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Un sommaire des résultats en français est inclus dans ce rapport

Final report

CANADIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE SAFETY OF CANADA'S FOOD SUPPLY



*Prepared for
Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)*

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LES ÉTUDES DE MARCHÉ CRÉATEC +

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Background

- This research was commissioned by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to understand how Canadians view the safety of the country's food supply, to help the Agency:
 - Raise awareness of its roles and responsibilities, and promote the food safety systems that safeguard Canada's food supply.
 - Effectively position roles played by CFIA and the federal government in order to garner greater support for Canada's efforts.
 - Improve its communication and outreach efforts to consumers about food safety issues through multi-media communication products, and collaboration with industry and stakeholder groups who directly interact with consumers.
 - Determine the type and tone of the information to be shared.
 - Update and validate existing quantitative data and inform future public opinion research.

Purpose

- To explore existing perceptions related to the safety of Canada's food supply in four main areas: (1) awareness and knowledge, (2) attitudes and behaviours, (3) trust and concerns, and (4) information and communication.

Methodology

- From November 24 to 29 2007, eight two-hour focus groups of six to eight participants were conducted in four Canadian cities from four different regions of the country with a total of 60 men and women aged 25-59 with a range of occupational, educational and ethnic backgrounds.
 - Two groups each were held in Calgary, Toronto, Halifax (English) and Montreal (French). In each location, one group was very concerned about the safety of the food supply and the other was not.

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- Participants were recruited randomly by Createc, according to a client-approved recruitment screener created in both official languages, which stipulated, among other things, that all respondents were responsible for grocery shopping, and all included red meat in their diet. At least some in each group had children living at home.
 - All respondents received an incentive payment of \$50 at the end of their session.
 - Discussions in all eight groups generally followed the client-approved Discussion Guide.
 - The Interactive Workshop Method was used for the first half of each session. In each group, participants formed teams of two who collaborated on what they knew, believed and had heard about food safety in Canada (whether true or false), and what they wondered. Each team presented their deliberations to the group for discussion. With this method, a vast amount of unprompted information was generated by a total of 30 teams.

Limitations

- Note that qualitative research by nature is exploratory and cannot be extrapolated to any type of market or audience, without further validation. At best, qualitative research explores the range of views, and provides understanding of why such views exist.
 - The insights and suggestions obtained from the main shoppers who willingly participated in our study added considerable value to our understanding about their perceptions of and confidence in the safety of Canada's food supply.
 - However, the reader is advised that any statement non-factual in nature constitutes only current opinion, which is subject to change.
- Consequently, as in all qualitative research, and in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of the Marketing Research Intelligence Association (MRIA), findings may or may not be representative of the target population at large.

1.2 OVERVIEW

- Overall, research findings were quite consistent in all eight groups, across language, ethnicity, region, and confidence level.
- Food safety was and continues to be a topic of strong interest to participants, who demonstrated a strong motivation to understand various aspects. However, food safety issues were generally not top-of-mind, unless triggered by a recall or event.
- Overall, confidence in the safety of Canada's food supply was moderate and precarious.

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- Long-term effects from things like pesticides, chemicals, GMO, hormones in meat and dairy products, and the lingering worries about the impact of mad cow disease on the meat supply were a much greater concern than foodborne illness or food poisoning, which was considered unpleasant but short-term and low risk.
 - Besides cancer and serious food allergies, no other medical conditions or diseases—such as diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol—were discussed in relation to food safety. Some did mention salt and trans fats, salmonella, and E. coli, but there was much more concern about chemicals, antibiotics, growth hormones and pesticides.
 - The traditional concerns about food safety appear to have given place to newer unknown, long-term and more threatening issues.
 - When shopping, people reported increasing tendencies to read labels and look for reassurances with regard to both packaged and fresh foods. Those affected by food allergies made an even more stringent effort at label reading at point of purchase.
 - Because of concerns about the use of pesticides, antibiotic residues, colouring, etc., there was a strong interest in organic foods, perceived by many to be healthier because of safer growing and production practices.
 - However, many also questioned organic labelling as to what it meant, how monitored it was, how standards were established and by whom.
 - Participants in all groups were very willing to adopt safe food-handling practices at home, and some felt good that they were already doing this. Others wanted reassurance that they were on the right track.
 - People in this study, including those from Quebec, generally felt confident that the Canadian government was doing its job with regard to regulations and standards. They also generally believed Canadian standards are high.
 - However, participants demonstrated low awareness of what regulations exist, if and/or how they are complied with, and who is responsible for what, in terms of jurisdiction. For example, some Calgary people knew that the municipality was responsible for restaurant inspections, and people in Toronto knew the province was responsible for water safety, but this is likely because both issues were headlined due to safety and health issues.
 - Participants did not particularly care to know the specifics about regulations per se.
 - However, they did seem to care a lot and worry about inspection and compliance, on a local, regional, national and international level. Participants expressed many questions, doubts and uncertainties about the integrity of inspectors and the efficiency of the current food inspection system.

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- Participants said they relied on a wide range of media-generated information sources, including TV, Internet, newspapers, and radio, plus word-of-mouth from friends and family. However, there was little to no recall of specific information sources or information providers, whether Internet-based, printed, governmental or industry related. In addition, most food shoppers in the study did not seem to actively look for information on food safety, despite the seriousness of many of their concerns.
 - Generally, people seemed to trust the Canadian government to inform them about relevant food safety issues, with some mention of Health Canada as a reliable source.
 - In fact, there was a high degree of trust when it came to food alerts and/or recalls. People felt that by the time a public message was required, all doubts about the level of seriousness had been erased.
 - However, food recalls and/or alerts generally evoked conflicting reactions.
 - On the one hand, participants were reassured that the government was diligent, and glad to learn the information so they could discard or avoid purchasing the particular food item.
 - On the other hand, participants also admitted they wondered about the conditions which allowed an unsafe food item to enter the food supply chain, and became more anxious about the safety of the food supply in general.

1.3 KEY FINDINGS

1.3.1 PERCEIVED ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

Standards and regulations

- The general impression of Canadian standards and regulations was favourable.
- Interest in learning the legalities of standards and regulations was low.
- Consumers demonstrated a very low confidence in the enforcement of regulations, especially at the local level.
- The enforcement of standards and regulations occupied the lion's share of consumer questions, doubts and uncertainties.

Government responsibilities

- Consumers were unclear about who does what.
- People had low awareness about what the government does and how well the job is being done—but they were hopeful.

Government priorities

- A perception gap could be seen to exist between food safety as a top ranking government priority and low awareness about what the government actually does.
- Consumers expected their government to focus on enforcement of standards and regulations, food labelling, and consumer education—all of which were seen to reflect the importance government gives to food safety.

Crisis management—food recalls/alerts

- Food recalls or alerts evoked conflicting feelings of anxiety and confidence.
- Consumers demonstrated a high awareness of past food recalls but had difficulty remembering any details of what happened and why—to them, food recalls seemed to be becoming too commonplace.
- People were very aware that bacterial contamination could affect meat and produce—so much so that E. coli and salmonella have now become familiar terms in the consumer vocabulary, although the two were often confused.
- Pet food recalls were considered a family affair.

Government credibility

- While consumers trusted what the government said when there was a food recall or alert, this should not be taken for granted. Trust in government is at risk each time there is a food recall.

Made in Canada label

- Learning about the standards of the *Made in Canada* label increased consumer anxiety.
- The *Made in Canada* label had low credibility and was questioned because it was thought to guarantee nothing and was worrisome to consumers.

Confidence in the food supply

- The general impression of food safety in Canada was favourable but fragile. While the safety of the food supply was thought to fall within acceptable limits, people indicated that anxiety was just below the surface ready to quickly emerge.
- Reasons for being less confident today were said to have increased from a few years ago.
- The discussion about enforcement of standards and regulations directly impacted feelings of confidence, in a negative way.
- Consumers said they believed the food industry was not doing its share to ensure food was safe.

1.3.2 FOOD SAFETY CONCERNS

General food labelling

- While people indicated that food label reading was on the rise, food labels were a confusing source of information for consumers. Often misunderstood, they created frustration and mistrust.
- Chemicals, additives and shelf-life extending agents (preservatives and packaging) were perceived as serious health threats.
- The truth of expiry dates was questioned.
- Issues discussed: Uneasiness about incomplete or misleading food labels with regard to chemicals, additives, preservatives, allergenic components, general nutritional truth, and expiry dates in all types of foods.

Meat and poultry

- Consumers believed meat and poultry contained harmful and highly hazardous substances added by the food industry.
- Consumers had conflicting feelings about eating the meat and poultry they bought at retail outlets and restaurants.
- The perceived health risks of meat and poultry were long term, unknown and scary, while short term risks were seen as acceptable, for now.
- Mad cow disease was still strongly imprinted on consumers' minds.

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- Issues discussed: Uncertainty about eating meat and poultry due to steroids, hormones, additives and antibiotic use, and what these animals were being fed, evidenced by mad cow disease.

Organic food labelling

- Organic food evoked favourable first impressions because they were not supposed to contain the hazardous substances that the food industry normally adds.
- Consumers were unclear about what the organic label really means because it is poorly regulated and potentially misleading.
- Issues discussed: Considerable confusion re organic vs. natural foods.

Safety inspections

- Food inspections directly impacted consumer confidence in food, mainly in a negative way.
- Doubts associated with the integrity of inspectors and the inspection system were higher for the food service sector, followed closely by the food industry as a whole.
- Pet food and toy recalls significantly increased consumer anxiety.
- Consumers had little awareness about who was responsible for food inspection and how it is done.
- Food inspection methods were one of the few areas of government administration that people expressed interested in learning about—mainly for reassurance.
- Issues discussed: Strong doubts emerged about the effectiveness and integrity of inspections in all areas—from the farm to processing plants, retail and restaurant levels—and at all levels—local, regional, national and international—the latter fuelled by recent toy and pet food recalls.

Imported food

- Overall, consumers had low confidence in imported food, which was viewed as a major threat to the safety of the food supply.
- People saw globalization as a cause of decreasing food quality.
- Imported food was often synonymous with food from third-world countries.
- Canada looked good when compared with standards from other countries.

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- Imports from the United States, Europe, Russia and Commonwealth countries were barely mentioned.
 - Issues discussed: Imported food carried a much higher perceived risk compared to domestic food because most other countries were thought to be less regulated than Canada.

Food industry and food service sector practices

- Consumers realized that food contamination could occur at every link in the food supply chain, but were not alarmed by that.
- Food contamination was closely associated with hygiene practices.
- People appeared to have an increasing mistrust of large corporations.
- Issues discussed: Scepticism and mistrust about the processing and unhygienic handling practices at plants, restaurants, fast food and retail outlets.

Mercury in fish and seafood

- Worries about mercury levels, mainly in salmon and tuna, were based on fuzzy information, including the farmed vs. wild debate.
- Consumers shared few spontaneous concerns related to the safety of fish.
- Issues discussed: Fish could have detrimental health effects.

Genetically modified food

- There was unanimous concern about and negative impressions of biotechnology products.
- Consumers included GMO as part of food safety because of its unknown cumulative impact.
- Issues discussed: There was uncertainty due to the unknown cumulative effects on health and ultimately on the food supply.

Plastics and packaging

- A high level of anxiety emerged about plastics and food containers—people were puzzled and uncertain about what to do.
- Packaging standards and regulations were seen to have not kept pace with the times.

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- Issues discussed: There was increasing cancer-related worry about the leaching of harmful chemicals into water, using plastics in microwave ovens, or the impact on foods in plastic containers.

Water contamination

- The Walkerton incident left a legacy of worry about water consumption, as did produce recalls due to flawed irrigation methods.
- Water and beverages were very much a part of food safety in the minds of consumers.
- Issues discussed: The safety of the water supply was a concern in terms of drinking, food preparation and irrigation.

Sugar substitutes

- Disease-causing substitutes were a growing issue due to the current public health focus on weight and obesity.
- Issues discussed: Aspartame was seen to be a carcinogen.

1.3.3 FOOD HANDLING AT HOME

- Low level risks were generally associated with foodborne illness.
- Food poisoning was seen to have mainly short-term effects, compared with the cumulative damages from chemicals, pesticides, etc.
- Consumers seemed to have a good understanding of causes and symptoms of foodborne illness, and a good working knowledge of food-handling practices at home.
- Self-protection efforts fell into five main categories: (1) washing hands and food, (2) cleaning utensils and surfaces, (3) cooking and safe storage, (4) respect for expiry dates, and (5) selective shopping.
- People still wanted more information and reassurance that they are on the right track.

1.3.4 COMMUNICATION ISSUES

- People relied heavily on the mass media for information, and used the Internet as a supplement.
- Consumers had very low awareness or recall of specific Website resources on food safety, or any printed materials.
- People increasingly tended to read labels, but did not find much satisfactory or understandable information they could use.
- People were willing to register for automatic email notification of alerts and/or recalls, but no one was receptive to automated phone messages. Note that participants were not made aware that such phone messages were aimed mainly at people who suffered with allergies.

1.4 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

General

- Food safety was seen as a highly relevant and important personal issue for Canadian consumers, dominated by questions, doubts, uncertainties and sometimes fears.
- It is clear that any communication or action from the government in this area would get keen attention from the public. However, because confidence is precarious, feelings of safety can rapidly shift into a credibility crisis. Consequently, a continuous flow of communication is required to maintain trust in government.
- How people view government action on regulations enforcement, integrity of inspectors, food labels, packaging standards, chemicals and GMOs has a direct correlation with their level of confidence, even more than its action to prevent bacterial contamination.
- Apart from recalls or alerts, people do not actively look for information mainly because:
 - They assume food in Canada is safe enough or risks fall within acceptable limits (unless otherwise advised by media).
 - Their concerns about long-term cumulative effects are dormant and not top-of-mind.
 - They do not know where accurate, trustworthy and relevant information is available, who provides it and how to gain access.

Proactive Information

- If there is one overriding message for communications coming out of this study, it is that consumers are receptive to food safety information that is pushed proactively, and that information should be pushed if the government wants to maintain a continuous flow of communication.
- Not doing this and only communicating when there is a problem (i.e., a food alert or recall) gives the impression that the government is reacting and therefore consumer confidence is more at risk.
- The tone of information and content might benefit from taking into account how consumers currently connect with food safety.

Consumer State of Mind

- Consumer orientations to food safety seem to fall along a continuum, whose polar opposites range between avoidance of disease on the one end to achieving and maintaining optimum health on the other.
 - At the avoidance of disease end, people's mindset focuses first on chemicals introduced by the food and farming industries, including mad cow, GMOs, fertilizers, pesticides, additives, antibiotics, preservatives, substitutes, plastics and packaging, etc., and then on bacterial contamination.
 - At the achieving and maintaining optimum health end, people's mindset focuses on organic, locally-produced and non-imported foods, whose labels indicate they are free from various substances.
- If we can imagine the continuum as a teeter-totter, right now people are more or less lumped at the avoidance end, mainly due to their concerns with chemicals.
 - Therefore messaging, whenever possible, should include considerations related to chemicals, not only bacteria. Food safety in Canada today mainly means free from chemicals.

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1. SOMMAIRE DES RÉSULTATS

1.1 CONTEXTE, OBJECTIF ET MÉTHODOLOGIE

Contexte

- Cette recherche a été commandée par l'Agence canadienne d'inspection des aliments (ACIA) afin de comprendre comment les Canadiens perçoivent la salubrité des aliments vendus au pays et aider l'Agence à :
 - Rehausser le niveau de connaissance de ses rôles et responsabilités, et promouvoir des systèmes de salubrité alimentaire qui protègent les aliments vendus au Canada.
 - Bien camper les rôles joués par l'ACIA et le gouvernement fédéral afin de susciter un plus grand soutien pour les efforts du Canada.
 - Améliorer sa communication et ses efforts pour se rapprocher des consommateurs sur les questions liées à la salubrité alimentaire par l'entremise de produits de communication multimédia, et d'une collaboration avec l'industrie et les groupes d'intervenants qui interagissent directement avec les consommateurs.
 - Déterminer le type et le ton de l'information à être partagée.
 - Actualiser et valider des données quantitatives existantes, et orienter les recherches futures sur l'opinion publique.

Objectif

- Explorer les perceptions existantes reliées à la salubrité des aliments vendus au Canada dans quatre grands domaines : (1) connaissance et savoir, (2) attitudes et comportements, (3) confiance et préoccupations et (4) information et communication.

Méthodologie

- Du 24 au 29 novembre 2007, huit focus groupes d'une durée de 2 heures chacun, réunissant de six à huit participants, ont été menés dans quatre villes canadiennes et autant de régions du pays, soit avec un total de 60 hommes et femmes âgés de 25 à 59 ans, représentant diverses professions, degrés de scolarité et origines ethniques.

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- Deux groupes ont été tenus dans chacune des villes de Calgary, Toronto, Halifax (en anglais) et de Montréal (en français). Dans chaque ville, un groupe se caractérisait par un grand souci quant à la salubrité des aliments vendus, tandis que l'autre l'était moins.
 - Les participants ont été recrutés au hasard par Créatec à l'aide d'un questionnaire de recrutement bilingue approuvé par le client qui assurait, entre autres choses, que tous les participants soient en charge des achats alimentaires de leur foyer et que la viande rouge fasse partie de leur régime alimentaire. Dans chaque groupe, il y avait au moins quelques participants avec des enfants à charge.
 - Tous les répondants ont reçu la somme incitative de 50 \$ à la fin de leur session, en guise de remerciement.
 - Les discussions dans les huit groupes se sont généralement déroulées selon le guide de discussion approuvé par le client.
 - La méthode des ateliers interactifs a été utilisée au cours de la première moitié de chaque session. C'est ainsi que dans chaque groupe les participants ont formé des équipes de deux et ont échangé sur ce qu'ils savaient, croyaient et avaient entendu dire à propos de la salubrité des aliments au Canada (que ce soit vrai ou faux) et sur ce qu'ils se demandaient. Chaque équipe a présenté ses délibérations au groupe pour alimenter la discussion. Grâce à cette méthode, une grande quantité d'informations spontanées a été générée par un ensemble de 30 équipes.

Limites

- On notera que la recherche qualitative est par nature exploratoire et qu'on ne peut la généraliser à un marché ou une audience particulière, sans être davantage validée en profondeur. Au mieux, la recherche qualitative explore l'éventail des points de vue et permet de comprendre pourquoi de tels points de vue existent.
 - Les révélations et les suggestions obtenues des principaux acheteurs d'aliments qui ont bien voulu participer à notre étude ont considérablement rehaussé notre compréhension de leurs perceptions et de leur confiance dans la salubrité des aliments vendus au Canada.
 - Toutefois, le lecteur est avisé que toute affirmation de nature non factuelle n'est qu'une opinion du moment sujette au changement.
- Conséquemment, comme c'est le cas pour toute recherche qualitative, et en accord avec le Code d'éthique et les normes de l'Association de la recherche et de l'intelligence marketing (ARIM), les résultats peuvent ou non être représentatifs de la population visée dans son ensemble.

1.2 VUE D'ENSEMBLE

- Globalement, les résultats de la recherche ont été très constants dans les huit groupes, que ce soit au chapitre de la langue, de l'ethnicité, de la région ou du niveau de confiance.
- La salubrité des aliments était et continue d'être un sujet de grand intérêt pour les participants qui ont démontré une grande motivation à en comprendre les divers aspects. Cependant, les questions liées à la salubrité des aliments ne venaient généralement pas au premier rang de leurs préoccupations spontanées, à moins qu'il n'y ait un rappel ou un événement déclencheur.
- Dans l'ensemble, la confiance dans la salubrité des aliments vendus au Canada était modérée et fragile.
- Les effets à long terme de facteurs comme les pesticides, les produits chimiques, les OGM, les hormones dans la viande et les produits laitiers, et la persistance des inquiétudes quant à l'impact de la maladie de la vache folle sur l'approvisionnement en viande préoccupaient bien davantage que les intoxications d'origine alimentaire, considérées comme des désagréments de courte durée et de faible risque.
- Outre le cancer et les allergies alimentaires graves, aucune autre condition médicale ou maladie – que ce soit le diabète, une maladie cardiaque, un taux élevé en cholestérol – ont été discutées en lien avec la salubrité alimentaire. Certains participants ont mentionné le sel et les gras trans, la salmonelle et la E. coli mais il y avait beaucoup plus d'inquiétude au sujet des produits chimiques, des antibiotiques, des hormones de croissance et des pesticides.
 - Les préoccupations traditionnelles sur la salubrité des aliments semblent avoir laissé la place à de nouveaux enjeux, inconnus, à long terme et plus menaçants.
- Les gens ont rapporté une tendance grandissante à lire les étiquettes et à rechercher des informations rassurantes lorsqu'ils magasinent des aliments, frais ou emballés. Ceux qui sont affectés par une allergie alimentaire ont dit déployer un effort encore plus rigoureux lorsqu'ils lisent les étiquettes sur les lieux d'achat.
- En raison des préoccupations portant sur l'utilisation des pesticides, les résidus d'antibiotiques, les colorants, etc., il y avait un intérêt marqué pour les aliments biologiques, perçus par beaucoup comme meilleurs pour la santé à cause des pratiques de production et de croissance plus sécuritaires.
 - Toutefois, plusieurs se sont également questionnés sur l'étiquetage des produits biologiques, à savoir ce qu'il signifiait, de quelle manière il était surveillé, comment et qui établissait les normes.
- Les participants de tous les groupes étaient tout à fait disposés à adopter des pratiques sécuritaires pour manipuler les aliments à la maison, et certains étaient fiers de les mettre déjà en pratique. D'autres souhaitaient qu'on les rassure d'être sur la bonne voie.

