regulations ([*Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations*](#)). It is the job of the inspector to enforce the requirements of the Regulations and, during an inspection, accurately report and describe what is seen according to national standards.

Inspector responsibilities include the following:

- **A thorough knowledge of inspection duties.** This is achieved through review of manuals, regulations, training modules, etc.;
- **Impartiality.** The prime mandate of the inspector is to enforce the Regulations. Fairness and equality should always be promoted when performing an inspection and the inspector should never think or believe that they are helping a member of the industry by not enforcing the Regulations.
- **Uniformity.** In order for an inspection system to have credibility, it must have national uniformity. The inspector must follow the procedures and instructions outlined in their manuals, as well as enforce the Regulations at all times. When an inspector deviates from the manuals or does not enforce the Regulations, this results in non-uniformity and may jeopardise the value of the inspection system.
- **Maintenance of all regulations, manuals and other inspection aids to ensure they are up-to-date.** Computerised versions will be automatically

updated.

- **Inspection manuals and Act and Regulations should be readily available at the time of inspection.** Inspectors are required to bring, or have access to, the pertinent manuals and regulations at the inspection site.
- **Adherence to accepted inspection techniques and methodologies.** Initiative is appreciated and all inspectors should feel free to offer suggestions aimed at improving standards, work methods or procedures. However, in order to maintain national uniformity within the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, suggestions should be forwarded to Programs through the appropriate channels to ensure that all inspection work is carried out in a uniform manner across the country.

1.6 Occupational Safety

Safety on the work site is a prime concern within the Public Service of Canada and it is the responsibility of the inspector to determine when safe or unsafe conditions exist. The use of safe work practices, combined with on-the-job training, will help reduce the chance of an injury happening to an inspector.

All inspection staff must be aware of the hazards in the environment in which they will be working. Pre-operational checks of the work area are essential to identify unsafe conditions or situations. Unsafe conditions and situations must be corrected before inspection or testing is started both at the workplace and/or on third party premises. If the inspector decides that conditions are unsafe, they are to immediately discuss the situation with the responsible person at the work site. If this does not result in satisfactory action, the inspector is to advise the applicant that inspection services will be withdrawn until such time as conditions are improved. The inspector always has the right to refuse to perform an inspection for occupational safety and health reasons. If you have doubts about your safety, or a co-worker's safety, notify your supervisor as soon as possible and identify the safety issue.

The following are some of the more common hazards of fresh fruit and vegetable inspection duties. It is not intended to be a complete list and does not supplant or take precedence over information provided by your area Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Manual. For more detailed information, always consult your local OSH committee.

Manual Material Handling

Plan and notify the client of your visit. Have a client representative assigned to assist you at all times while selecting samples and having them delivered to the inspection location as per Section 21 (3) of the [Canada Agricultural Products Act](#).

Use proper lifting techniques when loading and unloading samples:

- size up the load before lifting;

- ensure that the travel way is clear of obstructions;
- keep feet at least a foot apart to provide a stable base;
- with a straight back, bend the knees to lift load;
- keep load as close to your body as possible;
- turn by pivoting at the feet, not by twisting at the waist;
- when conducting an inspection at a workstation, ensure that table height is adequate to perform the inspection, lighting is at least 540 lux and a chair is made available.

Moving Vehicles

Be aware of all moving vehicles (tow motors, forklifts, trucks etc.) while travelling around and within the client's workplace. Use designated walkways when possible. Do not assume that the pedestrian has the right of way and try to remain visible to any vehicle operators. Be aware of the dangers associated with exhaust fumes from vehicles.

Third Party Premises Hazards

When selecting samples, be aware of environmental conditions and potential hazards (eg. palletized product improperly placed on overhead racking or damaged racking). Inform Warehouse Manager/Supervisor on duty of the hazard.

Climbing

Inspectors must not climb any skids, equipment or materials. Inspectors must not stand on any platform being hoisted by a lift truck or on the lift trucks forks. Ask the company for assistance to obtain samples or items beyond the reach of the inspector.

Inspectors should consult with their local OSH committee for detailed information regarding workplace safety.