



Focus Group Testing:  
Travellers'  
Biosecurity Campaign  
(Public Service Announcement)

**FINAL REPORT**

Submitted to:

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency

**EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC.**

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## EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

Ottawa Office  
99 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1100  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 6L7  
Tel: (613) 235 7215  
Fax: (613) 235 8498  
E-mail: [pobox@ekos.com](mailto:pobox@ekos.com)

Toronto Office  
480 University Avenue, Suite 1006  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5G 1V2  
Tel: (416) 598 8002  
Fax: (416) 598 2543  
E-mail: [toronto@ekos.com](mailto:toronto@ekos.com)

Edmonton Office  
9925 109th St. NW, Suite 606  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2J8  
Tel: (780) 408 5225  
Fax: (780) 408 5233  
E-mail: [edmonton@ekos.com](mailto:edmonton@ekos.com)

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# 1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

CFIA's goal is to make travellers and importers aware of the instrumental role they play in protecting Canada from foreign diseases, pests and other threats, which they may unintentionally bring into the country. Messaging will be placed in the context of securing Canada from the many threats posed by bringing banned goods into the country.

Pre-testing communications products is a necessary step in conducting an effective communications campaign. A series of earlier focus groups (conducted in late February) tested reaction to a number of communications products for the campaign (i.e., posters, tag lines, brochures, information cards, web pages, and URL addresses).

The purpose of the current research was to gauge reaction to a 30 second commercial (public service announcement) which would be shown on airplanes. Two focus groups were conducted in Ottawa on the evening of March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006 (one in English, and one in French) to gauge the effectiveness of this commercial. In each group, 12 individuals were recruited to ensure the participation of at least eight. The focus groups reflected the following key client segments as defined by the CFIA:

- Canadian public who have travelled internationally in the last three years (outside the continent); and
- Canadian public who anticipate travelling internationally in the upcoming year.

In each group, at least 8 had traveled to Asia, Europe or the Middle East in the past three years; the remainder planned on traveling to these areas in the next year. In addition, we ensured that the groups included a reasonable cross-section of people based on gender, age, and educational attainment.



## 2. FINDINGS

### 2.1 GENERAL AWARENESS OF RESTRICTIONS

By way of introduction, participants were first asked if they had traveled to Europe, Asia or the Middle-East in the last three years. Not surprisingly, given the screening criteria used in recruiting participants, many indicated they had. These participants were asked if they brought anything back with them from their trip(s). Most reported souvenirs, clothing, textiles, spices, alcohol, conserves, and tulip bulbs.

All were then asked if they were aware of any restrictions on products brought back from other countries. Awareness of restricted food, plants, animals and related products was reasonably high. Many indicated, without prompting, that meat products, plants and live animals are restricted. Those who had brought back tulip bulbs discussed having to obtain special certificates in order to do so. When questioned about the severity of bringing back restricted products, most participants agreed that it is a serious matter. Some participants specifically mentioned that diseases (such as mad cow disease, SARS and the avian flu) could be brought into the country this way.

*“I think if there are restrictions, there are probably some very good reasons behind them.”*

*“Bringing restricted stuff back home could lead to the degeneration of our crops and the spread of serious disease.”*

When asked what they thought individual Canadians could do to help prevent diseases from entering Canada, participants offered a range of responses. One noted that travelers should always get the necessary vaccinations before leaving Canada. Others suggested that travelers should declare items that may be potentially restricted, even if they are not sure, and convince their family and friends to do the same.

The focus of the discussion was then turned to the public service announcement.

## 2.2 PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Participants were shown a 30-second in-flight commercial (public service announcement) that showed, in a light-hearted fashion, a person returning to Canada with a number of restricted products (such as sausages, plants, and a chicken) (the full script of the commercial is contained in Appendix 1). They were then asked what they thought of this commercial. Reactions to the commercial were largely mixed — few people strongly liked or strongly disliked the commercial. Most participants thought the ad was OK — it was considered inoffensive, light-hearted and even slightly comedic (particularly among French participants).