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- Les participants à cette étude, y compris ceux du Québec, étaient généralement confiants que le gouvernement canadien faisait son travail en ce qui concerne les règlements et les normes. Généralement, ils étaient aussi d'avis que les normes canadiennes étaient élevées.
 - Cependant, les participants ont démontré une faible connaissance de la réglementation existante, si elle était respectée et comment, et de qui s'occupait de quoi en termes de juridiction. Par exemple, quelques participants de Calgary savaient que la municipalité avait la responsabilité d'inspecter les restaurants et à Toronto, certains participants savaient que la province était responsable de la salubrité de l'eau mais cette connaissance provenait probablement de la couverture médiatique de ces sujets suite à l'impact qu'ils ont eu sur la salubrité et la santé.
 - Les participants n'étaient pas particulièrement intéressés à en savoir davantage sur les règlements en tant que tels.
 - Par contre, ils semblaient vraiment très curieux et inquiets à propos d'inspection et de conformité au niveau local, régional, national et international. Les participants ont exprimé de nombreuses questions, des doutes et des incertitudes quant à l'intégrité des inspecteurs et l'efficacité du système actuel d'inspection des aliments.
 - Les participants ont dit qu'ils se fiaient sur un vaste éventail de sources d'information produites par les médias, comme la télévision, l'Internet, les journaux et la radio, en plus du bouche à oreille provenant des amis et de la famille. Cependant, il y a eu peu ou pas de rappel de fournisseurs ou de sources précises d'information, qu'elles soient sur Internet, de nature imprimée, gouvernementale ou reliées à l'industrie. De plus, la plupart des responsables des achats alimentaires qui ont participé à l'étude ne semblaient pas rechercher activement de l'information sur la salubrité des aliments, malgré le sérieux de plusieurs de leurs préoccupations.
 - En général, les participants semblaient faire confiance au gouvernement canadien pour les tenir au courant des questions touchant la salubrité des aliments, et Santé Canada a été mentionné à quelques reprises comme étant une source fiable.
 - En fait, le niveau de confiance était élevé dans les cas d'avertissements et/ou de rappels d'aliments. Les participants avaient le sentiment que dès qu'un message public était devenu nécessaire, il n'y avait plus de doutes sur le niveau de gravité.
 - Toutefois, les rappels et/ou les alertes d'aliments suscitaient généralement des réactions contradictoires.
 - D'une part, les participants étaient rassurés par la diligence du gouvernement et heureux d'avoir l'information qui leur permettait d'éviter d'acheter ou d'écarter un produit alimentaire particulier.
 - D'autre part, les participants ont également admis qu'ils se questionnaient sur les conditions qui ont permis à un produit alimentaire insalubre d'entrer dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire et devenaient plus inquiets à propos de la salubrité générale des aliments.

1.3 PRINCIPAUX RÉSULTATS

1.3.1 RÔLE PERÇU DU GOUVERNEMENT

Normes et règlements

- L'impression générale des normes et de la réglementation canadienne était favorable.
- L'intérêt pour connaître les aspects légaux des normes et règlements était faible.
- Les consommateurs ont démontré une très faible confiance dans la mise en application des règlements, particulièrement au niveau local.
- La mise en application des normes et des règlements accaparait la plus grande part des questions, doutes et incertitudes des consommateurs.

Responsabilités du gouvernement

- Les consommateurs étaient confus à propos de qui fait quoi.
- Les participants avaient une faible connaissance de ce que le gouvernement fait et dans quelle mesure son travail était bien fait, mais ils étaient pleins d'espoir.

Priorités du gouvernement

- Un déséquilibre perceptuel semble exister entre d'une part la salubrité des aliments en tant que grande priorité gouvernementale et d'autre part, la faible connaissance de ce que le gouvernement fait actuellement.
- Les consommateurs s'attendaient à ce que leur gouvernement se concentre sur la mise en application des normes et des règlements, sur l'étiquetage des aliments et sur l'éducation des consommateurs, tous des domaines qui leur signalaient si le gouvernement accorde de l'importance à la salubrité des aliments.

Gestion de crise – rappels/alertes d'aliments

- Les alertes ou les rappels d'aliments ont suscité des sentiments contradictoires d'anxiété et de confiance.
- Les consommateurs ont démontré qu'ils connaissaient bien les aliments ayant fait l'objet d'un rappel dans le passé mais avaient de la difficulté à se souvenir de détails sur ce qui s'était passé et pourquoi – pour eux, les rappels d'aliments semblaient devenir monnaie courante.

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- Les gens étaient très conscients que la viande et les produits maraîchers pouvaient être contaminés par des bactéries, à tel point que E. coli et la salmonelle semblent désormais devenus des termes familiers du vocabulaire du consommateur, même si ces deux micro-organismes étaient souvent confondus.
 - Les rappels d'aliments pour animaux de compagnie étaient considérés comme un événement familial.

Crédibilité du gouvernement

- Bien que les consommateurs ont eu confiance dans ce que le gouvernement a dit lorsqu'il y a eu un rappel ou une alerte d'aliments, cette confiance ne devrait pas être prise pour acquise. La confiance envers le gouvernement est mise à l'épreuve chaque fois qu'il y a un rappel d'aliments.

L'étiquette Fait au Canada

- En apprendre davantage sur les normes qui régissent l'étiquette *Fait au Canada* augmentait l'anxiété du consommateur.
- L'étiquette *Fait au Canada* avait peu de crédibilité et soulevait des questions parce qu'on ne pensait pas qu'elle était garante de quoi que ce soit et inquiétait les consommateurs.

Confiance dans l'approvisionnement des aliments

- L'impression générale sur la salubrité des aliments au Canada était favorable mais fragile. Alors qu'on pensait que la salubrité de l'approvisionnement alimentaire se situait à l'intérieur de limites acceptables, les participants révélaient que leur anxiété n'était pas très loin, prête à se manifester rapidement.
- Selon ce qu'ont dit les participants, on a dénoté que les raisons d'être moins confiants aujourd'hui ont augmenté par rapport à il y a quelques années.
- Le sujet de la mise en application des normes et règlements avait un retentissement direct et négatif sur le sentiment de confiance.
- Les consommateurs ne croyaient pas que l'industrie alimentaire faisait sa part pour s'assurer que les aliments étaient salubres.

1.3.2 PRÉOCCUPATIONS RELATIVES À LA SALUBRITÉ DES ALIMENTS

Étiquetage des aliments

- Bien que les participants nous aient signalé qu'ils avaient davantage tendance à lire les étiquettes des aliments, celles-ci étaient néanmoins une source d'informations confuses pour les consommateurs. Souvent mal comprises, elles engendraient de la frustration et de la méfiance.
- Les produits chimiques, les additifs ainsi que les agents qui prolongent la durée de vie en étagère (agents de conservation et emballages) étaient perçus comme des menaces sérieuses pour la santé.
- La véracité des dates d'expiration soulevait des questions.
- Questions abordées : malaise suscité par des étiquettes d'aliments incomplètes ou trompeuses concernant les produits chimiques, les additifs, les agents de conservation, les composantes allergènes, la valeur nutritive réelle ainsi que les dates d'expiration de tous les types d'aliments.

Viande et volaille

- Les consommateurs étaient d'avis que l'industrie alimentaire ajoutait à la viande et à la volaille des substances nuisibles et hautement dangereuses.
- Les consommateurs avaient des sentiments contradictoires envers la consommation de la viande et de la volaille qu'ils achetaient dans les magasins de vente au détail et dans les restaurants.
- Les risques perçus pour la santé de consommer de la viande et de la volaille étaient à long terme, inconnus et faisaient peur, alors que les risques à court terme étaient considérés comme acceptables, pour le moment.
- La maladie de la vache folle était encore fortement gravée dans l'esprit des consommateurs.
- Questions abordées : incertitude associée à la consommation de viande et de volaille en raison de l'usage de stéroïdes, d'hormones, d'additifs et d'antibiotiques, et de la nourriture donnée aux animaux, ce que la maladie de la vache folle confirmait.

Étiquetage des aliments biologiques

- Les aliments biologiques évoquaient en premier lieu des impressions favorables parce qu'ils ne sont pas supposés contenir les substances dangereuses que l'industrie alimentaire ajoute habituellement.

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- Les consommateurs n'étaient pas certains de ce que l'étiquette biologique voulait vraiment dire parce que sa réglementation est déficiente et potentiellement trompeuse.
 - Questions abordées : grande confusion entre le terme biologique et aliments naturels.

Inspections préventives

- Les inspections des aliments avaient un impact direct sur la confiance des consommateurs dans les produits alimentaires, essentiellement de manière négative.
- Les doutes associés à l'intégrité des inspecteurs et au système général d'inspection étaient plus prononcés dans le cas du secteur des services alimentaires, suivi de près par l'industrie alimentaire dans son ensemble.
- Les rappels d'aliments pour animaux de compagnie et de jouets ont significativement augmenté l'anxiété des consommateurs.
- Les consommateurs avaient une faible connaissance de qui était responsable de l'inspection des aliments et comment celle-ci était effectuée.
- Les méthodes d'inspection des aliments étaient l'un des rares domaines de l'administration gouvernementale sur lesquels les participants ont exprimé de l'intérêt à en savoir davantage, principalement pour se rassurer.
- Questions abordées : de forts doutes sont ressortis concernant l'efficacité et l'intégrité des inspections à tous les niveaux – allant de la ferme, aux usines de transformation, à la vente au détail et à la restauration – et à tous les paliers – local, régional et international – ceux-ci étant alimentés par les rappels récents de jouets et d'aliments pour animaux de compagnie.

Aliments importés

- Dans l'ensemble, les consommateurs n'étaient pas très confiants envers les aliments importés qu'ils considéraient comme une grande menace à la sécurité d'approvisionnement des aliments.
- Les participants voyaient la mondialisation comme étant un facteur responsable de la baisse de la qualité des aliments.
- Les aliments importés étaient souvent synonymes d'aliments provenant des pays du tiers-monde.
- Comparativement aux normes des autres pays, le Canada ressortait favorablement.
- Les importations en provenance des États-Unis, de l'Europe, de la Russie et des pays du Commonwealth n'ont pratiquement jamais été mentionnées.

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- Questions abordées : un risque beaucoup plus grand associé aux aliments importés comparativement aux aliments produits au pays parce que la plupart des autres pays étaient perçus comme moins réglementés que le Canada.

Les pratiques de l'industrie alimentaire et du secteur des services alimentaires

- Les consommateurs avaient conscience que la contamination alimentaire pouvait survenir à n'importe quelle étape de la chaîne de l'approvisionnement alimentaire, mais n'étaient pas alarmés par cette possibilité.
- La contamination alimentaire était étroitement associée aux pratiques en matière d'hygiène.
- Les participants paraissaient avoir une méfiance grandissante envers les grandes entreprises.
- Questions abordées : doute et méfiance envers l'insalubrité des processus de production et des façons de manipuler dans les usines, les restaurants, les services de repas-rapide et les magasins de vente au détail.

Le mercure dans le poisson et les fruits de mer

- Les préoccupations au sujet des niveaux de mercure, principalement dans le saumon et le thon, étaient fondées sur des informations vagues, comprenant le débat sur le poisson d'élevage vs capturé à l'état sauvage.
- Les consommateurs ont échangé peu de préoccupations liées à la salubrité du poisson.
- Questions abordées : le poisson pourrait avoir des effets dommageables sur la santé.

Aliments modifiés génétiquement

- Il y avait une inquiétude généralisée et des impressions négatives au sujet des produits issus de la biotechnologie.
- Les consommateurs ont inclus les OGM à l'intérieur du thème de la salubrité des aliments à cause de l'inconnu entourant leur impact cumulatif.
- Questions discutées : il y a eu de l'incertitude due à l'inconnu entourant leurs effets cumulatifs sur la santé et en dernier ressort, sur l'approvisionnement alimentaire.

Matières plastiques et emballages

- Un haut niveau d'anxiété est ressorti au sujet des matières plastiques et des contenants pour aliments – les participants étant perplexes et incertains quant à ce qu'il faut faire.
- Les normes et règlements s'appliquant aux emballages étaient perçus comme dépassés, n'ayant pas évolué avec le temps.
- Questions discutées : inquiétude grandissante face au cancer à cause des fuites de produits chimiques nocifs dans l'eau, de l'utilisation de matières plastiques dans les fours à micro-ondes ou de l'impact des contenants de plastique sur les aliments.

Contamination de l'eau

- L'incident de Walkerton a laissé son lot d'inquiétudes lorsqu'il est question de consommation d'eau, comme l'ont fait les rappels de produits maraîchers dus à des méthodes d'irrigation déficientes.
- Dans l'esprit des consommateurs, l'eau et les boissons faisaient partie intégrante du thème de la salubrité des aliments.
- Questions abordées : la salubrité des sources d'eau était une inquiétude qu'on associait à la consommation d'eau potable, à la préparation des aliments et à l'irrigation.

Succédanés du sucre

- Les substituts causant des maladies représentaient une préoccupation grandissante à cause de l'accent mis actuellement sur la santé publique relativement au poids et à l'obésité.
- Questions abordées : l'aspartame était perçu comme un agent cancérigène.

1.3.3 MANIPULATION DES ALIMENTS À LA MAISON

- Un faible niveau de risque était généralement associé à l'intoxication alimentaire.
- L'intoxication alimentaire était perçue comme causant des effets principalement à court terme, comparativement aux dommages cumulatifs provenant des produits chimiques, des pesticides, etc.
- Les consommateurs semblaient avoir une bonne compréhension des causes et des symptômes de l'intoxication alimentaire ainsi qu'une bonne connaissance des pratiques adéquates pour manipuler les aliments à la maison.

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- Les efforts pour se protéger étaient regroupés en cinq grandes catégories : (1) le lavage des mains et des aliments, (2) le nettoyage des ustensiles et des surfaces, (3) la cuisson et l'entreposage sécuritaire, (4) le respect des dates de péremption et (5) les achats sélectifs.
 - Les participants voulaient plus d'informations et souhaitaient qu'on les rassure d'être sur la bonne voie.

1.3.4 ENJEUX DE COMMUNICATION

- Les participants comptaient beaucoup sur les médias pour les informer et utilisaient l'Internet comme un complément.
- En matière de salubrité des aliments, les consommateurs avaient une très faible connaissance ou se rappelaient très peu de ressources particulières sur le Web ou de matériel imprimé quelconque.
- Les participants avaient de plus en plus tendance à lire les étiquettes mais ils n'y trouvaient pas beaucoup d'informations satisfaisantes ou compréhensibles qu'ils pouvaient utiliser.
- Les participants étaient prêts à s'inscrire à un service de notification automatique par courriel afin d'être informés sur des alertes et/ou des rappels mais personne n'était réceptif à recevoir des messages téléphoniques automatisés. Toutefois, les participants n'avaient pas été informés que de tels messages téléphoniques étaient surtout destinés aux personnes souffrant d'allergies.

1.4 CONCLUSION

Globalement

- La salubrité des aliments était considérée comme un sujet d'une grande pertinence personnelle pour les consommateurs canadiens, constituée principalement d'interrogations, de doutes, d'incertitudes et parfois de craintes.
- Il est clair que toute communication ou action du gouvernement dans ce domaine recevrait une grande attention de la part du public. Cependant, parce que la confiance est précaire, les sentiments de sécurité peuvent rapidement faire place à une crise de crédibilité. En conséquence, un flux continu de communication est nécessaire pour maintenir la confiance dans le gouvernement.
- La manière dont les gens perçoivent l'action gouvernementale relative à la mise en application des règlements, l'intégrité des inspecteurs, l'étiquetage des aliments, les normes sur les emballages, les produits chimiques et les OGM a une influence directe sur leur niveau de confiance, encore plus que son action visant à prévenir la contamination par des agents pathogènes.

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- En dehors des rappels ou des alertes, les gens ne recherchent pas activement de l'information principalement parce que :
 - Ils supposent qu'au Canada, les aliments sont assez sécuritaires ou que les risques se situent à l'intérieur de limites acceptables (sauf si avis contraire des médias).
 - Leurs préoccupations au sujet des effets cumulatifs à long terme sont à l'état latent et non manifestement présentes à leur esprit.
 - Ils ne savent pas où trouver de l'information disponible qui soit exacte, fiable et pertinente, ni qui offre ce service ou la façon d'y accéder.

Communication proactive

- Le grand message pour les communications qui ressort de cette étude est que les consommateurs sont réceptifs à ce que de l'information sur la salubrité des aliments soit 'poussée' vers eux de manière proactive, et que cette information devrait être 'poussée' si le gouvernement veut entretenir un flux continu de communication.
- Si cela n'était pas fait, et qu'il n'y avait communication qu'en cas de problème (soit lors d'une alerte ou d'un rappel d'aliments), le gouvernement pourrait donner l'impression qu'il ne fait que réagir, ce qui est susceptible de mettre à risque la confiance des consommateurs.
- Le ton et le contenu des communications gagneraient à prendre en compte les liens que les consommateurs font avec le thème de la salubrité des aliments.

État d'esprit des consommateurs

- Les considérations des consommateurs en matière de salubrité des aliments semblent s'inscrire dans un continuum aux pôles opposés, allant du pôle de l'évitement de la maladie, au pôle de l'atteinte et du maintien d'une bonne santé.
 - Au pôle de l'évitement de la maladie, la pensée des gens se concentre d'abord sur les produits chimiques que l'industrie alimentaire et agricole introduit, y compris la vache folle, les OGM, les engrais, les pesticides, les additifs, les antibiotiques, les agents de conservation, les substituts, les matières plastiques et les emballages, etc., et ensuite sur la contamination bactérienne.
 - Au pôle de l'atteinte et du maintien d'une bonne santé, la pensée des gens se concentre sur le biologique, les aliments produits localement et non importés, dont l'étiquetage indique qu'ils ne contiennent pas certaines substances.

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- Si on visualise ce continuum comme une balançoire, la plupart des gens se situent actuellement au pôle de l'évitement de la maladie, surtout à cause de leurs préoccupations envers les produits chimiques.
 - Conséquemment, le contenu des communications devrait, à chaque fois que possible, aussi inclure des considérations liées aux substances chimiques, pas uniquement aux bactéries. Aujourd'hui, la salubrité des aliments vendus au Canada signifie principalement qu'ils sont exempts de produits chimiques.

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Date d'octroi : 6 novembre 2007

Agence canadienne d'inspection des aliments : por-rop@inspection.gc.ca

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- As part of the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment to food safety, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has been developing outreach strategies related to food safety and confidence in food safety in order to increase public awareness of: food recalls and allergy alerts, changes in food labelling, organic food, safe food handling practices in the home, bio-security for international travellers, and the Agency's online list service.
- Over the last ten years, food safety and security issues have consistently received increased exposure and prominence in the public domain. The public is becoming increasingly aware of potential risks to the food supply and there is an appetite for meaningful information from credible sources.
- While results from previous and recent public opinion research indicate that most Canadians are confident in Canada's food supply, they were shown to have specific concerns derived from and/or related to: salmonella in spinach, botulism in carrot juice, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), chemicals and poisons in food, genetically modified food, food handling practices and the safety of imported food products. Moreover, Canadians lack an understanding of the roles of the CFIA and the government when it comes to food safety.
- It was hoped that findings from this qualitative study could further explain the underpinnings of current Canadian attitudes and perceptions about the safety of Canada's food supply, in order to help the CFIA:
 - Raise awareness of its roles and responsibilities, and promote the food safety systems that safeguard the food supply.
 - Effectively position roles played by the Agency and federal government in order to garner greater support for Canada's efforts.
 - Improve its communication and outreach efforts to consumers about food safety issues through multi-media communication products, and by collaborating with industry and stakeholder groups that directly interact with consumers.
 - Determine the type and tone of the information to be shared.
 - Update and validate existing quantitative data and inform future public opinion research.

2.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- Essentially, the purpose of the research was to explore existing awareness, attitudes and behaviours related to the safety of Canada's food supply. This included looking at current needs and concerns and identifying factors that could explain differing and changing levels of confidence in Canada's food supply.

2.3 TARGET AUDIENCE

- Focus group composition derived from the primary target audience of CFIA outreach strategies related to food safety and food safety confidence, i.e., adult Canadians who are the main food shoppers and food preparers in the home.

2.4 METHODOLOGY

- Given the explanatory nature of the research objectives, it was decided to use focus groups so that participants could express their views and concerns in an atmosphere of openness and where such expressions could be probed and queried in an effort to understand.
- Moderators began the sessions by using the interactive workshop method: participants in each group were divided into pairs, and asked to write everything they knew, believed and had heard about food safety in Canada (whether true or false) in one column of a flipchart, and everything they wondered in the second column. After about five minutes, each team presented their first column to the group for discussion, followed by presentation and discussion of the second column. Then moderators probed with more specific questions related to the objectives of the study, when required.
 - With this method, the 30 teams generated a vast amount of unprompted information, which has been analyzed and summarized in this report.

2.4.1 NUMBER AND TYPE OF SESSIONS

- Accordingly, from November 24 to 29, 2007 eight two-hour focus groups were conducted in four Canadian cities from four different regions of the country.
 - Two English-speaking groups each took place in Calgary, Toronto and Halifax
 - Two French-speaking groups were conducted in Montreal.
- A total of 60 men and women aged 25-59, from a range of occupations, ethnicities and educational backgrounds participated.

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- All sessions were held at specialized fully-equipped focus group facilities, to accommodate observers and tape the sessions unobtrusively.

2.4.2 PARTICIPANT SELECTION CRITERIA

- The 60 participants were recruited randomly by Createc+, according to a client-approved recruitment screener created in both official languages (appended), which set out the following criteria:
 - All groups had 6-8 participants (10 were recruited).
 - All groups were mixed gender, although a specific mix was not requested.
 - All groups had an age range of 25-59.
 - All groups had a mix of occupational, educational and ethnic backgrounds.
 - In each location, except in Toronto, groups were recruited on the basis of their level of concern about the safety of the food supply:
 - One group of participants were very concerned;
 - One group of participants were not very concerned.
 - In Toronto, the group of not very concerned participants was replaced by a group comprised of people who were born outside of Canada.
 - This was based on the link in some studies between perceptions of food safety and ethnic background and education.
 - At least some in each group had children living at home.
 - All respondents were responsible for grocery shopping.
 - All included red meat in their diets.
 - Some in each group had never participated in a focus group, and those who had participated had done so more than 2 years ago.
 - No one or their families worked for:
 - Marketing research, public relations or advertising
 - The media
 - Any level of government (federal, provincial, municipal) or political organization
 - A food manufacturer, a food chain, or a distributor of food products, any company related to the food industry, or a restaurant.

2.4.3 INCENTIVES

- All respondents received an incentive payment of \$50 at the end of their session.

2.4.4 DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Discussions in all eight groups generally followed the client-approved Discussion Guide (appended), which was designed by Createc+ in both official languages.
- The first major question employing the interaction workshop method, (designed to elicit spontaneous responses from participants), was allowed to take up to an hour since participants had so much to say in this unprompted way about topics which were included later on in the Guide. Thus, it was fruitful to let the conversations occur in this organic and natural way.

2.4.5 RESEARCH TEAM

- **Mr. Grégoire Gollin** was the project manager, responsible for client relations, the design of the work methodology and supervision of the final summary report as well as overall coordination.
- **Ms. Louise Saint-Pierre** (based in Montreal) moderated and analyzed the French sessions in Montreal.
- **Ms. Sharon Archibald** (based in Halifax), moderated and analyzed the English sessions in Halifax.
- **Ms. Natalie Gold** (based in Toronto) moderated the English sessions in Calgary and Toronto, and prepared the final report incorporating findings from all eight groups.

2.4.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- While public opinion surveys can tap the views of a population as a whole, qualitative research attempts to understand and explore individual beliefs, views and feelings by posing questions and listening, and having participants answer freely. The aim of this study was to discover and understand the current knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about various food safety issues in Canada, by listening to and observing participants.
 - Focus groups and the interactive workshop method provided the most appropriate context for participants to express their views with the flexibility, tone and direction they desired. In addition, the focus group methodology enabled an honest, open discussion and free exchange among participants and between participants and the moderator.

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- However, note that qualitative research by nature is exploratory and should not be extrapolated to any type of market or audience, without further validation.
 - In addition, the focus was on only one main segment of the consumer market, with its possible unique set of questions, doubts and uncertainties. Because the consumer market is comprised of many distinct segments, findings may be typical of only part of that market.
 - Finally, the reader is advised that any statement non-factual in nature constitutes only current opinion, which is subject to change.
 - Therefore, as in all qualitative research, and in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of the Marketing Research Intelligence Association (MRIA), findings from this study may or may not be regarded as representative of the target population at large. This research may be further pursued by other instruments (qualitative and/or quantitative) to establish representativity.

2.4.7 ABOUT THE REPORT

- Findings were relatively consistent in the eight groups, not only across the four different regions and locations and the two official languages, but also across the two levels of confidence used to recruit participants. Consequently, data has been combined as if it came from the same segment of the consumer market.
- The report begins with an Executive Summary which provides an overview of the key findings, and also presents some implications for consideration with regard to communications efforts. This is followed by the Introduction, which describes the parameters and methodology used in the research.
- The Detailed Findings are presented next. Instead of following the outline of the Discussion Guide, a different approach has been taken to present the vast array of material and information collected, much of which was generated by the opening exercise where participants identified what they knew, believed and had heard about food safety in Canada, and what they wondered about it.
 - In the Detailed Findings section of the report, the material has been organized mainly by topic area and perceived relevance to participants, as spontaneously discussed during the opening team exercise.
 - Under each topic heading, unprompted findings will first be presented on what participants knew, believed or had heard, and on their questions related to that particular topic. Then the prompted questions, as found in the Discussion Guide, will be addressed.
 - In addition, a list of the over 140 questions participants had about food safety is appended.

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- With regard to style:
 - This report is written using participants' own language, wherever possible, to let them speak in their own words.
 - For clarity and ease, a bullet format has been used, and respondent verbatims appear in *italics* (usually without quotation marks, except when incorporated into the text).
 - Some verbatims have undergone slight editing to make people's comments understandable, but all have been used within their intended context.



3. DETAILED FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- Findings from all eight groups were quite consistent. Therefore the data has been combined in this report as if it came from the same segment of the consumer market.
- Note that there were very few variations across location, language and even the different confidence levels determined during the recruiting process. Even the ethnic group in Toronto demonstrated attitudes and beliefs similar to other participants in the study.
- The main difference seemed to be the impact of regional incidents on the mindset of participants.
 - For example, Calgary and Montreal participants spent more time discussing inspections and restaurant closures probably because these were recent incidents in those cities. Similarly, Toronto respondents immediately introduced water contamination concerns, due to the lingering impact of Walkerton, while those in Halifax talked about roadside stands. However, all these regional differences pertained to the same safety issue: safety inspections and inspectors.
- Each subsection starts with a box containing the key findings, for easy reference.
 - Data derived from the unprompted team exercise at the beginning of each session is usually presented first.
 - This is followed by material from the prompted questions in the Discussion Guide.
 - If respondents asked questions on the particular topic during any part of the discussion, they are included at the end of each subsection.
 - In addition, since respondent questions essentially reflect their information needs, a list of all questions is appended to the report.

3.2 PERCEIVED ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

3.2.1 STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Key Findings:

- The general impression of Canadian standards and regulations was favourable.
 - Interest in learning the legalities of standards and regulations was low.
 - There was very low confidence in the enforcement of regulations, especially at the local level.
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- Participants in all eight groups spontaneously stated they knew or believed that the Canadian government has established standards and regulations that generally keep food safe.
 - *We know there are government standards.*
 - *We feel that Canadian safety standards are pretty good.*
 - *Standards are high.*
 - However, virtually all participants did not know any specific standards or regulations in place, nor did most express a desire to have such information. That is the government's job.
 - *We know that they exist. I don't know the details, but I'd think it was classified to foods. It's more legislative.*
 - Some knew or believed Canadian standards were high compared to other countries, and could be the model for others to emulate.
 - *Our safety standards are applied to other countries.*
 - *Canadian safety regulations are better than the US.*
 - Some in various groups and locations spontaneously questioned whether current regulations were adequate to safeguard the food supply.
 - *Everyone believes that there are regulations in place but do they reflect the current reality?*
 - *We need to have an idea of the regulations and the consumer should have some input into what the regulations should be.*
 - *We need to believe in food safety.*
 - However, one area for legislative concern spontaneously emerged in all four locations when discussing food safety standards and regulations. The local level—in terms of restaurants, retail food outlets, and in Halifax, roadside stands—impacted participant confidence in varying degrees.

- *You go into one fast food place and it's really dirty and another and it's really clean.*
 - *We heard about restaurant ratings.*
 - *The main thing is not to go into the kitchen because you won't want to eat there . . . I know because I used to work in restaurants, not to trust business.*
 - *The closing down of restaurants who do not respect hygiene regulations is reassuring.*
 - *Le suivi des normes dans les restaurants; les amendes ne sont pas assez sévères. / Safety standards in restaurants, are they respected?*
 - *I would like to see a minimum of 10% of our food supply inspected and greater regulation and control over food sold in local markets and on the side of highways.*
- A closely related concern for participants in all locations was the integrity of inspectors. Participants felt that food safety regulations and standards were lax, or certainly not adhered to, especially but not exclusively at the local level.
 - Some in Montreal joked that inspectors gave advance notice to companies and restaurants before visiting them.
 - We heard similar stories in Calgary regarding restaurants, and in Toronto with respect to food packing or processing plants, as well as water treatment plants.

Questions

Key Finding:

- The enforcement of standards and regulations occupied the lion's share of consumer questions, doubts and uncertainties.
- Overall, participants in many groups spontaneously raised some fairly general questions about government regulations, wanting to know who decides, how they decide, and what they decide.
 - *Who is in charge and what are their qualifications?*
 - *Canadian food regulations, who sets them and do they actually reflect the current realities?*
 - *Who decides how and what is safe?*
 - *Who regulates and decides what level of pesticides and preservatives are safe for humans?*
 - *On n'est pas certain qui exerce le contrôle ou approuve les produits. / Not sure who is responsible for food control and product approval.*
 - *Qui s'occupe de faire respecter les règlements concernant la salubrité des aliments au Canada? / Who is responsible for ensuring the safety of food in Canada?*
 - *What are the government safety standards?*
 - *What policies do they put in place?*
 - *How is food regulated?*
 - *Est-ce que les normes de salubrité des aliments sont respectées ? /Are regulations about food safety respected?*

3.2.2 GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Key Findings:

- Consumers were unclear about who does what in the government re food safety.
 - People had little awareness about how well the government is doing its job re protecting the food supply—but they expressed hope that the government is functioning at high capacity.
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- When probed on the role of government, many participants felt the Canadian government should be most responsible for ensuring the safety of food in Canada, rather than the food industry, which was generally seen as less trustworthy because they were out to make money.
 - *The food industry is driven by money, I don't trust them.*
 - However, some participants felt that both should assume responsibility.
 - Some Halifax participants thought it should either be a joint effort, or be administered by an independent agency, at arm's length from both government and the food industry.
 - Most participants could not specify what the government was doing to ensure the safety of Canada's food supply, apart from administering the current set of legislative and regulatory instruments.
 - Some in Halifax questioned "to what degree" these standards were applied.
 - In fact, most participants could not say for sure how well-managed food safety was in Canada. Some assumed it was well-managed, while others were not so certain about that.
 - *I think crisis situations are well-managed.*
 - *I like to think they are doing a good job. My children aren't sick and generally speaking we're not ill from what we're eating.*
 - Some participants in various groups and locations seemed to know a bit more about the specific department or government agency responsible for food safety.
 - Some in Toronto knew that Health Canada was generally in charge.
 - *Everything being sold must be approved by Health Canada we think.*
 - Some in various locations thought that the responsibility was split between the federal and provincial governments, but could not say who was in charge of what. One Toronto group expressed unanimous interest in finding out more about "who is approving our food."

- In Montreal, many participants seemed to be well aware that the federal government is responsible for the safety standards of Canadian and imported food, and not the Quebec government. Some knew that all types of foods are controlled to prevent illness, including fruits, vegetables, seafood and meat.
- Some in Montreal believed that the food industry complies with safety standards about hygiene, while others were more doubtful. Some also felt that food safety standards are improving because consumers are more conscious.

3.2.3 GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Key Findings:

- A perception gap existed between food safety as a top ranking government priority and low awareness about what the government actually does.
 - Consumers expected their government to focus on the enforcement of standards and regulations, food labelling, and consumer education—all of which they saw as a reflection of the importance government gives to food safety.
- When prompted, participants generally wanted to see food safety either at the top or at least in the upper half of the government's priority list. For example:
 - In Halifax, participants generally agreed it should be a top priority, "up there with health care, the environment and education." Some in Calgary and Toronto tended to agree with a top ranking.
 - *Fairly high, because if there are bacteria in food, it could create a pandemic that can be passed from the food to the people.*
 - In Montreal, participants generally saw it as an average priority, but not too low on the list. Some in Calgary and Toronto would agree with this position.
 - However, there was no consensus as to whether the government and/or the food industry should spend more money on food safety, especially if it would increase the cost of food.
 - *I don't think there's a choice, if you're asking more, it will cost more. I'm fine with the way it is.*
 - *I'd pay a little more if we could ensure there's no E. coli.*
 - *I'd like to be assured it's being monitored better.*
 - *Effectiveness is the key. Whether they have an effective plan.*
 - *It's okay with me to increase the cost of food for improved inspection of food.*
 - *The government should probably spend more money on food safety.*
 - *Maybe the big food retail outlets should have to pay a percentage of their revenue.*
 - Some participants mentioned that they did not know how much the government was currently spending, or if that is enough, or if the money is being well-spent.

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- Towards the end of their session, participants were asked to identify one goal that the government should focus on over the next few years.
 - For the most part, participants generally repeated the concerns they had mentioned during the opening exercise portion of the group. However, there were about ten issues that seemed to emerge, mainly related to enforcement, along with labelling and consumer education.

Enforcement

- 1) Make sure that current safety standards are observed and enforced.
- 2) Create stricter regulations and enforcement for pesticides and environmental contaminants.
- 3) Stay vigilant, especially for BSE.
- 4) Have stronger regulations for imported foods, along with increased inspections and testing.
- 5) Stronger enforcement of food handling practices in the food industry and service sector.
- 6) Have more frequent inspections, without advance warnings.
- 7) Have severe penalties for non-compliance.
- 8) Have a greater emphasis on corporate responsibility.

Labelling

- 9) Provide clear information on food labels about:
 - Country of origin, where it was processed and packaged
 - Chemicals and food additives
 - Dangerous food sensitivities

Consumer Education

- 10) Provide information to consumers and educate them, so they can do their part.
- Participants were also read a list of seven topics, and asked whether each should be a high, medium or low priority for the government. Overall, most of the seven were considered to be of either high or medium importance. Nothing was considered unimportant, but within and across groups, it is difficult to discern which took precedence. However, while this is a topic suited to follow-up quantitative efforts, here is a general take of how participants viewed the areas of concern, in order of importance:
 - The safety of meat and poultry
 - Pesticides and environmental contaminants
 - The safety of fresh produce / the safety of imported foods
 - Nutritional labelling / organic regulation / Made in Canada labelling.

3.2.4 CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Food Recalls and Alerts

Key Findings:

- Food recalls and alerts evoked conflicting feelings of anxiety and confidence.
 - People demonstrated high awareness of past food recalls but rarely remembered the details about what really happened and why—food recalls and alerts were thought to be becoming too commonplace.
 - People showed high awareness that bacterial contamination could affect meat and produce—E. coli and salmonella were now familiar terms in the consumer vocabulary, although the two were often confused.
 - Pet food recalls were considered a family affair.
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- Participants generally expressed conflicting feelings about food recalls and/or alerts.
 - On the one hand, some said they felt worried, more anxious and confused. Some had misgivings about other foods they were consuming. Others experienced the uneasiness that comes from feeling out of control.
 - *We feel confused because we might buy a large package of hamburger and break it down into bags in the freezer, so we don't know how it dates.*
 - *You just lose a little more faith.*
 - *If it looks like they are clamping down and catching things, my confidence would increase but if it is just a broad spectrum of things happening and they are not being secure enough to prevent them [it would decrease.]*
 - On the other hand, there were those who felt more confident after a food alert and/or recall, and tended to see it as proof that the government was on the ball and doing due diligence. Some in this category also wanted to know that those who were guilty would suffer economically.
 - *It gives me confidence that they are watching.*
 - *I feel more confident, that there's still problems and failures, but they are doing something about it.*
 - *There's more recalls, but there's also more processed foods than 10 years ago.*

Questions

- Questions about food alerts focused on emergency plans, and the general food supply.
 - *What if there was a major epidemic?*
 - *If there was a major epidemic, do we have a plan?*
 - *We wonder about how many foods are unsafe? We hear about foods that are being recalled.*
 - *How does food get infected?*

Salmonella and E. coli Contamination

- Participants in most groups spontaneously indicated an awareness of salmonella and E. coli with respect to recent food alerts and recalls.
- When discussing salmonella, many remembered the spinach recall, in somewhat varying degrees.
 - Some addressed the origin of the contaminated spinach
 - *I think that it was salmonella and it was spinach from the States.*
 - *California produce, i.e., spinach.*
 - Some described what they did with regard to the spinach alert
 - *I still bought spinach but only Canadian grown.*
 - *When I heard of the recall I stopped buying spinach*
 - *My son was happy because I stopped buying spinach.*
 - *I stopped ordering spinach in salads.*
 - *I stopped buying the bags.*
 - *Spinach recall, I wouldn't eat it, threw it out.*
 - *Restaurants claimed that their spinach is local and thus safe.*
 - Other produce mentioned in connection with salmonella included:
 - *Bean sprouts.*
 - *Mescaline salad caused dreadful illness. I purchased it loose at the St. Lawrence market.*
 - *Tomatoes.*
 - Some in Calgary referred to processed food recalls, such as luncheon meats, and others included the importance of well-cooked poultry or meat to avoid salmonella poisoning.
 - *The processed, the packaged foods, and all the recalls that happened the past summer.*
 - *Probably 12 different products in a week on luncheon meats.*
- Participants in some groups spontaneously discussed recalls and alerts due to E. coli, particularly in fresh and frozen foods.
 - Some thought they knew what it was and how it was contracted by humans.
 - *E. coli is a disease of the intestine.*
 - *Bacteria.*
 - *It gets in water.*
 - *They use water from the stream and it comes from there.*
 - *From food handling.*
 - *A lot of times we hear about the start of barbecue season and you hear about making sure it's properly cooked.*

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- *The slaughter of animals is where a lot of this stuff comes from, I drive past them and the stench is horrible. To go into one, I couldn't imagine, it certainly isn't clean. How much of the bacteria is being sent with the cow, chicken, or lamb?*
 - *I've heard more and more from buffets that you can pick up disease from utensils. You pick up the utensil and pick up the bun and eat the bun you get E. coli.*
 - While most participants did not seem to think E. coli was deadly, one Calgary woman knew it was.
 - *My friend's father got E. coli and passed away from it.*
 - Other comments concerned increased media coverage.
 - *We've probably heard more and more in the last 10 years.*
 - During the prompted portion of the discussions, participants in all groups were aware of food alerts and recalls in the past few years, and were able to recall about a dozen specific foods that were involved.
 - 1) Beef. Most participants knew that beef had been recalled, due to mad cow disease.
 - 2) Spinach. Many participants remembered the spinach recall. Some were aware that spinach from the US contained E. coli due to improper fertilization practices, while others discussed it in terms of salmonella.
 - 3) Pet food. Participants in various groups and locations remembered this painfully because pets are "members of the family."
 - 4) Bean sprouts
 - 5) Chicken. Some connected this to bird flu.
 - 6) Seafood. Some in Halifax and Montreal remembered this.
 - 7) Lettuce or mescaline salad. This was mentioned by some in Halifax and Toronto.
 - 8) Cantaloupe. Some in various groups knew there was salmonella or E. coli on the skin.
 - 9) Chocolate bars. Montreal participants identified this recall, mainly from drugstores.
 - 10) Sausage. This was mentioned only by Montreal respondents.
 - 11) Mussels. Some in Halifax cited this, in relation to red tide.
 - 12) Potatoes. Blight was mentioned in Halifax.
 - However, as the above findings show, in most instances, after some time has lapsed, people do not recall the specifics about food alerts and/or recalls, i.e., the causes, the duration of the recall or alert, any significant or deadly results, or what happened to the offending companies.
 - This is one area that might benefit from further quantitative research.

Questions

- Only a few questions emerged with regard to foodborne illness, mainly related to what it is specifically, and human tolerance.
 - *What is E. coli?*
 - *How many germs do we eat but our bodies are controlling them? Are we eating contaminated food but our body is controlling them.*

3.2.5 GOVERNMENT CREDIBILITY

Key Finding:

- While consumers trusted what the government said during a food recall or alert, this should not be taken for granted. Trust in government would appear to be at risk each time there is a food recall.
- Overall, most participants in this study indicated they were confident that Canadian government officials tell Canadians the truth when it comes to food recalls or alerts.
- When probed, most felt that by the time government officials make an announcement, they are probably quite sure of what they are saying.
- However, some participants in various groups did express some hesitancy when answering this question. These individuals were not one hundred percent sure that the government was telling the whole story, and thought that perhaps some information was being held back.
 - In Toronto and Calgary, for example, there was some skepticism that perhaps government officials also wanted to cover themselves, and one participant mentioned "key messages" in this context.
 - Some in Halifax brought up the Walkerton incident as an example of how things can go awry.
- Even so, virtually all participants said they would comply, and have already complied, with food alerts and recalls.