*“As a refresher---it’s not bad. It might actually incite some people to think twice and declare.”*

*“It’s a satire! This isn’t meant to be serious. It doesn’t really matter why the rules are in place; it’s just a reminder to declare.”*

*“This is a difficult subject to approach. [Government] is stuck between a rock and a hard place — do you scare people or take a lighter approach? People are traveling and it’s a fun time for them.”*

Although the ad did not generate strong negative views, several participants offered suggestions for improvement. For instance, it was suggested that the audio be altered in the French announcement to clarify its message. Currently, there is a slight pause in the narration which causes the announcement to sound like two messages are being delivered: a) do not to leave your bags unattended, and b) be aware and declare. A slight revision to the wording could serve to improve the French version of the announcement.

Several participants also felt the commercial should have more information about why it is important to declare products bought back from foreign countries – i.e., the consequences to the country. There was also some desire for more information about the penalties for bringing restricted products into Canada. However, other participants acknowledged that a 30 second commercial does not leave a lot of time to provide detailed information about this issue.

However, the most significant criticism of the ad was that the tone seemed a little too light, given the severity of this issue. For these participants, the ad was not a call to action. While they agreed it is not ideal to scare travellers, they suggested the subject matter be communicated in a more serious fashion.

*“The comedy caught my attention, but I found myself more interested in the next joke than in the actual message.”*



*“Canada is often too polite in its messaging.”*

*« Si il y a gros à perdre, pourquoi le traiter si légèrement ? »*

These results suggest that the narrative (voice-over) for the commercial should be a little more authoritative in tone to convey the significance of this issue. However it should also be noted that results from these focus groups (and from the focus groups conducted in late February) suggest that Canadians will not react well to being told by government what they can and cannot bring into the country. Consequently, while adjusting the tone of the commercial to be a little more serious is likely a good idea, the narrative should not take too serious a tone as this may generate some backlash from Canadians (and would seem at odds with the visuals in the ad).

The desire for more information, and the desire among some for a more serious tone to communicate the message, also underscores the importance of the other communications products for the campaign (particularly the brochure and the information card) which do provide more information, and contain a more serious tone in their messaging.

## 2.3 WRAP-UP

The focus groups were concluded by asking participants what else they thought the Government of Canada should be doing to inform Canadians about the risks of bringing banned products into the country. A common response was that the government should consider creating a series of different 30 second ads to be played on planes and at airports (some with a more serious tone). Participants also suggested that public service announcements be developed for television (with a website to reference). Finally, some participants said the government should continue to provide travelers with more detailed information about bringing restricted products into Canada (these participants had seen this type of information with their passports).



APPENDIX A  
SCRIPT FOR 30 SECOND PSA



# Be Aware And Declare Carousel Trunk

VIDEO	AUDIO
1. Open with a shot of a large suitcase trunk rotating into frame on a luggage carousel.	<b>MUSIC:</b> Engaging. Light <b>MAN (voiceover):</b> <i>At airports...</i>
2. The camera pulls out to reveal an exasperated John Candy-like character clutching the handle of the large suitcase trunk.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ He's being dragged along the floor, parallel to the moving luggage carousel.</li> <li>❑ Other passengers waiting for their luggage, jump out of his path.</li> </ul>	
3. Cut to our character exerting all his might against a luggage cart on which the large trunk is on.	<i>...I never lose my luggage...</i>
4. Pull out to reveal the Border Service Inspection Dog sitting by the front of our character's large trunk.	<i>...or lose...</i>
5. Our character looks up at the dog and then at the Border Services Officer. Our character lamely smiles.	<i>...sight of doing the right thing...</i>
6. Cut to our character standing in front of the Border Services Officer. The officer's eyebrows questionably raise as he looks at our character's declaration card.	<i>...when it comes to declaring...</i>
7. The officer pulls out a string of sausage links from the large trunk.	<i>...seemingly harmless food...</i>
8. Dissolve to a chrysanthemum pulled out from the trunk.	<i>...plants...</i>
9. Dissolve to a chicken being pulled out from the trunk.	<i>...animals...</i>
10. Dissolve to a wooden island trinket being pulled out from the suitcase.	<i>...and anything else...</i>
11. Cut to our character letting out an exasperated sigh.	<i>...I might be bringing into Canada.</i>
12. Cut to pan of all the products on the customs' table, and others, pulled out from the trunk including: peacock feathers, feta cheese in liquid, eggs, a sub sandwich filled with meat products, a pair of muddy boots in a clear plastic bag, etc.	<i>...Because we all play a key role in protecting the country against foreign pests, viruses and animal diseases.</i>
13. Cut to our character peering anxiously into his empty trunk. He grimaces.	<i>...Be aware and declare. Believe me, there's more at stake than losing what you've brought back.</i>
14. Dip to black. The Government of Canada word mark appears.	