Confidence in the Food Supply

Key Findings:

- The general impression of food safety in Canada was moderately favourable but precarious. While it seemed to fall within acceptable limits, anxiety was just below the surface, ready to quickly emerge.
 - Reasons for being less confident today have increased from a few years ago.
 - The enforcement of standards and regulations directly impacted feelings of confidence.
 - Consumers believed the food industry was not doing its share to ensure food is safe.
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- During the prompted portion of the research, which followed the spontaneous exercise, participants were asked how confident they currently felt about the safety of the food they bought, in terms of being free from chemicals or bacteria. The question was asked as a rating on a 10-point scale.
 - Overall, most participants gave ratings in the mid-zone, in the 5-7 range.
 - However, there were those who gave ratings of 2 or 3 in various groups, and those who gave 8.
 - Some said they would have given a higher rating before their particular focus group discussion. For example, one Toronto participant seemed to feel overwhelmed while discussing the wide range of food safety issues that emerged in her group, and exclaimed:
 - *Nothing is safe to eat anymore!*
 - Overall, there were seven main reasons why some respondents felt less confident than they did a few years ago.
 - 1) The existence of very serious illnesses, especially mad cow disease and avian flu
 - 2) The increased number of food recalls and alerts due to foodborne illness, including shellfish poisoning
 - 3) Overproduction leading to negligence with regard to poultry and meat
 - *I am not confident because I think the government is not interested in protecting us but is more interested in making money and testing.*
 - 4) The use of hormones and steroids in poultry, and colouring in meats
 - 5) Awareness of disturbing food-handling practices in the food industry
 - 6) Getting sick more often after eating in a restaurant
 - 7) Increased media coverage.
 - Somewhat fewer explanations (five) were given by those who indicated that their confidence level had not changed over the past few years.
 - 1) Canada has regulations and standards in place to ensure the safety of the food supply
 - *I am fairly confident my food is free from chemicals and bacteria because I trust the government is aware and I take precautions when purchasing food.*

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- 2) There is a greater consciousness among consumers with respect to hygiene, food handling and organics
 - 3) There is more food quality control in terms of freshness
 - 4) The issue is not top-of-mind
 - 5) There have been no major outbreaks.
 - *Everything seems to be under control.*
- Thus, findings from this study clearly show that people are relying on the Canadian government to look after their needs when it comes to food safety and to a positive feeling about the safety of the Canadian food supply.
 - However, in this regard, participants indicated that while they are willing to do their part, in terms of assuming a greater role in own safety measures, the food industry does not seem to have matched their efforts.

3.2.6 MADE IN CANADA LABELLING

Key Finding:

- Learning about the Made in Canada label increased anxiety because it was seen to guarantee nothing to consumers.
- During the spontaneous portion of the discussions in three locations (Calgary, Toronto and Halifax), at least one or more participants had watched a TV program (either shown on CTV or on CBC) on Made in Canada labelling, and quoted the same statistics.
 - According to many respondents in these sessions, made in Canada labelling was dishonest, because the food was merely packaged in Canada, but imported from poorly regulated countries with much laxer standards.
 - *Only 60% of ingredients are from Canada, but if packaged in Canada the label can say “Made in Canada.”*
 - *McDonald’s burgers say 100% Canadian Beef, but the beef does not really come from Canada, it’s just a company name.*
 - One Calgary respondent explained to his group how lack of pesticide regulation affected farmed shrimp.
 - *They showed a guy in the field. He was raising shrimp. He was feeding his shrimp something, in the next field he was spraying fertilizer in his field to grow something. Now this guy brings his shrimp out and he sends it to Canada. Where’s the control?*
 - After hearing these accounts, most participants in these sessions expressed new concerns.
 - *Blind trust is evaporating hearing this stuff.*
 - *I want full disclosure whether a product is grown as well as produced here.*

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- Thus, their newly acquired awareness of the Made in Canada label issue seemed to affect participants' confidence level in the efficacy of Canadian government standards and regulations, since food they thought was safe and protected was not necessarily so.
 - Given the prevailing doubts about the effectiveness of safety standards vis a vis imported foods, participants now had an added worry. The Made in Canada label was generally seen as a legal loophole, which needed to be fixed.

3.3 MAIN FOOD SAFETY CONCERNS

- Paradoxically, food safety issues were not top-of-mind for participants. However, just below the surface in all eight groups, there were about a dozen main areas of concern, fear and doubt that emerged spontaneously and quickly during the first exercise and progressed during the rest of the discussions.
 - This confirms that confidence in food safety is precarious, and that Canadian consumers need information of a reassuring nature.
- The dozen or so issues are presented briefly in the following table, with the first six in order of perceived importance, based on frequency of mention and discussion time. All are elaborated on in the rest of this section.

Food Safety Concerns	
1)	General food labelling issues: There was uneasiness about incomplete or misleading food labels with regard to chemicals, additives, preservatives, allergenic components, general nutritional truth, and expiry dates in all types of foods.
2)	Meat and poultry: Consumers expressed uncertainty about eating meat and poultry due to steroids, hormones, additives and antibiotic use, and what these animals were fed, evidenced by mad cow disease.
3)	Organic food labelling: There was considerable confusion re organic vs. natural foods.
4)	Safety inspections: Strong doubts emerged about the effectiveness and integrity of inspections in all areas—from the farm to processing plants, retail and restaurant outlets, and at all levels—local, regional, national and international—the latter fuelled by recent toy and pet food recalls.
5)	Imported foods: Consumers felt there was a much higher risk with food imports than domestic foods because most other countries are less regulated than Canada.
6)	Food industry and service sector practices: Scepticism and mistrust prevailed about the processing and unhygienic handling practices at plants, restaurants, fast food and retail outlets.
7)	Mercury in seafood: Fish consumption was seen to have detrimental health effects.
8)	GMO foods: People expressed uncertainty due to the unknown cumulative effects on health and ultimately on the food supply.
9)	Plastics and packaging: There was increasing cancer-related worry about the leaching of harmful chemicals into water, the use of plastics to heat food in microwave ovens, or how plastic containers impacted foods.
10)	Water contamination: Consumers were concerns about drinking, food preparation and irrigation.
11)	Sugar substitutes: There was some worry because aspartame was seen as a carcinogen.

3.3.1 GENERAL FOOD LABELLING

Key Findings:

- While food label reading was on the rise, food labels were a confusing source of information for consumers. Often misunderstood, they created frustration and mistrust.
 - Chemicals, additives and shelf-life extending agents (preservatives and packaging) were perceived as serious health threats.
 - The truth of expiry dates was questioned.
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- Participants in all eight groups spontaneously identified food labelling as an issue, because it was either incomplete, misleading, or both, and was therefore a mystery with regard to a host of issues.
 - Food labelling topped the list because it applied to almost all foods, from meat, poultry and fish to fresh produce to packaged, processed and frozen foods. Participants worried about:
 - Chemicals, additives and preservatives both named and unnamed, allergenic components, expiry dates on a range of foods, and general nutritional truth.
 - Most participants believed that all the ingredients were not listed on the label, or were too confusing to understand, and this is what caused concern.
 - *We know that all the ingredients aren't listed.*
 - *What is missing from labels is that the wording is so misleading.*
 - Chemicals, additives and preservatives both named and unnamed were a worry to people in all groups.
 - *Food lasts longer today.*
 - *I recently saw a program about Twinkies that would last a couple of days. Now they last a month, they add chemicals. Packed cookies to keep them fresh.*
 - *It's even stemmed into dairy products. Dairy products have a longer expiry date. You have milk to go that has 45 day expiry date. I use to work at Safeway and an egg lasts 8 days and now you have eggs that last a month.*
 - *Chemicals in frozen vegetables. I believe that they are used for preservatives*
 - *If there are a lot of things listed that I cannot understand then I don't buy it.*
 - *I worry about the cumulative effects of chemicals in food.*
 - The use of pesticides and fertilizers on crops and produce during growth was also a worry in most groups.
 - *Concern about the long term effect, i.e. seeing more and more cancers.*

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- Some participants in all four locations expressed concerns either about allergenic components and/or general nutritional labelling.
 - One Calgary respondent was a Celiac, who would seriously suffer if she consumed any gluten whatsoever, stated that major companies like Nabisco do not mention gluten on their labels.
 - Another was a stay-at-home mom, who worried about conflicting studies on what to feed her children so they would be healthy.
 - *From a personal experience, it may contain nuts, I have a friend that gets a reaction.*
 - *Nutrition values listed on food packaging, i.e. sodium, sugar, salt content, trans fats*
 - *En termes de salubrité, ce qui ne nous rend pas malade, je crois que le gouvernement fait son travail comme il le faut, mais pour les gras trans par exemple, c'est une autre affaire. / In terms of food safety, the fact that we won't get sick, I think that the government does a good job. But trans fat, for example, is another thing.*
 - *Too much salt is added to processed foods*
 - *Buzz words: corn syrup, any kind of modified sugars*
 - Expiry dates were a topic of discussion in many groups, mainly with regard to meat and dairy products as well as on packaged and processed foods. Some participants said they usually reached "behind" on the shelf to get products that are dated in the future.
 - While some felt that major chains would not risk selling products past the best before date with new date labels, others were not so sure.
 - *What they do after the expiry date, is repackage it with a different date. I saw it on 60 Minutes. They actually caught companies doing it.*
 - *[Expiry dates] imply that the products have preservatives.*
 - *Ce serait bien si on pouvait voir sur l'étiquette la date du dernier test gouvernemental. / It would be nice if we could see a label showing the date of the last government inspection.*
 - It is interesting to note that irradiation was only mentioned by one participant in this study.
 - *In Europe it is listed on the package if something has been irradiated.*

Questions

- Many questions about labelling emerged during the discussions. Below is what people wondered about labelling with regard to truth and accuracy, expiry dates, and potential contamination by containers or packaging.
 - *We wonder how many chemicals are left. It's supposedly as you look at the ingredients it's less.*
 - *Why are some things labelled and some not?*
 - *Accuracy of labels on products: are they hiding a few things?*
 - *How accurate are those labels? Is it what they say they are?*
 - *Who is checking the labels for accuracy?*
 - *Are the percentages accurate?*
 - *How do they test an orange or an apple?*

- *How many bugs are you allowed to have?*
- *What is the level of tolerance?*
- *Why is there aspartame? Now they are just changing the name of it.*
- Questions about expiry dates were asked in many groups.
 - *Who decides and what happens to the product after the expiry date?*
 - *What do they do with expired food?*
 - *How do they decide best before date? What happens if I eat it one day before or after the best before date?*
 - *I find some packages have expiry dates. Some have best before on them. What is the difference?*
- Additives were mentioned by some participants, who wondered what was added to the product or produce to make it last, or what specifically caused cancer.
 - *What is in our food?*
 - *What do they do to food so they can sell it all year?*
 - *What makes food last longer?*
 - *What does go into the food industry to get perfect shape and colour?*
 - *Are there chemicals in frozen veggies? Do they add anything to preserve them?*
 - *I wonder, what is cancer causing specifically?*
- Some participants were confused about nutritional issues, having been exposed to a host of conflicting information in the public domain, related to whole wheat vs. whole grain and trans fats.
 - *Is whole wheat no longer better than white? I used to buy whole wheat, but now you're saying there's no benefits?*
 - *Why are there trans fats in milk?*
 - *Nutritional information, how is that arrived at?*

3.3.2 MEAT AND POULTRY

- Note that all participants were recruited on the basis that they ate red meat.

Key Findings:

- Consumers believed meat and poultry contain harmful and highly hazardous substances added by the food industry.
 - Consumers had conflicting feelings about eating the meat and poultry they bought at retail outlets and restaurants.
 - The perceived health risks of eating meat and poultry were seen as long term, unknown and scary, but short term risks were considered acceptable, for now.
 - Mad cow was still strongly imprinted on consumers' minds.
- Many participants in all four locations spontaneously expressed uncertainty about eating meat and/or poultry injected with steroids, hormones, additives and antibiotics, which they generally assumed to be unhealthy, and perhaps even dangerous.

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- Some were concerned about long-term effects, such as obesity or resistance to superbugs.
 - *Steroids are given to cows.*
 - *I'm careful not to buy any meat from places where they inject it.*
 - *Colour is added to meat, i.e., bacon.*
 - *They do this in different parts of the world, add food colouring to meat, to make the meat look fresher and it is easier to sell it.*
 - *We don't want to eat chemicals, they can make you sicker. Basically, they are not supposed to be in your system. You wouldn't eat red dye so you wouldn't want it in your food.*
 - *I've heard about antibiotics, but I haven't heard people getting sick.*
 - *There has been some curtailing of the practice, but growth hormone is used more in the States. Testing has shown, from what I've read, that the growth hormone is not good for the kid's health and may have contributed to obesity.*
 - *I heard that [antibiotic use] has led to puberty sooner.*
 - *The antibiotics thing, it may be contributing to the super bugs. Super bugs seem to show up when they are in high antibiotic population.*
 - *Comment les animaux sont-ils nourris : produits chimiques, hormones dans leur nourriture? Dans quelles conditions sont-ils transportés? / How are animals fed: chemicals, hormones in their food? In what conditions are they transported?*
 - *I believe that chickens are raised using antibiotics.*
 - *They are using steroids on chickens.*
 - *Steroids and growth hormones cause chickens to grow faster. They grow fast to sell fast.*
 - *Not concerned about chicken and avian flu, not widespread enough.*
 - *Concerned about avian flu but not concerned that it is in our local chickens or poultry.*
 - Mad cow was a topic that came up in all four locations without prompting. Most participants had heard about it, although not everyone understood what it was exactly.
 - *Heard about mad cow disease. That it's deadly, people in England have died from it.*
 - *When it was across the border, shipments were stopped.*
 - *Contamination occurred from diseased cattle being fed to cattle, diseased brain that the cattle ate.*
 - *Mad cow is dangerous. Brain virus in cows. We heard about it.*
 - *They slaughter all of the affected animals*
 - *People getting sick from meat. People getting sick from animals that have been fed stuff they shouldn't be.*
 - Many participants said they worried that it could happen again, and that it was in the back of their minds whenever they purchased meat products.
 - *Mad cow, I worry that it could happen again.*
 - *You could be affected with a terminal disease from mad cow.*
 - *When I buy meat I think about mad cow.*

- On the other hand, while some felt reassured that precautions were in place to prevent mad cow from reoccurring, there were also those who remained uncertain about the effectiveness of these precautions.
 - *So much hype about it in the news (mad cow) that there is more effort and precautions to make certain that the problem does not arise again.*
 - *Now there are more precautions and more thorough screening.*
 - *But farmers may conceal this problem since it affects their livelihood*
 - *There are not enough inspectors.*

Questions

- Many participants spontaneously queried the safety of meat and poultry.
 - *You sort of think twice before you bite into it, do you trust it? I was hesitant, is there potential? Could I get disease?*
 - *I eat beef and pork, but worry. How safe is safe? How do we know that the practice of feeding other animals to cows has stopped?*
 - *Is meat injected with red dye to make it look better and more appetizing?*
 - *Is meat injected with colouring?*
 - *What are the hormone levels in meat?*
- Participants in Toronto and Montreal wondered about animal disease in general, and specifically mad cow.
 - *Pourquoi autant de maladies: grippe aviaire, vache folle, virus, bactéries, salmonelle ? Est-ce dû au non respect des normes en vigueur ? / Why are there so many illnesses like avian flu, BSE, salmonella, bacteria, virus? Is it because safety standards were not respected?*
 - *I wonder if mad cow exists.*
 - *What happened to mad cow disease? Do they know where it originated or, how it started? Is it completely gone now?*
 - *Comment les animaux sont-ils nourris : produits chimiques, hormones dans leur nourriture? Dans quelles conditions sont-ils transportés? / How are animals fed: chemicals, hormones in their food? In what conditions are they transported?*
- Some were curious about testing procedures and criteria.
 - *What kind of testing is done to see what disease an animal has?*
 - *If an animal is treated for disease what was it injected with to treat it?*
 - *There's a process that we believe that animals [with mad cow] fall, but what is that process?*
 - *I wonder how closely animals are monitored. How is it monitored?*
 - *Who decides what steroid and antibiotics can be used in our food?*

3.3.3 ORGANIC FOOD LABELLING

Key Findings:

- Organic food evoked favourable first impressions because they were not supposed to contain the hazardous substances that the food industry normally adds.
 - Consumers were unclear about the meaning of the organic label because it is poorly regulated and potentially misleading.
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- Overall, many participants in all locations spontaneously identified organic foods as healthier because chemicals and preservatives were not used during production, with a trade-off that it has a shorter shelf-life.
 - *I believe organic food is safer because fewer chemicals are used.*
 - *Chicken tastes better and for safety because there are no antibiotics, not with free range chickens.*
 - However, participants had also heard that there were problems with the meaning of organic labels. For example, participants in Toronto stated:
 - *There are different degrees of organic.*
 - *You can include one item that is organic on the package and call the entire product organic.*
 - *Current labelling requirements do not stipulate what organic means.*
 - Some were aware that organic manure or fertilizer was a relevant factor, but were unclear about how.
 - *Organic manure is not actually organic because of medication animals take and then excrete.*
 - *The organic manure from some animals is not actually organic due to animal maintenance (hormones, antibiotics).*

Questions

- Questions about organic food came from participants in all locations, who demonstrated curiosity about the definition of organic and "natural" foods, the benefits, regulations and standards and whether non-organic food is harmful, i.e. where pesticides and insecticides are used.
 - *With some foods, is it really organic?*
 - *What is organic? My sister eats everything organic head to toe. Is she really going to live longer? What's going to happen?*
 - *I wonder about organic foods and how they prevent disease.*
 - *Will you die first because of worrying from the stress of it? Will it make a difference?*
 - *What determines whether a food is considered organic?*
 - *Why is organic better (how do we know) and how do we know it is organic?*
 - *Are organic foods really natural?*
 - *What are the standards for organic? Can it have preservatives in it?*

- *Who regulates certified organic food?*
- *How is organic food being regulated?*
- *Is the term “organic” regulated by the government?*
- *How can a person know if it is REALLY organic?*
- *Can there be more or better disclosure re what is allowed to be labeled green, organic, made in Canada?*
- *How does pollution affect our food?*
- *How does fertilizer affect our food?*
- *Les insecticides sont-ils dangereux pour la santé ?/ Are insecticides harmful?*
- *L’utilisation des pesticides est-elle sous contrôle? / Is the use of pesticides under control?*

3.3.4 SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Key Findings:

- Food inspections directly impacted consumer confidence in food.
 - Doubts associated with the integrity of inspectors and the system were higher for the food service sector, followed closely by the food industry as a whole.
 - Pet food and toy recalls increased consumer anxiety.
 - Consumers had little awareness about who is responsible for food inspection and how it is done.
 - Food inspection methods were considered to be one of the few areas of government administration that people were interested in learning about—mainly for reassurance.
- Safety inspections spontaneously emerged as a topic of concern in all eight groups. Participants wondered about a range of inspection areas within the country—from the farm to processing plants, as well as retail and restaurant levels—and outside Canada regarding imported foods.
 - Many thought there were either fewer inspectors than there used to be, or that they were not doing their job, for whatever unknown reasons.
 - *Concern that government inspectors are not doing the job.*
 - *I know there's less, based on rumors, reading, MacLean's magazine.*
 - *In a W5 report there was only 50 guys doing inspection and now they're saying there's only 10 and now they're dealing with more.*
 - Most participants did not know what level of government was responsible for the various types of inspections.
 - However, some in Calgary and Toronto were aware that the municipality was responsible, because of several recent well-publicized incidents.
 - *Restaurant inspection is a municipal responsibility.*
 - *We know in Calgary inspectors in restaurants are overworked and understaffed.*
 - *Talking about the MacDonald's scare on 9th avenue . . . Someone went to another country and they came back and they had hepatitis. The Calgary health region had to shut it down.*

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- *Municipal inspection of plants and retail outlets. Dominion Warehouse had rats. Most everyone here knew about it, they shut down the Dominion Warehouse at the Food terminal.*
 - Some participants told personal anecdotes about dishonest inspectors, advance notice of inspections, and what seemed like fraudulent business practices due to lack of inspections or monitoring.
 - *We depend too much on the inspection system. I think there's too much hand-shaking.*
 - *I remember poultry, my husband was asked to help out harvesting poultry. The poultry wasn't going to pass inspection, so there was a deal to sell it as fast food. We were students at the time. I can't trust a fast food chain to this day.*
 - *In the beginning, when my husband was an immigrant, next door was a store, a Vietnamese store. They sold the horse meat, but the label was beef.*
 - *I avoid name brands because bigger companies can afford to buy off inspectors.*
 - *I know one restaurant that shot pigeons and sold it as chicken.*
 - *I heard that if a store drops food on the floor it will put it back.*
 - Discussions were fueled in some cases by recent toy and pet food recalls, which made people doubt the efficacy of the current system.
 - *When I heard of the pet food recall, I went to the cupboard to make certain that I did not have that product. I am very careful, and always try to keep on top of information re recall. I know the brand that I buy for my cat and it was not one of the products being recalled.*
 - *I read the label very carefully to check the ingredients to make certain that the product is not in the food that I buy for my pet.*
 - In Halifax, some participants expressed concerns about the unlicensed practice of roadside stands selling food.
 - *Street vendors need a license to sell food; people selling on the side of the road not regulated or inspected.*
 - Participants expressed mixed feelings when restaurant and/or plant closings were mentioned in their session.
 - On the one hand, some felt reassured that inspectors were doing their job, and that the system in place was working.
 - *The closing down of restaurants who do not respect hygiene regulations is reassuring.*
 - *Makes me feel safe that the government does inspections and close these places down.*
 - On the other hand, some participants worried more when after hearing stories.
 - *This sort of information makes me nervous. What's going on? How are they cutting corners? Are they cutting corners?*
 - This reaction echoes the one related to food recalls and alerts.

Questions

- Participants in all eight groups had questions about safety inspections and inspectors.
- Some wondered if there were enough inspectors to do their jobs effectively.
 - *Safety inspectors, are they overworked?*
 - *Are there enough inspectors for all of the restaurants in the city [Toronto]?*
 - *Les inspecteurs sont-ils en nombre suffisant ? / Are there enough inspectors?*
- Some wondered how what turned out to be unsafe products passed through the inspection process without detection, and what type of assurances they had that stores and restaurants were selling what they claimed.
 - *How did infectious products get by inspectors?*
 - *We always have a finger pointed at the manufacturer, but how did it get by?*
 - *How do you know that the store that sells beef isn't selling horse meat?*
 - *How many shortcuts are covered by legal terms?*
- Many, however, simply wondered about the mechanics of safety inspections, including frequency, training, and compliance.
 - *How often is food inspected (imported and local)?*
 - *Quelle est la fréquence des contrôles ? Est-ce que ce sont les mêmes normes d'inspection pour tous les types d'entreprise? / What is the frequency of inspection? Are the inspection standards the same for all businesses?*
 - *What percentage of food is inspected?*
 - *How is local food sold at farmer's markets tested?*
 - *What are the inspection policies on foods sold at local farmer's markets / side of the road?*
 - *How well trained are Canada's inspectors?*
 - *How often are they retrained or retested?*
 - *Les normes sont-elles respectées dans les restaurants? / Safety standards in restaurants, are they respected?*
 - *Les normes d'hygiène sont-elles respectées par les détaillants ? / Are the hygiene rules complied with by retailers?*

3.3.5 IMPORTED FOOD

Key Findings:

- Overall, consumers had low confidence in imported food, which was viewed as a major threat to the safety of the food supply.
 - People saw globalization as a cause of decreasing food quality.
 - Imported food was often synonymous with food from third-world countries.
 - Canada looked good when compared with standards from other countries.
 - Issues discussed: Imported food carried a much higher perceived risk compared to domestic food because most other countries are less regulated than Canada.
 - Imports from the United States, Europe, Russia and Commonwealth countries were barely mentioned.
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- Overall, there was a general spontaneous perception that Canadian food safety standards were higher than in most other countries.
 - *I believe standards are higher in Canada than in other countries.*
 - *I trust things that come from Canada more than anywhere else in the world.*
 - *There are stronger regulations in Canada against additives.*
 - *The food coming from other countries is not as safe, they have different standards, and the Canadian standards are higher.*
 - *Safety standards are different among countries.*
 - *China is becoming a major exporter because it is cheaper, but standards are lower.*
 - *Asparagus is imported from Latin America.*
 - There were also some individuals in various groups who said they trusted Canadian regulations regarding imported foods.
 - *Imported food must respect Canadian safety standards.*
 - *I have an inherent belief that what is brought into the country is safe because of regulations.*
 - The majority of participants in most groups were spontaneously skeptical about food imports from other countries. In some cases, imported foods were considered dangerous because they were less regulated than in Canada.
 - This was due to a lack of stringent regulations in foreign countries, where indiscriminate use of pesticides and recent food or product recalls and alerts worried participants.
 - *Il y a certains produits dans lesquels je n'ai pas confiance : particulièrement les produits importés, les produits congelés et les marques non connues. C'est évident pour moi que les normes et la réglementation dans certains pays étrangers ne sont pas les mêmes qu'ici au Canada. / There are some products that I am not confident about: imported products especially, frozen food, unknown labels. It is evident to me that the safety standards and regulations in some foreign countries are not the same as here in Canada.*
 - *Imported food should be more closely regulated.*
 - *There is a lack of inspection in other countries.*

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- In addition, some participants pointed out that globalization and food overproduction favoured better costs but not necessarily food quality and hygiene.
 - *There are lots of pesticides in imported produce.*
 - *Since the concerns about China products, i.e., the toy recall, I now mistrust products from China, especially food.*
 - *China is going to be a major importer because it is cheaper but their standards are much lower.*

 - When prompted specifically on imported foods, most participants continued to elaborate on their initial concerns, affirming their belief that Canadian standards were higher than in other countries in terms of pesticide use and other unknown aspects.
 - *I do not trust what is in their food or understand their ingredients.*
 - *On ne connaît pas la rigueur de leurs normes. / We do not know the strictness of their standards.*
 - *I worry about foods coming in from other countries. I worry that they do not have the same standards that Canada has.*

 - Therefore, imported foods were generally seen as less safe than food produced or manufactured in Canada.
 - *Je viens d'un pays où la salubrité des aliments est loin d'être une préoccupation comme ici. Au Canada, le gouvernement est beaucoup plus sérieux, il réalise des études et ne désire pas que la population tombe malade parce que c'est trop coûteux. / I come from a country where food safety is less of an issue than it is here. In Canada, the government is more serious about it; they conduct studies and do not want citizens to get sick because it is too costly. Because a lot of incidents happened few years ago, and they had to strengthen rules.*

 - For this reason, some participants wanted the government to take remedial action.
 - *The biggest challenge for the government would be to increase the level of imported food inspections. There must be a desire to do it.*

 - However, most participants discussed imported foods in terms of recalls or alerts in the past few years, especially regarding foods from China or Latin America.
 - Some participants felt less safe than they had before such alerts or recalls, while others felt about the same, since they felt the system was working somewhat well because the dangers had been discovered.
 - *Hershey's. They had a product from China that they weren't allowed to disclose.*
 - *China doesn't have the same standards, because of the toys.*
 - *Imported veggies—bean sprouts—from China, where there is a polluted environment.*
 - *Les produits qui proviennent de la Chine, j'ai de la difficulté avec cela. Je recherche plutôt des produits de marque canadienne. / I have difficulty with products that come from China. I'm looking for a label that says the product is Canadian.*

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- Note that when it came to food safety and imported foods, almost no mention was made of food products from the U.S., Europe, Russia or Commonwealth countries such as Australia or New Zealand.
 - *I was concerned about a small pudding from Great Britain.*
 - *Japan is very health conscience. They're very cautious about what they bring in.*
 - In addition, most participants were unaware that food produced in Canada could use imported ingredients. However, such concerns were generally expressed when discussing labelling, which was one of the top issues for people in this study.
 - This area was not probed thoroughly, due to time constraints.

Questions

- Spontaneous questions emerged in all groups about imported foods:
 - International standards and who is responsible in Canada:
 - *International, when you have a number of countries, what are their standards? Are they similar?*
 - *The main concerns is how it's regulated from an international perspective. Who tests it?*
 - *Whatever we brought here, we wonder if it's regulated? We always have to wonder.*
 - *Is there a lack of inspectors in other countries? Do they have trained inspectors?*
 - *À l'égard des produits importés, qu'est-ce qu'on fait comme test? On ne connaît pas leur technique de production. / For imported products, who is responsible for regulations control?*
 - *La provenance, les normes internationales sont-elles les mêmes qu'ici? / Are safety and inspection standards the same for imported and Canadian food?*
 - *Quelles sont les normes de salubrité, les règles d'inspection en ce qui a trait aux aliments importés ? / What are safety standards, inspection rules for imported products?*
 - Cost of imports, and shipping:
 - *I wonder if it's cheaper to ship across borders.*
 - *Does imported food undergo the same level of testing as Canadian food?*
 - *What is the ripening process for fresh food? How long does food sit before it is shipped?*
 - *How long do imports stay in customs?*
 - *Is there a difference between perishable and non-perishable for how long it sits in dry dock?*
 - *Who is responsible for the imports? For example, the Highliner story, fish coming in from China, fruit from South America, or any country that has lower standards than what we hope Canada has.*

- Local vs. non-local or imported:
 - *Why are we importing? Why not grow it in our own country?*
 - *How much food is actually imported versus grown at the local or national level?*
 - *I want to know where the product originated.*
 - *Spinach. Why is it so difficult to source food locally? Why does it have to be shipped in from elsewhere?*
 - *Why can't I find locally grown produce in Ontario supermarkets?*

3.3.6 FOOD INDUSTRY AND SERVICE SECTOR PRACTICES

Key Findings:

- Consumers realized that food contamination could occur at every link in the food supply chain, but were not alarmed by that.
 - Food contamination was closely associated with hygiene practices.
 - People appeared to have an increased mistrust of large corporations.
- In all groups, food industry and food service sector practices spontaneously generated scepticism and mistrust among respondents, who were unhappily aware of unhygienic processing and handling practices at plants, restaurants, fast food and retail outlets.
 - *I take a lot of precautions, shop in a butcher shop, look for the made in Canada label, I don't trust the grocery store.*
 - For this reason, some participants, especially but not exclusively in Montreal, wanted the government to take action in terms of increased inspections and stiffer penalties.
 - *Il n'y a pas assez d'inspections dans les épiceries. / There are not enough grocery store inspections.*
 - *Les commerçants ne devraient pas savoir quand les inspecteurs vont venir. / Grocery store owners should not be notified when inspectors are coming.*
 - In the prompted portion of the discussion, participants identified a range of specific places along the food chain where food contamination was most likely to occur.
 - 1) Food handling was mentioned most often, during the manufacturing or packaging process, or retail outlet.
 - *Lack of cleanliness from the company or store. There's not enough diligence to make sure their hands are washed.*
 - *Meat packing. We have a concern that they do not wash it.*
 - *I know some people who work in a meat factory they drop it on the floor and then package it.*
 - *A pork factory in Vaughan was feeding pigs dead animals in their feed.*

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- 2) Restaurants, due to unsatisfactory sanitation and hygiene.
 - *When I go to a restaurant, I'm not a germaphobic, but I never touch the washroom door handles.*
 - 3) Farms, due to the use of pesticides.
 - 4) During transportation
 - 5) Storage.
- Some participants in various locations felt that contamination could occur at any stage along the entire food chain.
 - *It can happen at all stages.*
 - *It can happen everywhere.*
 - *Plusieurs intermédiaires sont impliqués dans la chaîne alimentaire. Les consommateurs s'inquiètent quant à l'hygiène, la fraîcheur et la salubrité des aliments. / Many intermediaries are implicated in the food chain. Consumers worry about hygiene, freshness and safety.*

Questions

- Some participants wondered about how the food industry and service sector was monitored, and who was responsible.
 - *Basically the whole thing, given fast foods and knowledge in the past in how certain chains accept certain meats, how do we know we can trust them?*
 - *Contamination of the food supply chain. Who is actually monitoring this?*
 - *Safeguards around food production. Who is going to do it?*
 - *Who monitors restaurants and what controls are there?*
 - *What is the cleaning process for frozen veggies and meat?*
- Many were quite concerned about the hygiene of food workers
 - *Should there be a standard or is there a standard [regarding food workers]?*
 - *Hepatitis shots, if someone visits a [foreign] location, is there an obligation to get a shot?*
 - *How many people go on vacation and come back to work in food production?*
- Some wondered about packaging, labelling and punitive measures
 - *Standards and packaging information, how is it regulated or managed?*
 - *How is it all done? Who sets the standards and changes the standards?*
 - *Are the standards for no-name products as strict?*
 - *What happens to a company after they have a product recall, i.e., cat food?*
- Some wondered about honest claims in restaurants and nutritional content.
 - *The specials you see at restaurants, how do you know there specials aren't mislabelled?*
 - *Trans-fats in restaurants.*
 - *Restaurant food including fast foods concern about trans fats, hygiene.*

3.3.7 MERCURY IN SEAFOOD

Key Findings:

- Worries about mercury levels mainly in salmon and tuna seemed to be based on fuzzy information, including the farmed vs. wild debate.
 - Consumers demonstrated few spontaneous concerns related to the safety of fish.
- Overall, mercury and other possible contaminants in fish and seafood were spontaneously mentioned in Calgary and Toronto, mainly with regard to farmed salmon and tuna.
 - *Mercury in seafood, especially tuna and salmon.*
 - *Bigger fish like tuna are affected more by mercury but I love salmon more than any other fish, I would never give it up even if it contains mercury.*
 - *Mercury, when it goes into your body it doesn't get out. I read some articles about contaminated fish. It affects how I shop for fish. I eat only salmon from Canada. It is safer than Salmon from Norway.*
 - *I'll never buy farmed salmon because of the mercury level and the crap being fed to them.*
 - *It's labelled Atlantic but it could be farmed.*
 - *Wild salmon is better than farmed.*
 - *I know there's a fish being sold in stores, but there was an article that said it wasn't safe. It came from a fish farm and we stopped buying that.*
 - *Salmon. Too high mercury levels. That's been an alert.*
 - Participants troubled by mercury levels seemed to have somewhat fuzzy information about it.
 - *Most governments do tests on the fish, i.e. mercury.*
 - *I'm not too clear on mercury.*
 - *Chemicals are pumped into the river or sea get into the salmon.*
 - *It's not just mercury, there are so many others.*
 - While it is curious that Montreal and Halifax participants did not mention fish or seafood in the early unprompted parts of the discussion, this could be attributed to the fact that meat-eating respondents were specifically recruited, rather than fish or seafood consumers. It could also be that participants were simply less concerned about fish and/or fish safety.
 - However, during the prompted parts of the discussion, concerns about seafood and shellfish—in particular, mussels—were mentioned in Halifax where there had been food recalls or alerts for these items.

Questions

- Only a few questions regarded mercury:
 - *Is salmon and tuna full of mercury? We just buy it and hope for the best.*
 - *Which is the bad salmon? I don't know.*
 - *Where did they come up with the number or amount that you can safely eat?*

3.3.8 GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Key Findings:

- There was unanimous concern and negative impressions of biotechnology products.
 - Consumers included GMO as part of food safety because of its unknown cumulative impact on humans and the food supply.
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- There were no specific questions asked about genetically modified foods, but this does not mean that people were disinterested. To the contrary, participants in groups where this topic was discussed seemed keenly interested in the topic. However, there was simply insufficient time to delve into more detail.
 - In some groups in most locations, the idea of genetically modified foods created uncertainty due to the unknown cumulative effects on health and ultimately on the food supply.
 - Some participants were more informed than others, but when these individuals informed their respective groups, a consensus of concern emerged.
 - *Most food in Canada is genetically modified unless the food is organic*
 - *Lobbyists argue that we have been genetically changing food since the turn of the century.*
 - *Because of genetic manipulation, we are losing the genetic stock in various foods, like bananas.*
 - *I know there's a lot of genetic manipulation to make foods last over long distance.*
 - *They are screwing around with nature, the DNA of what you are eating, for example, creating square tomatoes*
 - *In genetically modified food, nutrients are diminished.*
 - *They are trying to make wheat and corn more resistant to drought*
 - *In Europe they label GMO products.*
 - *Big consciousness in Europe re genetically modified food.*
 - While asked no questions about GMO foods, some expressed an interest in seeing GMO information on food labels.
 - This is one area where further research could be useful.

3.3.9 PLASTICS AND PACKAGING

Key Findings:

- A high level of anxiety was associated with plastics and food containers—people were puzzled and uncertain about what to do.
 - Consumers thought that packaging standards and regulations had not kept pace with the times.
- While packaging was mentioned in all four locations, some participants, mainly in Toronto, spontaneously expressed particular concerns about plastics.
 - Plastic water bottles were worrisome, as were plastic containers and packages with plastic components.
 - *Plastic controversy re leaching into and harming foodstuffs and water.*
 - *Water bottles chemicals from the plastic contaminate the water.*
 - *Plastic containing anything is a safety issue.*
 - *Concern about the plastic—cancer.*
 - In one group, all participants agreed that it was not safe to microwave food in plastic containers.
 - There was also some notion that packaging standards had not kept pace with the times.
 - *Food regulations were developed in the 20s and 30s, but now we are dealing with packaging that is newer and no regulations on them, i.e., plastic.*

Questions

- Overall, participants wondered whether materials in food containers were safe, or whether possible contamination was still an unknown factor.
 - *How many years have we been using plastic?*
 - *Container/packaging of food, i.e., tin or plastic. Can the packaging contaminate food products?*
 - *What is the expiry date on the plastic containers?*
 - *How safe is plastic packaging, i.e. water bottles, microwave plastic containers?*
 - *Dioxin, bleaches and other toxins, is it necessary?*

3.3.10 WATER CONTAMINATION

Key Findings:

- The Walkerton incident left a legacy of worry about water consumption, as did produce recalls due to flawed irrigation methods.
 - Water and beverages were included in the definition of food safety in the minds of consumers.
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- Participants in some groups, most notably in Toronto, but also in Calgary and Halifax, spontaneously expressed anxieties about water contamination.
 - This applied to tap water, bottled water, and water used in food preparation at home and in processing plants.
 - *I'm concerned that the water bill never lists the purity of the water.*
 - Many participants generally knew that contaminated water was used to irrigate crops, especially in foreign countries, as evidenced by food recalls over the past few years.
 - *Chemicals leach into the soil and the water supply and eventually into the food.*
 - Not surprisingly, Torontonians had strong memories about the failure of the provincial government to safeguard the Walkerton water supply, and the serious consequences that resulted. Participants in other locations had also heard of Walkerton.
 - *Walkerton is a confidence issue.*
 - *I have spoken to people in Toronto who have said that it could happen here after a good rainfall. It happened in Vancouver, they had to boil water after a severe downfall.*
 - Some were troubled about lead levels.
 - *Lead water pipes in old city hall Toronto and in some schools.*
 - *Walkerton water safety and levels of lead in the water, especially schools.*
 - A few had heard that a certain brand of bottled water had carcinogens.

Questions

- Some participants had questions related to water used in food processing, and bottled water.
 - *What about the water used in the processing of foods? If the water is bad, will it contaminate the food?*
 - *Bottled water, where does it come from? How do we know it is not tap water?*
 - *What are the standards for bottled water? Walkerton.*

3.3.11 SUGAR SUBSTITUTES

Key Findings:

- Disease-causing sugar substitutes were a growing issue due to the increasing public focus on weight and obesity.
 - People were concerned because aspartame was seen as a carcinogen.
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- Some participants spontaneously said they worried about the safety of sugar substitutes, given media coverage over the past few years.
 - While the top issue was cancer, unknown factors could affect future health, and this is what bothered people.
 - *We know aspartame is a carcinogen.*
 - *I have more than a strong belief . . . my sister's friend use to drink diet cola and she started to get MS, then she stopped drinking and the symptoms just disappeared.*
 - *For me aspartame isn't so much as about cancer. We know that aspartame is safer with protein.*

3.4 FOOD HANDLING AT HOME

3.4.1 UNDERSTANDING FOODBORNE ILLNESS

Key Findings:

- Only low level risks were generally associated with foodborne illness.
 - Food poisoning was thought to have mainly short-term effects, compared with the cumulative damages from chemicals, pesticides, etc.
 - Consumers seemed to have a good understanding of causes and symptoms.
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- Participants in all groups spontaneously mentioned some aspect connected to foodborne illness during the first exercise, especially recalls or alerts related to salmonella or E. coli.
 - Many either knew someone or had personally experienced foodborne illness, which was more comfortably referred to as food poisoning.
 - Overall, there was high general awareness that foodborne illness is mainly caused by bacteria, and contamination in food or in water used to irrigate produce.
 - Participants tended to see most instances occurring from food consumed outside the home, in public places such as restaurants and cafeterias, especially salad bars.
 - During the prompted portion of the discussion, most participants said they could recognize food poisoning symptoms, and some specified sweating, vomiting, abdominal cramping, and diarrhea.
 - *It looks like the flu.*
 - A range of foods were associated with such illness:
 - Fish
 - Undercooked chicken and pork
 - Fresh fruits and vegetables
 - Meats, including hamburger
 - Processed foods
 - Mayonnaise
 - Eggs
 - Seafood and shellfish
 - Canned foods
 - Dairy
 - Chinese buffets

3.4.2 AVOIDING FOOD CONTAMINATION

Key Findings:

- Consumers seemed to have a good working knowledge of food-handling practices at home.
 - They still wanted more information and reassurance that they are on the right track.
-
- Participants in all eight groups spontaneously identified some of the things they have been doing at home to avoid food contamination during the last few years.
 - Overall, most participants indicated they were doing at least some things differently than a few years ago, thanks to recent food recalls or alerts and greater attention to food safety measures in the media.
 - Self-protection efforts could be divided into five main categories: (1) washing hands and food, (2) cleaning utensils and surfaces, (3) cooking and safe storage, (4) respect for expiry dates, and (5) selective shopping.