## Justification

This PSA is primarily intended for use on airplanes. In these times, heavy-handed messages are not appropriate for passengers. Apart from actual movies, much of the shorts and commercials that you do see on board are lighthearted in nature for a reason....to put passengers at ease.

Light humour is mass appealing: The Government of Australia used a humorous approach to deliver a serious message for their campaign on bio-security. They have had excellent response to their in-flight video and Broadcast PSA's, largely in part to this approach. A lighter approach to get a serious message across will resonate better with incoming travelers to Canada. (rather than a message than positions Canada preaching with an iron fist)

While the visual story is humorous and captivating, the message and tone of the narration is not. The viewer will be left with a strong call-to-action.... *Be Aware And Declare*

We have adapted this spot to incorporate key intent of the *Be Aware And Declare* campaign while at the same time, being sensitive to proper airport and customs procedures.

APPENDIX B  
MODERATOR'S GUIDES  
(ENGLISH AND FRENCH)







# TRAVELLERS' BIOSECURITY CAMPAIGN

## FOCUS GROUPS

### MODERATOR'S GUIDE

MARCH 16, 2006

## 1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

- Purpose of the discussion.
- Explanation of format and "ground rules":
  - ◇ Discussions are being audio taped and observed by members of the research team. Your comments will remain confidential.
  - ◇ Please try to speak one at a time.
  - ◇ There aren't any right or wrong answers to the things we'll be talking about — we're just looking for your honest opinions.
  - ◇ It's okay to disagree. Please speak up even if you think you're the only one who feels a certain way about an issue. It's also okay, though, if you change your mind based on things you hear or new information.
  - ◇ Moderator's role: raise issues for discussion, watch for time and make sure everyone has a chance to participate.
- Participant introductions: First name, nature of work, etc.

## 2. AWARENESS OF RESTRICTIONS ON PRODUCTS/ROLE OF TRAVELLERS (10 MINUTES)

- Have any of you travelled to Europe, Asia or the Middle-East in the last three years?
- Did you bring anything back with you?
- Is anyone aware of restrictions on products brought back from other countries?
  - ◇ What have you heard? How clear are you about what you can and cannot bring into the country? Examples?
  - ◇ How serious do you think it is when people do not declare food, plants, animals, and related products (such as sausages) when they enter the country?
  - ◇ How concerned are you about this issue?
- Can you think of any diseases that could be brought into Canada this way?
  - ◇ Do you think individual Canadians such as yourselves can do something to help prevent diseases from entering Canada? What?

## 3. TESTING OF CREATIVE MATERIAL (20 MINUTES)

I am going to take you through a 30 second commercial that would be shown on airplanes. This commercial is aimed at informing Canadians about the types of products they cannot bring into the country after travelling abroad.

MODERATOR SHOWS VIDEO

Moderator goes around the table and probes the following:

- What was your first impression of this commercial?
- How does it make you feel?
- Is messaging clear, understandable/what are key messages?
- Is there enough information provided?
- Does it motivate you to action (call or go to website to find out more information/declare even if it causes delays).