1) Washing hands and food

- Participants in all locations included hand-washing as a safety precaution.
 - *I wash my hands between touching everything.*
- While many participants said they washed certain foods, they generally differed on water temperature, and whether rinsing under the tap was good enough. Some used cold running water, others used warm.
 - Most participants did not use any type of cleaning agent, but some in Halifax used a product called "Fit."
 - *I wash with warm water, and then cold.*
 - *I only rinse under cold water.*
 - Most participants washed fruits and vegetables to get rid of pesticide residues.
 - *I wash it but don't think that the water actually washes it off, it is probably more psychological than anything.*
 - *I always wash my produce more. I peel a lot of my fruits.*
 - *When you wash an apple you still see a waxy finish on it.*
 - *Food with skins don't need to be washed, like mandarins.*
 - Some washed the skins of fruits that required peeling to avoid contamination by the knife.

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- *I wash melons because when you are peeling it the chemicals, preservatives or pesticides are on the skin of the melon and when you cut it you contaminate the inside.*
 - *I only wash the skin of the cantaloupe. I don't know why I don't wash other fruits like oranges.*
 - One woman said she even "scrubbed" leafy vegetables in warm water, to make sure they were safe.
 - *I scrub, with a vegetable brush and warmish water.*
 - In Halifax, there was mention of using paper towels instead of cloth towels to dry fruits and vegetables after washing.
 - Some participants in various groups washed meat, poultry or fish, using different water temperatures.
 - *I wash the chicken with lemon juice or vinegar.*
 - *I only wash chicken, not beef.*
 - *I wash my fish before I cook it.*

2) Cleaning utensils and surfaces

- Participants in various groups took precautions to keep kitchen counters and cooking utensils clean, to avoid cross-contamination.
 - *I clean the counter tops.*
 - *We're super cautious about touching utensils and plates. We scrub the plates.*
 - *I've seen it in a lab, two knives, one cut pork the other cut red meat, the bacteria grew faster on the knife used to cut the pork.*
 - *I'm very careful with chicken, I sterilize the cutting board and utensils.*
 - *I boil things.*
 - *La façon de préparer les aliments, l'utilisation du couteau avec le poulet. / The way to prepare food, specially the use of knife for chicken.*
 - *Je suis conscient de l'hygiène du comptoir où je coupe les aliments. / I am more aware of the cleanliness of the kitchen counter where I cut food.*
 - *Ne pas se servir du même ustensile pour la viande crue et la viande cuite. / You should not use the same utensil for raw and cooked meat.*
- Some people used separate cutting surfaces and storage shelves for different foods.
 - *I've got colour coded cutting sheets, I use one for chicken, another for vegetables and another for meat, to avoid cross contamination.*
 - *We use different shelves in the fridge, and don't have hamburger high because of dripping blood. I clean the fridge weekly.*
 - *Ne plus décongeler la viande sur le comptoir. / Do not defrost meat on the kitchen counter.*

3) Cooking and safe storage

- Some participants in various groups were more careful now with regard to cooking and cooking temperatures, with a tendency to cook meat longer.
 - *I overcook everything.*
 - *I notice now, certain meat products, cook at this temperature. I went out and bought a temperature gauge.*
 - *My husband cooks his meats and uses thermometers.*
 - *I used to cook my steaks medium rare, now I do medium.*
 - *You have to cook pork very well and wash it thoroughly.*
 - *Pork gets rotten easily, so food safety-wise it is a concern.*
- Some specified that meats, poultry and seafood required storing at the proper temperature.
 - *Je ne me sers plus de thermos pour mes lunchs parce que je ne peux pas bien contrôler la température. / I don't use a thermos anymore for lunch because I cannot control the temperature.*

4) Respect for expiry dates

- Some participants in various groups were careful about expiry dates not only when they shopped, but also in their home. There was some uncertainty about the wisdom of using foods past their expiry dates.
 - *I check best before dates.*
 - *Dès que j'ai un doute, je jette. / As soon as I have a doubt about the safety of food, I throw it away immediately.*

5) Selective shopping

- Participants were asked if they avoided purchasing any types of food or food ingredients that they perceived as unsafe.
 - Some had spontaneously mentioned a change in purchase habits during the initial team exercise, and this data has been included with the prompted responses.
- Participants in various groups said they tended to avoid buying specific foods not only during a recall or alert, but long afterwards. Other excluded foods:
 - Canned food in general, food in dented cans
 - Meats in packages with broken seals, any pre-packaged meat
 - Packaged fish
 - Luncheon meats
 - Packaged foods in general
 - Foods sold at roadside stands and in local farmer's markets
 - Imported fruits and vegetables, if possible

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- Packaged foods with too many ingredients, or with particular ingredients, such as MSG
 - *I stay away from additives, fats and sugars.*
 - Foods that did not stipulate the exclusion of particular allergenic components, such as gluten (re Celiac disease).
- In addition, participants in most groups said they made an effort to include certain foods in their diets, such as:
 - A range of organic foods, such as free range eggs, produce, meats, and fish
 - Foods grown and produced locally.

Questions

- Participants in various groups had some questions about food handling practices at home, mainly in relation to washing and cooking.
 - *Is it good enough to rinse salads with cold water?*
 - *How do we make sure we're washing the products enough?*
 - *How long should we be cooking?*
 - *What's an ideal temperature?*
 - *Is cooking enough to remove germs?*
 - *How do individual homes rate?*
 - *Comme consommateurs, on ne connaît pas bien les règles à suivre pour la conservation, cuisson et manipulation des aliments. / As consumers, we are not well-versed about basic hygiene rules to store, cook and handle meat.*

3.5 COMMUNICATION ISSUES

3.5.1 MAIN INFORMATION SOURCES

Key Findings:

- People relied heavily on the mass media for information, and used the Internet as a supplement.
 - There was very low awareness or recall of specific Web site resources on food safety, or of any printed materials on the topic.
-
- During the prompted portion of the discussions, participants in all eight groups said they used a wide range of sources for information about food safety, including:
 - The major media: TV, radio, newspapers and magazines.
 - Internet: However, there was limited awareness of specific Web sites devoted to food safety. Only one respondent (from Toronto) knew about the Health Canada site, and another had heard something about it. But this was not mentioned anywhere else.
 - *The University of Guelph is a good site.*
 - *Les médias électroniques parce que c'est plus rapide / Electronic media because it is faster.*
 - *I know some e-numbers, and it'll say carcinogenic components. You go to a Web site and it gives you a whole list.*
 - Word-of-mouth: Friends and family often kept each other in the information loop, especially when it came to food recalls and alerts.
 - No one mentioned getting information from health practitioners, retail outlets, or even the government.

3.5.2 INFORMATION ON LABELS

Key Finding:

- People read labels, but did not find much satisfactory or understandable information they could use.
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- Not surprisingly, given that food labelling was one of their top major concerns, most participants in all locations reported an increased tendency to read the information on food labels.

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- However, there was also a tendency to mistrust what was on labels, or at least regard it with some caution. For example, one Toronto participant pointed out how ridiculous it was for bottled water to state that there was zero percent fat content.
 - Despite their scepticism, people said they took particular notice of:
 - Expiry dates
 - Whether or not there were preservatives, trans fats, sugars, salt, and in particular, allergenic ingredients.
 - *I'd like to see a picture of a hydrogenated palm tree.*
 - *Gluten free facility.*
 - *Salt content.*
 - The order of ingredient listings, with some awareness that priority of listings indicated the percentage or amount of a particular ingredient.
 - Safe cooking methods
 - The origin of the product. However, by the end of the discussions, many doubted the accuracy of such information, and reiterated their concerns with regard to lack of full and honest disclosure, and transparency.
 - Farmed vs. wild, especially in relation to fish and seafood.
 - Some said they would only glance at a label, and would not purchase a food if there were too many ingredients listed, assuming it could not be healthy.
 - In addition to a fuller, easier to understand and less misleading list of ingredients, some participants, especially but not exclusively from Montreal, expressed interest in the following additional food safety information:
 - Storage considerations, such as duration, and safe temperature
 - Warnings about possible contamination from handling
 - Cooking instructions for raw meat
 - Freezing life or period
 - Packaging date
 - Consistency with regard to expiry or best before dates
 - Label showing the date of the last government inspection
 - One person mentioned that in England, colour coding was used to indicate the healthiness of the food.

3.5.3 COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

Email Alerts

Key Finding:

- People were willing to register for automatic email notification of food alerts and/or recalls, but were clearly not receptive to automated phone messages. Note that participants were not made aware that such phone messages were aimed at people who suffered with allergies.
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- At the end of their sessions, participants in all groups were queried about their interest in receiving food recall and alert information by email.
 - No one was aware this type of service was available.
 - Interest in email alerts generally varied, within and across groups.
 - Some participants were quite keen, while others were definitely opposed to this method, and preferred to be informed first by the mass media—mainly television—and then directed to a particular Web site.
 - No one wanted to receive automated telephone messages. In fact, reaction to this idea was strongly rebuffed, since it was considered to be quite intrusive.
 - However, some would not mind a text message.
 - Note that the idea relating to automated telephone messages was intended mainly for people with food allergies. This fact was not mentioned to participants, nor were food allergies part of the recruitment criteria.

Suggestions Made by Participants

- Consistently, participants in all eight groups agreed that it was important to heighten public awareness about food safety issues, and were in favour of a food safety awareness campaign.
 - *Have an ongoing campaign to keep people informed.*
 - *Start in the schools, learn young.*
 - *Moi, je trouve qu'il faut davantage d'informations pour les consommateurs. / I want to take advantage of information available to consumers.*
- When asked about the best way to inform them, most participants expressed a clear desire to be informed by the usual mass media.

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- *Il pourrait y avoir plus de campagne de publicité à la télévision pour sensibiliser les gens, comme ils l'ont fait pour la maladie du hamburger. / There should be more TV advertising to inform people, like they did for the hamburger disease [mad cow].*
 - There was also a suggestion to have experts appear on the morning talk show circuit, and refer viewers or listeners to specific Web sites during the broadcast.
 - Some also recommended that notices should be posted in grocery stores and/or retail outlets, along with posters and brochures at points of sale.
 - Montreal participants suggested a TV campaign similar to the "little blue man" effort run by the provincial government to promote physical fitness, an approach which was deemed suitable for both adults and children.
 - There could be different tips or measures that consumers could practice to enhance food safety (cooking, preparing, hygiene, etc.)

Questions

- Some questions about media coverage were generated spontaneously during the first exercise, and some were posed at the end of the discussions, during the prompted queries.
 - *How do we become more educated and understanding about what the government is doing?*
 - *Is there a monthly update? Anything that's written on a regular basis?*
 - *How valid is the media and their reporting? Is there bias? How much do they report, what's missing?*
 - *Is it enough with the media coverage? Are we hearing enough?*
 - *Is the government leaving information out because of corporate structures or media hype?*

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANT QUESTIONS

LIST OF PARTICIPANT QUESTIONS

All of the following 140 or so questions were spontaneously raised by participants during the focus group sessions.

Standards and Regulations

1. *Who is in charge and what are their qualifications?*
2. *Canadian food regulations, who sets them and do they actually reflect the current realities?*
3. *Who decides how and what is safe?*
4. *Who regulates and decides what level of pesticides and preservatives are safe for humans?*
5. *On n'est pas certain qui exerce le contrôle ou approuve les produits. / Not sure who is responsible for food control and product approval.*
6. *Qui s'occupe de faire respecter les règlements concernant la salubrité des aliments au Canada ? / Who is responsible for ensuring the safety of food in Canada?*
7. *What are the government safety standards?*
8. *What policies do they put in place?*
9. *How is food regulated?*
10. *Est-ce que les normes de salubrité des aliments sont respectées ? /Are regulations about food safety respected?*

Food Recalls and Alerts

11. *What if there was a major epidemic?*
12. *If there was a major epidemic, do we have a plan?*
13. *We wonder about how many foods are unsafe? We hear about foods that are being recalled.*
14. *How does food get infected?*

Food Contamination

15. *What is E. coli?*
16. *How many germs do we eat but our bodies are controlling them? Are we eating contaminated food but our body is controlling them.*

Food Labelling

Truth and accuracy re chemicals, sugar, MSG, sulphates, GMO, and aspartame

17. *We wonder how many chemicals are left. It's supposedly as you look at the ingredients it's less.*
18. *Why are some things labeled and some not?*
19. *Accuracy of labels on products: are they hiding a few things?*
20. *How accurate are those labels? Is it what they say they are?*
21. *Who is checking the labels for accuracy?*
22. *Are the percentages accurate?*
23. *How do they test an orange or an apple?*

24. *How many bugs are you allowed to have?*
25. *What is the level of tolerance?*
26. *Why is there aspartame? Now they are just changing the name of it.*

Expiry dates

27. *Who decides and what happens to the product after the expiry date?*
28. *What do they do with expired food?*
29. *How do they decide best before date? What happens if I eat it one day before or after the best before date?*
30. *I find some packages have expiry dates. Some have best before on them. What is the difference?*

Additives and preservatives

31. *What is in our food?*
32. *What do they do to food so they can sell it all year?*
33. *What makes food last longer?*
34. *What does go into the food industry to get perfect shape and colour?*
35. *Are there chemicals in frozen veggies? Do they add anything to preserve them?*
36. *I wonder what is cancer causing, specifically?*

Nutrition

37. *Is whole wheat no longer better than white? I used to whole wheat, but now you're saying there's no benefits?*
38. *Why are there trans fats in milk?*
39. *Nutritional information, how is that arrived at?*

Meat and Poultry

Safety

40. *You sort of think twice before you bite into it, do you trust it? I was hesitant, is there potential Could I get disease?*
41. *I eat beef and pork but worry. How safe is safe? How do we know that the practice of feeding other animals to cows has stopped?*
42. *Is meat injected with red dye to make it look better and more appetizing?*
43. *Is meat injected with colouring?*
44. *What are the hormone levels in meat?*

Animal disease, especially mad cow

45. *Pourquoi autant de maladies: grippe aviaire, vache folle, virus, bactéries, salmonelle ? Est-ce dû au non respect des normes en vigueur ? / Why are there so many illnesses like avian flu, BSE, salmonella, bacteria, virus? Is it because safety standards were not respected?*
46. *I wonder if mad cow exists.*
47. *What happened to mad cow disease? Do they know where it originated or, how it started? Is it completely gone now?*
48. *Comment les animaux sont-ils nourris: produits chimiques, hormones dans leur nourriture? Dans quelles conditions sont-ils transportés ? / How are animals fed: chemicals, hormones in their food? In what conditions are they transported?*

Testing procedures and criteria

49. *What kind of testing is done to see what disease an animal has?*
50. *If an animal is treated for disease what was it injected with to treat it?*
51. *There's a process that we believe that animals [with mad cow] fall, but what is that process?*
52. *I wonder how closely animals are monitored. How is it monitored?*
53. *Who decides what steroid and antibiotics can be used in our food?*

Organic Food

54. *With some foods, is it really organic?*
55. *What is organic? My sister eats everything organic head to toe. Is she really going to live longer? What's going to happen?*
56. *I wonder about organic foods and how they prevent disease.*
57. *Will you die first because of worrying from the stress of it. Will it make a difference?*
58. *What determines whether a food is considered organic?*
59. *Why is organic better (how do we know) and how do we know it is organic?*
60. *Are organic foods really natural?*
61. *What are the standards for organic? Can it have preservatives in it?*
62. *Who regulates certified organic food?*
63. *How is organic food being regulated?*
64. *Is the term "organic" regulated by the government?*
65. *How can a person know if it is REALLY organic?*
66. *Can there be more or better disclosure re what is allowed to be labeled green, organic, made in Canada?*
67. *How does pollution affect our food?*
68. *How does fertilizer affect our food?*
69. *Les insecticides sont-ils dangereux pour la santé ?/ Are insecticides harmful?*
70. *L'utilisation des pesticides est-elle sous contrôle? / Is the use of pesticides under control?*

Safety Inspections

Number of inspectors

71. *Safety inspectors, are they overworked?*
72. *Are there enough inspectors for all of the restaurants in the city [Toronto]?*
73. *Les inspecteurs sont-ils en nombre suffisant ? / Are there enough inspectors?*

System failure

74. *How did infectious products get by inspectors?*
75. *We always have a finger pointed at the manufacturer, but how did it get by?*
76. *How do you know that the store that sells beef isn't selling horse meat?*
77. *How many shortcuts are covered by legal terms?*

Frequency, training, compliance

78. *How often is food inspected (imported and local)?*
79. *Quelle est la fréquence des contrôles ? Est-ce que ce sont les mêmes normes d'inspection pour tous les types d'entreprise? / What is the frequency of inspection? Are the inspection standards the same for all businesses?*

- 80. *What percentage of food is inspected?*
- 81. *How is local food sold at farmer's markets tested?*
- 82. *What are the inspection policies on foods sold at local farmer's markets / side of the road*
- 83. *How well trained are Canada's inspectors?*
- 84. *How often are they retrained or retested?*
- 85. *Les normes sont-elles respectées dans les restaurants? / Safety standards in restaurants, are they respected?*
- 86. *Les normes d'hygiène sont-elles respectées par les détaillants ? / Are the hygiene rules complied with by retailers?*

Imported Foods

International standards and who is responsible in Canada

- 87. *International, when you have a number of countries, what are their standards? Are they similar?*
- 88. *The main concern is how it is regulated from an international perspective. Who tests it?*
- 89. *Whatever we brought here, we wonder if it is regulated? We always have to wonder.*
- 90. *Is there a lack of inspectors in other countries? Do they have trained inspectors?*
- 91. *A l'égard des produits importés, qu'est-ce qu'on fait comme test? On ne connaît pas leur technique de production. / For imported products, who is responsible for regulations control? We don't know their production methods.*
- 92. *La provenance, les normes internationales sont-elles les mêmes qu'ici? / Are safety and inspection standards the same for imported and Canadian food?*
- 93. *Quelles sont les normes de salubrité, les règles d'inspection en ce qui a trait aux aliments importés ? / What are safety standards, inspection rules for imported products?*

Cost of imports and shipping

- 94. *I wonder if it's cheaper to ship across borders?*
- 95. *Does imported food undergo the same level of testing as Canadian food?*
- 96. *What is the ripening process for fresh food? How long does food sit before it is shipped?*
- 97. *How long do imports stay in customs?*
- 98. *Is there a difference between perishable and non-perishable for how long it sits in dry dock?*
- 99. *Who is responsible for the imports? For example, the Highliner story, fish coming in from China, fruit from South America, or any country that has lower standards than what we hope Canada has.*

Local vs. non-local or imported

- 100. *Why are we importing? Why not grow it in our own country?*
- 101. *How much food is actually imported vs. grown at the local or national level?*
- 102. *I want to know where the product originated.*
- 103. *Spinach. Why is it so difficult to source food locally? Why does it have to be shipped in from elsewhere?*
- 104. *Why can't I find locally grown produce in Ontario supermarkets?*

Mercury in Fish and Seafood

- 105. *Is salmon and tuna full of mercury? We just buy it and hope for the best.*
- 106. *Which is the bad salmon? I don't know.*
- 107. *Where did they come up with the number or amount that you can safely eat?*

Plastics and Packaging

- 108. *How many years have we been using plastic without affect?*
- 109. *Container/packaging of food, i.e. tin or plastic. Can the packaging contaminate food products?*
- 110. *What is the expiry date on the plastic containers?*
- 111. *How safe is plastic packaging, i.e. water bottles, microwave plastic containers?*
- 112. *Dioxin, bleaches and other toxins, is it necessary?*

Water Contamination

- 113. *What about the water used in the processing of foods? If the water is bad, will it contaminate the food?*
- 114. *Bottled water, where does it come from? How do we know it is not tap water?*
- 115. *What are the standards for bottled water? Walkerton.*

Food Industry and Service Sector

Responsibility for monitoring

- 116. *Basically the whole thing, given fast foods and knowledge in the past in how certain chains accept certain meats, how do we know we can trust them?*
- 117. *Contamination of the food supply chain. Who is actually monitoring this?*
- 118. *Safeguards around food production. Who is going to do it?*
- 119. *Who monitors restaurants and what controls are there?*
- 120. *What is the cleaning process for frozen veggies and meat?*

Food-worker hygiene

- 121. *Should there be a standard or is there a standard [regarding food workers]?*
- 122. *Hepatitis shots, if someone visits a [foreign] location, is there an obligation to get a shot?*
- 123. *How many people go on vacation and come back to work in food production?*

Packaging, labelling and punitive measures

- 124. *Standards and packaging information, how is it regulated or managed?*
- 125. *How is it all done? Who sets the standards and changes the standards?*
- 126. *Are the standards for no-name products as strict?*
- 127. *What happens to a company after they have a product recall, i.e., cat food?*

Restaurant labelling and nutritional content

- 128. *The specials you see at restaurants, how do you know there specials aren't mislabelled?*
- 129. *Trans-fats in restaurants.*
- 130. *Restaurant food including fast foods concern about trans fats, hygiene.*

Food Handling at Home

- 131. *Is it good enough to rinse salads with cold water?*
- 132. *How do we make sure we're washing the products enough?*
- 133. *How long should we be cooking?*
- 134. *What's an ideal temperature?*
- 135. *Is cooking enough to remove germs?*
- 136. *How do individual homes rate?*
- 137. *Comme consommateurs, on ne connaît pas bien les règles à suivre pour la conservation, cuisson et manipulation des aliments. / As consumers, we are not well-versed about basic hygiene rules to store, cook and handle meat.*

Media Coverage

- 138. *How do we become more educated and understanding about what the government is doing?*
- 139. *Is there a monthly update? Anything that's written on a regular basis?*
- 140. *How valid is the media and their reporting? Is there bias? How much do they report, what's missing?*
- 141. *Is it enough with the media coverage? Are we hearing enough?*
- 142. *Is the government leaving information out because of corporate structures or media hype?*

APPENDIX 2

RECRUITMENT SCREENER (English and French)

RECRUITING SCREENER
GROUP 1 – TORONTO

Project: 746-005
November 2007

Hello. My name is _____ from Créatec +, a public opinion research firm. We are presently conducting a study on behalf of the Government of Canada. We are looking for people 25 years of age and older to participate in a focus group to discuss some food safety related issues.

Your participation is on a voluntary basis and your identity will remain confidential, your name, as a participant in this study, will never be shared with anyone, and your comments will be combined with those of other participants in order to get a global picture. Your participation in our study will not affect any dealings you may have or will have with any department of the Government of Canada.

I would like to ask you a few questions to verify your eligibility for the focus group. This will take only 3 or 4 minutes. If you are eligible, you will be invited to participate in the discussion and you will receive a **\$50** cheque to thank you for your participation.

Q1 Who is responsible most of the time for doing the grocery shopping in your household?

- Respondent.....
- Shared responsibility.....
- Someone else **ASK TO SPEAK TO THAT PERSON**

All participants should be responsible for doing the grocery shopping.

Q2 Can you tell me if you or anyone in your immediate family works or has worked in the last two years for: **(Read)**

- | | NO | YES | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ▪ A marketing, research, or a public relations firm, or an advertising agency | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | CONCLUDE |
| ▪ Radio, TV, the media | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| ▪ A manufacturer, a food chain, or a distributor of food products or any company related to the food industry... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| ▪ The municipal, provincial, or federal government | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| ▪ A political organization | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| ▪ A restaurant..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |

Q3 Can you tell me if you or anyone in your immediate family...? **(Read)**

- | | NO | YES | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ▪ does not eat red meat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | CONCLUDE |
| ▪ has to follow a diet prescribed by a health professional because of his/her medical condition | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |

Q4 Do you belong to a cultural or ethnic community?

- Yes, which one? _____ **GO TO ETHNIC SCREENER**
- No

Q5 Now, consider the topic of the safety of the food you buy. Compared with a few years ago, would you say you are less confident, as confident or more confident that the food sold in Canada, including imported food is safe to eat? (**Repeat scale if necessary**)

- Less confident..... **GROUP 1**
- As confident **CONCLUDE**
- More confident.....

<i>NOTE FOR TORONTO</i>
GROUP 1 = LESS CONFIDENT
GROUP 2 = ETHNIC PEOPLE NO QUOTA OF CONFIDENCE
OTHERS CONCLUDE

Q6 What is your age category? (**GOOD VARIETY**)

- 18-24..... **CONCLUDE**
- 25-34.....
- 35-44..... **GOOD MIX**
- 45-54.....
- 55-59.....
- 60 +..... **CONCLUDE**

Q7 Do you have children living with you?

- Yes **GOOD MIX**
- No

Q8 What is the last year of schooling that you completed?

- Some high school.....
- High school completed.....
- Some college **GOOD MIX**
- College completed
- Some university.....
- University completed.....

Q9 Do you have a paid job?

- Yes, full-time
 - Yes, part-time
 - No
 - Student
- GO TO Q11**

Q10 Could you tell me your position or occupation and what type of company you work for?

OCCUPATION	COMPANY

GOOD MIX OF OCCUPATIONS (exclude jobs related to farming, production, distribution, sale of food, including restaurants)

Q11 Have you ever participated in a discussion group for a research company?

- No, never
 - Yes, less than 24 months ago
 - Yes , more than 24 months ago
- AT LEAST HALF (5 RECRUITS)**
- CONCLUDE**

Q12 What was the topic discussed?

SPECIFY: _____
(IF TOPIC RELATED TO FOOD, TERMINATE)

Q13 Record gender:

- Male
 - Female
- GOOD MIX**

SCREEN FOR HEARING / SPEAKING DIFFICULTIES OR CONCERN ABOUT ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE

We would like you to participate in a focus group. To thank you for taking part, you will receive a **\$50** cheque at the end of the session which will last 2 hours.

If asked: The amount received is not considered income. Therefore, you do not have to declare it for tax purposes.

If the participant wants information about what a discussion group is

A discussion group is made up of approximately 6 to 8 people and a moderator from our firm who will gather everyone's opinions and reactions. Participation is on a voluntary basis and comments made during the discussion will be combined to ensure that your personal identity remains confidential.

The session will take place at _____, **(time)** at **(place)**, which is located at **(address)**.

TORONTO	November 26 <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Group 1: 5h30 pm▪ Group 2: 7:30 Ethnic	The Bay Charles Consulting Company Inc (BC3) 151 Bloor Street West, Suite 420 Tel.: (416)-967-3337
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We ask that you arrive 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the session and identify yourself to our staff who will gladly welcome you. During the discussion it might happen that we ask you to read a document so please bring reading glasses or anything else that you may need . Please bring an ID card with photo. If for any reason you are unable to attend, please let us know as soon as possible at **1(888) 844-1127** so we can find a replacement.

NOTE TO THE RECRUITER

Tell participants that the groups are small and anyone who does not show or cancel at the last minute will compromise the study.
Make sure they know we feel their opinions are valuable.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
TELEPHONE: Home: _____ Office: _____
DATE: _____ TIME: _____
RECRUITER'S NAME: _____ GROUP: _____

THANK YOU! YOUR PARTICIPATION IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED.

	GROUP 1 Less confident (Q4)
▪ Responsible for grocery shopping	All (10)
▪ 25-34	(3)
▪ 35-44	(3)
▪ 45-59	(4)
▪ Ethnic community	---
▪ Fulltime/part-time workers	(6)
▪ Others	(4)

No one in family: a) has to follow a diet prescribed by a health professional because of his/her medical condition b) does not eat red meat.

**RECRUITING SCREENER
TORONTO ETHNIC GROUP**

Project: 746-005
 November 2007

Hello. My name is _____ from Créatec +, a public opinion research firm. We are presently conducting a study on behalf of the Government of Canada. We are looking for people 25 years of age and older who belong to a cultural or ethnic minority group to participate in a focus group to discuss some food safety related issues.

Your participation is on a voluntary basis and your identity will remain confidential, your name, as a participant in this study, will never be shared with anyone, and your comments will be combined with those of other participants in order to get a global picture . Your participation in our study will not affect any dealings you may have or will have with any department of the Government of Canada.

I would like to ask you a few questions to verify your eligibility for the focus group. This will take only 3 or 4 minutes. If you are eligible, you will be invited to participate in the discussion and you will receive a **\$50** cheque to thank you for your participation.

Q1 Who is responsible most of the time for doing the grocery shopping in your household?

- Respondent.....
- Shared responsibility.....
- Someone else **ASK TO SPEAK TO THAT PERSON**

Q2 Verify that respondent belongs to a cultural or ethnic minority group or visible minority and ask: In which country where you born?

- Canada **CONCLUDE**
- _____ **GOOD MIX**

ALL PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THE GROCERY SHOPPING AND BELONGING TO A CULTURAL OR ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP.

Q3 Can you tell me if you or anyone in your immediate family works or has worked in the last two years for: **(Read)**

- | | NO | YES | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ▪ A marketing, research, or a public relations firm, or an advertising agency | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | CONCLUDE |
| ▪ Radio, TV, the media | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| ▪ A manufacturer, a food chain, or a distributor of food products or any company related to the food industry... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| ▪ The municipal, provincial, or federal government | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| ▪ A political organization | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |
| ▪ A restaurant..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |

Q4 Can you tell me if you or anyone in your immediate family...? **(Read)**

	NO	YES
▪ does not eat red meat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
▪ has to follow a diet prescribed by a health professional because of his/her medical condition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<input type="radio"/>	CONCLUDE
<input type="radio"/>	

Q5 What is your age category? **(GOOD VARIETY)**

▪ 18-24.....	<input type="radio"/>	CONCLUDE
▪ 25-34.....	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ 35-44.....	<input type="radio"/>	GOOD MIX
▪ 45-54.....	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ 55-59.....	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ 60 +.....	<input type="radio"/>	CONCLUDE

Q6 Do you have children living with you?

▪ Yes	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ No	<input type="radio"/>	GOOD MIX

Q7 What is the last year of schooling that you completed?

▪ Some high school.....	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ High school completed.....	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ Some college	<input type="radio"/>	GOOD MIX
▪ College completed	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ Some university.....	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ University completed.....	<input type="radio"/>	

Q8 Do you have a paid job?

▪ Yes, full-time	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ Yes, part-time.....	<input type="radio"/>	
▪ No	<input type="radio"/>	GO TO Q10
▪ Student.....	<input type="radio"/>	

Q9 Could you tell me your position or occupation and what type of company you work for?

OCCUPATION	COMPANY

GOOD MIX OF OCCUPATIONS (exclude jobs related to farming, production, distribution, sale of food, including restaurants)

Q10 Have you ever participated in a discussion group for a research company?

- No, never..... **AT LEAST HALF (5 RECRUITS)**
- Yes, less than 24 months ago..... **CONCLUDE**
- Yes , more than 24 months ago.....

Q11 What was the topic discussed?

SPECIFY: _____
(IF TOPIC RELATED TO FOOD, TERMINATE)

Q12 Record gender:

- Male..... **GOOD MIX**
- Female

**Screen for hearing / speaking difficulties or
concern about ability to communicate in English.**

We would like you to participate in a focus group. To thank you for taking part, you will receive a \$50 cheque at the end of the session which will last 2 hours.

If asked: The amount received is not considered income. Therefore, you do not have to declare it for tax purposes.

If the participant wants information about what a discussion group is

A discussion group is made up of approximately 6 to 8 people and a moderator from our firm who will gather everyone's opinions and reactions. Participation is on a voluntary basis and comments made during the discussion will be combined to ensure that your personal identity remains confidential.

The session will take place Wednesday **November 21 at 7:30 pm** at **(place)**, which is located at **(address)**.

TORONTO	November 26 ▪ Group 2: 7:30 pm	The Bay Charles Consulting Company Inc (BC3) 151 Bloor Street West, Suite 420 Tel.: (416)-967-3337
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We ask that you arrive 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the session and identify yourself to our staff who will gladly welcome you. During the discussion it might happen that we ask you to read a document so please bring reading glasses or anything else that you may need. Please bring an ID card with photo. If for any reason you are unable to attend, please let us know as soon as possible at **1(888) 844-1127** so we can find a replacement.

NOTE TO THE RECRUITER

Tell participants that the groups are small and anyone who does not show or cancel at the last minute will compromise the study.
Make sure they know we feel their opinions are valuable.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: Home: _____ **Office:** _____

DATE: _____ **TIME:** _____

RECRUITER'S NAME: _____ **GROUP:** _____

THANK YOU! YOUR PARTICIPATION IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED.

	GROUP 2 ETHNIC
▪ Responsible for grocery shopping	All (10)
▪ Born abroad	All (10)
▪ 25-34	(3)
▪ 35-44	(3)
▪ 45-59	(4)
▪ Fulltime/part-time workers	(6)
▪ Others	(4)

No one in family: a) has to follow a diet prescribed by a health professional because of his/her medical condition b) does not eat red meat.

QUESTIONNAIRE DE RECRUTEMENT

Projet : 746-005

Novembre 2007

Bonjour. Mon nom est _____ de Créatec +, une firme de sondage d'opinion. Nous effectuons présentement une étude pour le gouvernement du Canada. Nous recherchons des personnes âgées de plus de 25 ans ou plus pour participer à un groupe de discussion portant sur des sujets reliés à la sécurité / salubrité des aliments.

Votre participation se fait sur une base volontaire et votre nom, en tant que participant à cette étude ne sera divulgué à personne, vos commentaires seront combinés à ceux des autres participants afin de tracer un portrait d'ensemble. Votre participation à notre étude n'aura aucun impact sur les relations que vous avez ou aurez avec un ministère du gouvernement du Canada.

J'aimerais vous poser quelques questions afin de vérifier votre éligibilité pour le groupe de discussion. Cela ne prendra que 3 ou 4 minutes. Si vous êtes éligible, vous serez invité à participer à la discussion et un chèque de **50\$** vous sera remis pour vous remercier de votre collaboration.

Q1 La plupart du temps, qui dans votre foyer est responsable de faire les achats de produits alimentaires?

- Le répondant.....
- Responsabilité partagée
- Quelqu'un d'autre..... **DEMANDER À PARLER À CETTE PERSONNE**

Tous les participants doivent être les responsables des achats d'aliments.

Q2 Pourriez-vous me dire si vous ou un membre de votre famille immédiate travaillez ou avez déjà travaillé au cours des deux dernières années pour : **(Lire)**

- | | NON | OUI |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ▪ Une agence de recherche ou de relations publiques, marketing, publicité | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ▪ Radio, TV, média..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ▪ Un fabricant, une chaîne ou un distributeur de produits alimentaires ou toute entreprise reliée au secteur de l'alimentation..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> TERMINER |
| ▪ Le gouvernement municipal, provincial ou fédéral..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ▪ Une organisation politique..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ▪ Un restaurant..... | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q3 Pouvez-vous me dire si vous ou quelqu'un dans votre famille immédiate...? **(Lire)**

- | | NON | OUI |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ▪ ne mange pas de viande rouge | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ▪ doit suivre une diète prescrite par un professionnel de la santé à cause de sa condition médicale | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> TERMINER |

Q4 Pensez à la salubrité des aliments que vous achetez. Par rapport à il y a quelques années, diriez-vous que vous êtes moins confiant, aussi confiant ou plus confiant que les aliments vendus au Canada, incluant les aliments importés peuvent être consommés sans risque? (**Lire l'échelle si nécessaire**)

- Moins confiant **GROUPE 1**
- Aussi confiant..... **GROUPE 2**
- Plus confiant.....

Q5 À quelle catégorie d'âge appartenez-vous? (**BONNE VARIÉTÉ**)

- 18-24..... **TERMINER**
- 25-34.....
- 35-44..... **BONNE VARIÉTÉ**
- 45-54.....
- 55-59.....
- 60 +..... **TERMINER**

Q6 Avez-vous des enfants qui demeurent avec vous?

- Oui..... **BONNE VARIÉTÉ**
- Non

Q7 Quelle est la dernière année de scolarité que vous avez complétée?

- Secondaire non complété
- Secondaire complété
- Collégial non complété..... **BONNE VARIÉTÉ**
- Collégial complété.....
- Université non complétée
- Université complétée

Q8 Faites-vous partie d'une communauté culturelle ou ethnique?

- Oui, laquelle? _____
- Non

Q9 Avez-vous un travail rémunéré?

- Oui, à temps plein
- Oui, à temps partiel
- Non **PASSEZ À LA Q11**
- Étudiant

Q10 Pourrais-je connaître votre titre ou occupation et pour quel genre d'entreprise vous travaillez?

OCCUPATION	ENTREPRISE

BONNE VARIÉTÉ D'EMPLOIS (exclure les emplois ayant rapport à l'agriculture, la production, la distribution, la vente d'aliments, incluant les restaurants)

Q11 Avez-vous déjà participé à une discussion de groupe pour une firme de recherche?

- Non, jamais **AU MOINS LA MOITIÉ (5 RECRUTÉS)**
- Oui, moins de 24 mois **TERMINER**
- Oui, plus de 24 mois

Q12 Quel était le sujet discuté?

PRÉCISER : _____
(SI RELIÉ À UN SUJET TOUCHANT L'ALIMENTATION, TERMINER)

Q13 Enregistrer le sexe :

- Homme..... **BON MÉLANGE**
- Femme.....

FILTRE POUR DES DIFFICULTÉS D'AUDITION / D'ÉLOCUTION OU D'UN PROBLÈME À PROPOS DE LA CAPACITÉ À COMMUNIQUER

Nous aimerions que vous participiez à une discussion de groupe. Pour vous remercier de votre participation, vous recevrez un chèque d'un montant de **50\$** à la fin de la discussion qui durera environ 2 heures.

Si demandé : Le montant que vous recevrez n'est pas considéré comme un revenu. Par conséquent, vous n'avez pas à le déclarer à l'impôt.

Si le participant veut de l'information sur ce qu'est une discussion de groupe

Une discussion de groupe est constituée d'environ 6 à 8 personnes ainsi que d'un animateur de notre firme qui recueillera les opinions et les réactions de chacun. La participation se fait entièrement sur une base volontaire et les commentaires faits durant la discussion seront combinés afin de s'assurer que votre identité personnelle demeure confidentielle.

La discussion aura lieu le ____ à **(heure)** chez **(endroit)** au **(adresse)**.

MONTREAL	28 novembre	Ad hoc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Groupe 1 : 17h30 ▪ Groupe 2 : 19h30 	1250 Guy bureau 900 H3H 2T4 Tel.: (514) 937-4040

Nous vous prions de vous présenter 10 minutes avant le début de la discussion, notre personnel se fera un plaisir de vous accueillir. Pendant la discussion, il se peut que vous ayez un document à lire alors s'il vous plaît, veuillez apporter vos lunettes ou autre correctif si nécessaire. Veuillez apporter une pièce d'identité avec photo. Si pour une raison ou une autre vous ne pouvez vous présenter, s'il vous plaît nous en aviser le plus rapidement possible au **(514) 844-1127** afin que nous puissions vous trouver un(e) remplaçant(e).

LORS DU RECRUTEMENT

Dites aux participants que les groupes sont limités et que s'ils ne se présentent pas ou annulent à la dernière minute ça pourrait compromettre l'étude. S'assurer qu'ils savent que leurs opinions comptent.

NOM : _____

ADRESSE : _____

TÉLÉPHONE : Maison : _____ Bureau : _____

DATE : _____ **HEURE :** _____

NOM DE LA RECRUTEUSE : _____ **GROUPE :** _____

MERCI! VOTRE PARTICIPATION EST TRÈS APPRÉCIÉE.

	GROUPE 1 Moins confiant (Q4) 17h30	GROUPE 2 Plus ou aussi confiant (Q4) 19h30
▪ Responsable des achats d'épicerie	Tous (10)	Tous (10)
▪ 25-34	(3)	(3)
▪ 35-44	(3)	(3)
▪ 45-59	(4)	(4)
▪ Communauté ethnique	2-3	2-3
▪ Travailleurs à temps plein / à temps partiel	(6)	(6)
▪ Autres	(4)	(4)

Personne dans la famille : a) doit suivre une diète prescrite par un professionnel de la santé à cause de sa condition médicale, b) ne mange pas de viande rouge.

APPENDIX 3

DISCUSSION GUIDE (English and French)

DISCUSSION GUIDE

CFIA

Perceptions of the Safety of Canada's Food Supply

1. INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Study Purpose: *EXPLORATORY.*

This study explores (1) perceived risk, including awareness of food contamination (2) attitudes and behaviours, including safe food-handling at home (3) understanding of government role, (4) confidence / trust in government officials, and (5) sources of information, including food labels.

Outcomes of this study will help the Agency understand changing perceptions and: (1) inform the development of communication priorities, (2) provide insight into the public's interest in knowing about food safety systems that safeguard the food supply, (3) inform outreach efforts to consumers, and (4) help determine the type and tone of information to be shared.

*This initial stage of the discussion is to establish a level of confidence and a rapport between the moderator and participants, who are informed of the purpose of the discussion and what is expected. **All participants are primary shoppers in the household**, people responsible for grocery shopping and food preparation.*

- *Explain that the area of interest of this study is the public's perception, not knowledge.*
- *Take care to listen to vocabulary and not to suggest words that will prompt food safety concerns.*
- *Use simple familiar language. If participants have difficulty understanding questions, feel free to reframe the question if necessary.*
- *Remember that participants may hold a range of very different views about food issues, differing levels of confidence and different expectations from the Government of Canada.*

INTRODUCTION

- Words of welcome and introduction of moderator – CELL PHONES OFF
- Objectives of the research: “We are going to discuss, very generally, a range of **issues related to food safety and the safety of Canada’s food supply**. We’re looking for feedback, opinions, ideas, viewpoints, and what you think and feel. There are no wrong answers. All views are acceptable. Your opinions will help the Government of Canada understand the Canadian public’s views.
- Confidentiality: All your answers will remain confidential. Your name will not be mentioned to anyone and your opinions will be combined with those of other participants across the country.
- Role of moderator / client observing discussion / audio tape-recording for note-taking purpose / Phone link (if applicable).
- Neutrality and independence of moderator (*does not work for the Government, or for any company, agency or concern related to the production, inspection, distribution or sale of food*).
- Role of participants
- Duration: about 2 hours
- Are there any questions?

GO-AROUND

- First name
- Current job
- Children at home?

GENERAL WARM-UP

- 1) When you hear the term ‘food quality’, what does it mean to you?
- 2) When you hear the term ‘food safety’, what does it mean to you?

2. GENERAL AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING (35 minutes)

Note: What follows is the "Intensive Interaction Workshop" technique, designed to elicit whatever people know or think they know, and believe or disbelieve about food safety in Canada. To be effective, the technique must be delivered as is written below.

Moderator says: First of all, we're going to find out everything you know, believe and have heard about the safety of Canada's food supply, and everything you wonder about it.