#### 4. WRAP-UP (5 MINUTES)

- Is there anything else the Government of Canada should be doing to inform Canadians about the risks of bringing banned products into the country?
- Do you have any final comments or questions about the issues we have been talking about tonight?

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**



# CAMPAGNE SUR LA BIOSÉCURITÉ POUR LES VOYAGEURS

## DISCUSSIONS DE GROUPE

### GUIDE DU MODÉRATEUR

16 MARS 2006

## 1. INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

- But de l'étude et de la discussion de groupe.
- Explication du format et « règles de base » :
  - ◇ La discussion sera enregistrée sur bande sonore et observées par les membres de l'équipe de recherche (pour mieux comprendre le rapport que je vais soumettre)
  - ◇ Vos propos vont demeurer confidentiels et aucun nom complet ne sera divulgué.
  - ◇ Veuillez intervenir à tour de rôle.
  - ◇ Rappelez-vous qu'il n'y a pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses aux questions que nous allons poser —il s'agit de donner sincèrement votre opinion.
  - ◇ Il est permis d'être en désaccord. Exprimez-vous même si vous vous croyez la seule personne à être d'un certain avis. Il est aussi permis de changer d'opinion après avoir entendu celle des autres ou reçu des explications.
  - ◇ Rôle du modérateur : susciter la discussion, surveiller l'heure et voir à ce que chacun ait la chance de s'exprimer.
- Présentation des participants : prénom, région de résidence, la dernière place donc vous avez voyagé, etc.

## 2. CONNAISSANCE DES INTERDICTIONS TOUCHANT LES PRODUITS/LE ROLE DES VOYAGEURS (10 MINUTES)

- Y en a-t-il parmi vous qui ont voyagé en Europe, en Asie ou au Moyen-Orient au cours des trois dernières années?
- Avez-vous rapporté quoi que ce soit?
- Qui est au courant des interdictions touchant les produits rapportés de l'étranger?
  - ◇ Savez-vous précisément quels sont les produits que vous pouvez ou ne pouvez pas rapporter au Canada?
- Est-ce grave, selon vous, si les gens ne déclarent pas les aliments, végétaux, animaux et produits dérivés (comme les saucissons) qu'ils rapportent au Canada?
  - ◇ Selon vous, pourquoi ces produits sont-ils réglementés?
  - ◇ Est-ce que cette question vous préoccupe?
- Pouvez-vous penser à des maladies qui pourraient pénétrer au Canada de cette façon?
  - ◇ Croyez-vous qu'à titre individuel, les Canadiens peuvent faire quelque chose pour empêcher certaines maladies de pénétrer au Canada?

## 3. MISE A L'ESSAI DU MATERIEL (20 MINUTES)

J'aimerais maintenant montrer une annonce publicitaire qui a été créée pour les passagers d'avions. Il dure 30 secondes et sert à informer les passagers des genres de produits qu'ils ne peuvent pas rapporter au Canada après un voyage à l'étranger.

### LE MODÉRATEUR FAIT ROULER L'ANNONCE (DEUX FOIS)

Le modérateur fait un tour de table et demande à chacun de répondre aux questions suivantes:

- Quelle est votre réaction?
- Quelle impression en retirez-vous?
- Le message général est-il clair, compréhensible/quels sont les principaux messages?
- L'annonce fournit-elle suffisamment de renseignements? Pourriez-vous expliquer votre réponse?

- Est-ce que ça vous incite à agir (téléphoner ou consulter un site Web pour vous renseigner davantage/faire une déclaration même si ça cause du retard)?

#### 4. RÉCAPITULATION (5 MINUTES)

- Y a-t-il quoi que ce soit que le gouvernement du Canada devrait faire pour mieux informer les Canadiens des risques qu'il y aurait à rapporter au Canada certains produits interdits? Le cas échéant, qu'est-ce que le gouvernement devrait faire?
- Auriez-vous des commentaires à ajouter ou des questions sur ce dont nous venons de parler ce soir?

**MERCI BEAUCOUP DE VOTRE PARTICIPATION!**