Moderator: Explain process as you go:

- 1) Divide group into teams of 2 (if extra person, have 1 team of 3). (Moderator chooses partners)
- 2) Each team uses a large piece of paper (or flip chart paper). One team member is the secretary, and does the writing.
- 3) I want you to divide your page into 2 columns, like this:
 - One column: "**Know, believe, heard**" – and this is where you list everything you know, believe or have heard about the safety of the food available in Canada, whether it's positive, negative or neutral.
 - The other column: "**I wonder . . .**" This is where you list everything you wonder about the safety of the food available in Canada, whether it's positive, negative or neutral.
- 4) If people on your team disagree (for example one person wants something in the "I know" column, and the other person wants it in the "I wonder" column), that's great. Just draw a connecting arrow ←-----→ like this, to show that.
- 5) Okay. Now go to different parts of the room.
- 6) **(When there): (Repeat of instruction #3)**
 - Divide your page into 2 columns.
 - One column says: "**Know, believe, heard**" – you list everything you know, believe or have heard about the safety of the food available in Canada, whether it's positive, negative or neutral.
 - The other column says: "**I wonder . . .**" you list everything you wonder about the safety of the food available, whether it's positive, negative or neutral.
 - Now, prepare your columns. . . (etc.)
 - Don't begin yet. Wait till I say go. You will have 5 minutes to do this.
 - Don't talk too loudly, so the other teams don't overhear your ideas.

- Don't bother about the exact terminology or spelling, I am interested in the idea, the meaning.
- On your mark, get set, GO!

Note to Moderator:

- It is essential NOT to give any more information. Answer all questions by repeating what you've already said – usually information in question #3. If people look confused, tell them to do their best, as in standard qualitative practice.
- Remind people when they have about 2.5 minutes left, then about 1 minute left, and when they have only 30 seconds left.

Moderator:

- Okay, now stop. Let's put all our pages up on the wall so we can see them. (If not using flip charts, use masking tape to attach flip chart pages to the walls of the room, where they remain for the duration of the group, as "wallpaper")
- Let's have the person who wasn't the secretary tell us about the first column only -- what your team knows, believes or has heard about the safety of the food available in Canada , (Moderator chooses which team goes first, second, etc.)
 - Probe to get clarity for various aspects of awareness, i.e. positive or negative, etc.)
 - Get specific about type of foods when appropriate (e.g., organics, genetically modified, meat products, etc.)
- (After all the first columns are presented) Now, let's have the secretary tell us what your team wonders about the safety of Canada's food supply. (2nd column).
 - Probe to get clarity for various aspects of uncertainty.

Note to Moderator: The overall purpose is to understand changing perceptions. So it is important to determine at this stage if perceived risk has changed. Later in the discussion, changes in attitudes, behaviour, and trust will be looked at.

- 1) On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 meaning not at all and 10 meaning totally, how confident are you right now, in the safety of food you buy, in terms of being free from chemicals or bacteria?
 - Overall, would you say it is less than a few years ago, the same as a few years ago or more than a few years ago? (**Moderator:** if more or less probe why)
- 2) How confident are you that imported foods are as safe as food grown in Canada? How about compared with food produced or manufactured in Canada? (Moderator: note that food produced in Canada may be made with imported ingredients.)
 - If less confident probe: what if the imported foods were subjected to exactly the same inspection processes as domestically produced foods?

- How has your confidence in the safety of imported food changed compared with a few years ago? Has it increased or decreased? Why?
- 3) What are your main concerns when it comes to food safety or the safety of Canada's food supply?

3. PERCEIVED RISK (20 minutes)

(Moderator: Note that some of the following may have been introduced during the first exercise. If so, relate it back.)

- 1) How common do you think it is for people in Canada to get sick because the food we eat is unsafe? Has anyone here ever become sick from food they ate?
- 2) What food recalls or alerts have there been in the past few years?
- When you heard about a food recall, how did you feel? (more confident, more weary, worried)
 - What are the most common causes of food recalls and alerts in Canada?
- 3) Are food recalls and alerts changing in any way compared with a few years ago? (Frequency, seriousness, causes, etc.)
- Are the risks exaggerated about these food recalls and alerts or not?
- 4) When you hear the term **foodborne illnesses**, what comes to mind? What does it mean to you?

To make things easier, the word "foodborne illness" used throughout this discussion is the same as "food poisoning". It occurs when a person gets sick by eating food (or drinking a beverage) that has been contaminated by an unwanted micro-organism such as bacteria, parasites or viruses (if necessary, explain that it is not a food allergy).

- 5) Could you recognize the symptoms of a foodborne illness?
- 6) What foods are most associated with foodborne illness? (Raw and cooked meat, fish/shellfish, dairy products, eggs, vegetables/fruits, ready prepared meals.)
- 7) Where is contamination of food most likely to occur on the food chain 'from farm to plate'?

4. ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR (15 minutes)

(Moderator: Note that some of the following may have been introduced during the first exercise. If so, relate it back.)

- 1) During the past few years, have you done anything because of any concerns you had about the safety of the food you purchased? What did you do?
- 2) How often do you think about food safety when you are shopping for food? For any particular type of food?
- 3) Do you avoid purchasing any types of food or food ingredients that you perceive as unsafe?
- 4) Are you shopping for food any differently compared with a few years ago?
- 5) What can you do to protect yourself and your family from eating unsafe food?
- 6) What do you know about safe food-handling practices in the home?

5. GOVERNMENT ROLE (15 minutes)

(Moderator: Note that some of the following may have been introduced during the first exercise. If so, relate it back.)

- 1) Who do you think should be most responsible for ensuring the safety of food in Canada? The food industry? The Government?
- 2) What is the Government doing to ensure the safety of the food supply in Canada?
- 3) In your opinion, how well-managed, controlled and regulated is food sold in Canada?
 - What is well-managed? Not so well-managed?
- 4) How effective is food inspection in Canada?
 - Who is responsible for food inspection?
- 5) Does food safety rank too high, too low or where it should be on the priority list of the Government?
- 6) Do you think that more money should be spent on food safety by the government? By the food industry? Even if it will increase the cost of food you buy?

7) **What is the biggest challenge in the area of food safety facing the Government over the next few years? If you had to pick one issue / one goal the Government should focus on, relating to food safety, what would it be?** Note to moderator, if participants do not come up with the following, could you please ask them about the following and please note which ones they came up with on their own:

- safety of imported foods
- product of Canada labelling
- organic regulation
- nutritional labelling
- safety of meat and poultry
- safety of fresh produce
- pesticides and environmental contaminants

6. CONFIDENCE / TRUST (5 minutes)

(Moderator: Note that some of the following may have been introduced during the first exercise. If so, relate it back.)

- 1) What sources (e.g. media, persons) do you trust to give useful and reliable information about food recalls and alerts, or the health dangers of eating them?
- 2) How confident are you that government officials are telling Canadians the truth when there is a major food recall or alert?
- 3) How willing are you to cooperate / comply with food safety measures recommended by government officials, if there is a major food recall or alert?

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION (15 minutes)

- 1) How well informed do you feel about food safety?
- 2) What is your major source for information about food safety (television, magazines, books, doctors, gov't publications/Web sites, Internet, etc.)?
- 3) Do you use the information available on food labels, packaging or at the point-of-sale to judge the safety of food products? Are food labels and packaging currently providing all the information you need? Is there any important information missing that you would like to see added?
- 4) What, if any, type of food safety information should there be on food labels or packaging? (if necessary probe on safe cooking or cooling temperatures, and proper storage)

- 5) We've discussed many issues during this session like food imports, food-related illnesses, (moderator add other topics raised). **What do you think the Government should be doing to keep you better informed about food safety risks?**
- What could the government do to improve confidence in the safety of the food available in Canada? What are the key issues/areas that it should focus on?
 - What is the best way for the government to communicate with Canadians?
- 6) Did you know that food recalls and alert information can be sent directly to your home via email? Would you like to receive them this way?
- 7) How else would you like to receive recall and alert information? Prompt, if necessary: On the radio? In newspapers? By automated telephone messages? Why?
- Would you go to a specific Web site for information on food safety?

8. END OF DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

***(Moderator:** Visit the backroom to get additional questions, follow-up queries, etc.)*

I'm going to check with my colleagues behind the mirror to see if there's anything I've left out here.

Upon return

- ***Include questions/follow-ups (if any) from observers.***

Is there anything more you'd like to add to the discussion, parting comments? (Go round)

Thank you. Your participation is very much appreciated!

GUIDE DE DISCUSSION ACIA

Perceptions de la salubrité des aliments vendus au Canada

1. INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

But de l'étude : EXPLORATOIRE.

Cette étude explore (1) risque perçu, incluant connaissance de la contamination alimentaire, (2) attitudes et comportements, incluant la manipulation sécuritaire à la maison, (3) compréhension du rôle du gouvernement, (4) confiance dans les responsables gouvernementaux et (5) sources d'information, incluant l'étiquetage des aliments.

Les résultats de cette étude aideront l'Agence à comprendre l'évolution des perceptions et de : (1) éclairer le développement des priorités de communication, (2) donner des aperçus dans l'intérêt du public au sujet des systèmes sur la salubrité des aliments qui protègent l'approvisionnement alimentaire, (3) éclairer les efforts pour rejoindre les consommateurs et (4) contribuer à déterminer le type et le ton des informations à partager.

*Cette première partie de l'entretien consiste à détendre l'atmosphère et à créer un climat de confiance entre l'animatrice et les participants. C'est à ce moment que l'animatrice informe les participants des objectifs de la discussion et précise ses attentes à leur égard. **Tous les participants sont les acheteurs principaux dans leur foyer**, responsables des achats d'épicerie et de la préparation des aliments.*

- *Expliquer que ce qui est recherché dans cette étude, c'est la perception du public, et non les connaissances.*
- *Prenez soin d'écouter le vocabulaire utilisé et non de suggérer des mots pour parler de la salubrité des aliments.*
- *Utilisez un langage simple, familier. Si les participants ont de la difficulté à comprendre les questions, n'hésitez pas à reformuler la question.*
- *Rappelez-vous que les participants peuvent avoir un éventail de points de vue très différents à propos de l'alimentation, différents niveaux de confiance et différentes attentes à l'égard du gouvernement du Canada.*

INTRODUCTION

- Mot de bienvenue et introduction de l'animatrice – ÉTEINDRE VOS CELLULAIRES
- Objectifs de la recherche : « *Nous allons discuter, de façon très générale, d'une gamme de **sujets reliés à la salubrité des aliments et de l'approvisionnement au Canada**. Nous désirons connaître vos réactions, opinions, idées, points de vue, ce que vous pensez et ressentez. Il n'y a pas de mauvaises réponses. Tous les points de vue sont acceptables. Vos opinions aideront le gouvernement du Canada à mieux comprendre les points de vue de la population canadienne.* »
- Confidentialité : « *Toutes vos réponses vont demeurer confidentielles. Votre nom ne sera transmis à personne et vos opinions seront combinées avec celles des autres participants à travers le pays.* »
- Rôle de l'animatrice / observation / enregistrement / prise de note / lien téléphonique (si applicable)
- Neutralité et indépendance de l'animatrice (*ne travaille pas pour le gouvernement, ni pour une compagnie ou agence reliée à la production, l'inspection, la distribution ou la vente d'aliments*).
- Rôle des participants
- Durée : environ 2 heures
- Des questions?

TOUR DE TABLE

- Prénom
- Emploi actuel
- Enfants à la maison?

RÉCHAUFFEMENT GÉNÉRAL

- 1) Lorsque vous entendez le terme 'qualité des aliments', qu'est-ce que cela veut dire pour vous?
- 2) Lorsque vous entendez le terme 'salubrité des aliments', qu'est-ce que cela veut dire pour vous?

2. CONNAISSANCE ET COMPRÉHENSION GÉNÉRALES (35 minutes)

Note : Ce qui suit est une technique « d'interaction intensive en atelier » particulièrement utile pour recueillir ce que les gens savent ou pensent savoir, et sur leurs interrogations à propos de la salubrité des aliments au Canada. Pour être efficace, la technique doit être appliquée telle que décrite ci-dessous.

Animatrice, dites : Tout d'abord, nous allons découvrir tout ce que vous savez, croyez et avez entendu dire sur la salubrité des aliments disponibles au Canada, et tout ce que vous vous demandez à propos de cela, vos interrogations.

Animatrice : expliquer le processus tout en l'appliquant :

- 1) *Divisez le groupe en équipe de 2 (s'il y a des personnes supplémentaires, faire une équipe de 3 personnes). (L'animatrice compose les équipes)*
- 2) *Chaque équipe utilise une grande feuille de papier (style flip chart). Un membre de l'équipe agit comme secrétaire et écrit tout ce qui se dit.*
- 3) Vous allez diviser la page en 2 colonnes, comme ceci :
 - Une colonne : « **Je sais, je crois, j'ai entendu dire** ». C'est là que vous listez tout ce que vous savez, croyez ou avez entendu dire à propos de la salubrité des aliments disponibles au Canada. Tout ce que vous pouvez en penser, que ce soit positif, négatif ou neutre.
 - L'autre colonne: « **Je me demande** ». Vous notez ici toutes vos interrogations ou ce dont vous n'êtes pas certains à propos de la salubrité des aliments disponibles au Canada, que ce soit positif, négatif ou neutre.
- 4) Si des gens de votre équipe sont en désaccord (par exemple, une personne désire qu'un item soit inscrit dans la colonne « Je sais » alors qu'une autre personne désire que cet item soit dans la colonne « Je me demande »), c'est correct. Veuillez simplement dessiner une flèche ←----→ qui permet de voir la différence d'opinion.
- 5) Bien. Maintenant, dispersez-vous à divers endroits dans la pièce.
- 6) **(Lorsqu'ils sont en place) : (Répétez l'instruction #3)**
 - Divisez la page en 2 colonnes
 - Une colonne : « **Je sais, je crois, j'ai entendu dire** ». C'est là que vous listez tout ce que vous savez, croyez ou avez entendu dire à propos de la salubrité des aliments disponibles au Canada. Tout ce que vous pouvez en penser, que ce soit positif, négatif ou neutre.

- L'autre colonne: « **Je me demande** ». Vous notez ici toutes vos interrogations ou ce dont vous n'êtes pas certains à propos de la salubrité des aliments disponibles au Canada, que ce soit positif, négatif ou neutre.
 - Maintenant, préparez vos colonnes . . . (etc.)
 - Ne commencez pas tout de suite. Attendez mon signal. Vous aurez 5 minutes.
 - Ne parlez pas trop fort afin que les autres équipes n'entendent pas vos idées.
 - Ne vous tracassez pas avec la terminologie exacte ou l'orthographe, je m'intéresse aux idées, à la signification.
 - À vos marques, soyez prêts, **ALLEZ-Y!**

Note à l'animatrice :

- *Il est essentiel de ne PAS fournir plus de renseignements. Répondez à toutes les questions en répétant ce que vous avez déjà dit – les consignes de l'instruction #3. Si les gens semblent confus, dites-leur de faire de leur mieux.*
- *Rappelez aux gens lorsqu'il ne leur reste que 2,5 minutes, puis environ 1 minute, 30 secondes.*

Animatrice :

- D'accord, maintenant arrêtez. Mettez toutes vos pages sur le mur afin que nous puissions bien les voir. (*S'ils ne se servent pas de flip charts, utilisez du ruban gommé pour accrocher les pages sur les murs de la pièce où elles resteront affichées pour la durée du groupe comme « papier peint »*).
- Maintenant, y a-t-il une personne autre que la (le) secrétaire qui voudrait bien nous parler de la première colonne seulement -- ce que votre équipe sait, croit ou a entendu dire à propos de la salubrité des aliments disponibles au Canada. (*L'animatrice choisit l'équipe qui va commencer en premier, en deuxième, etc.*)
 - Sonder afin de clarifier les perceptions, i.e. positif ou négatif, etc.
 - Préciser lorsque nécessaire le type d'aliments : biologique, génétiquement modifié, viandes, etc.
- (*Après que toutes les premières colonnes aient été présentées*) Maintenant, laissons le (la) secrétaire nous parler de ce que son équipe se demande à propos de la salubrité des aliments disponibles au Canada (2^e colonne), leurs interrogations.
 - *Sonder afin de clarifier les aspects sur lesquels on s'interroge le plus.*

Note à l'animatrice : *L'objectif global est de comprendre l'évolution des perceptions. Ainsi, il est important de déterminer à cette étape si le risque perçu a changé. Plus tard dans la discussion, les changements dans les attitudes, les comportements et la confiance seront examinés.*

- 4) Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, 1 signifiant pas du tout et 10 signifiant tout à fait, dans quelle mesure avez-vous confiance actuellement que les aliments que vous achetez sont salubres, c'est-à-dire qu'ils sont exempts de substances chimiques ou de bactéries?
- Dans l'ensemble, diriez-vous que votre confiance est moindre qu'il y a quelques années, la même qu'il y a quelques années ou plus grande qu'il y a quelques années? (**Animatrice** : si plus grande ou moindre, sonder pourquoi)
- 5) Dans quelle mesure avez-vous confiance que les aliments importés sont aussi salubres que les aliments cultivés au Canada? Et comparativement aux aliments produits ou fabriqués au Canada? (*Note à l'animatrice* : certains aliments peuvent être produits à l'aide d'ingrédients importés).
- Si moins confiant, sonder : Et si les aliments importés étaient soumis exactement à la même procédure d'inspection que les aliments produits ici?
 - Votre confiance dans la salubrité des aliments importés a-t-elle changé par rapport à il y a quelques années? A-t-elle augmenté ou diminué? Pourquoi?
- 6) Quelles sont vos principales inquiétudes en matière de salubrité des aliments ou de salubrité des approvisionnements en aliments au Canada?

3. RISQUE PERÇU (20 minutes)

(Animatrice : Notez que certains des éléments suivants ont pu avoir été amenés lors du premier exercice. Si c'est le cas, le rappeler.)

- 1) Dans quelle mesure pensez-vous qu'il est fréquent au Canada que des gens soient malades parce qu'ils ont consommé des aliments insalubres? Quelqu'un ici a-t-il/elle déjà été malade après avoir consommé des aliments?
- On estime qu'il y a à chaque année entre 11-13 millions de cas d'intoxications alimentaires au Canada. Que pensez-vous / que ressentez-vous par rapport à cela? Qui est responsable? Quelles sont les causes?
- 2) Quelles alertes ou rappels d'aliments ont eu lieu au cours des dernières années?
- Lorsque vous avez entendu parler d'un rappel d'aliments, comment vous sentiez-vous? (plutôt confiant, indifférent, inquiet)
 - Quelles sont les causes les plus courantes d'alertes ou de rappels d'aliments au Canada?
- 3) Est-ce que les alertes ou rappels d'aliments ont changé d'une quelconque façon par rapport à il y a quelques années? (Fréquence, gravité, causes, etc.)

- Est-ce que les risques concernant ces alertes ou rappels d'aliments sont exagérés ou non?
- 4) Lorsque vous entendez l'expression **intoxication alimentaire**, qu'est-ce qui vous vient à l'esprit? Qu'est-ce que ça signifie pour vous?

Pour rendre les choses plus faciles, le mot « intoxication alimentaire » utilisé au cours de cette discussion signifie la même chose que « empoisonnement alimentaire ». Cela survient lorsqu'une personne devient malade après avoir mangé un aliment (ou bu un breuvage) qui a été contaminé par un micro-organisme indésirable tel que des bactéries, parasites ou virus (si nécessaire, expliquer que ce n'est pas une allergie alimentaire).

- 5) Pourriez-vous reconnaître les symptômes d'une intoxication alimentaire?
- 6) Quels sont les aliments les plus associés à une intoxication alimentaire? (Viande crue et cuite, poisson/mollusques, produits laitiers, œufs, légumes/fruits, repas préparés)
- 7) Dans la chaîne alimentaire 'de la ferme à l'assiette », à quel endroit la contamination des aliments est-elle le plus susceptible de se produire?

4. ATTITUDES ET COMPORTEMENT (15 minutes)

(Animatrice : Notez que certains des éléments suivants ont pu avoir été amenés lors du premier exercice. Si c'est le cas, le rappeler.)

- 1) Au cours des dernières années, avez-vous fait quelque chose parce que vous aviez des inquiétudes par rapport à la salubrité des aliments que vous aviez achetés? Qu'avez-vous fait?
- 2) À quelle fréquence pensez-vous à la salubrité des aliments lorsque vous faites votre épicerie? Pour un type d'aliment en particulier?
- 3) Évitez-vous d'acheter un type d'aliment ou un ingrédient alimentaire que vous jugez douteux?
- 4) Faites-vous l'épicerie de façon différente par rapport à il y a quelques années?
- 5) Que pouvez-vous faire pour protéger vous et votre famille contre la consommation d'aliments insalubres?
- 6) Que savez-vous au sujet des pratiques sécuritaires de manipulation des aliments à la maison?

5. RÔLE DU GOUVERNEMENT (15 minutes)

(Animatrice : Notez que certains des éléments suivants ont pu avoir été amenés lors du premier exercice. Si c'est le cas, le rappeler.)

- 1) Qui devrait être principalement responsable pour assurer la salubrité des aliments au Canada? L'industrie alimentaire? Le gouvernement?
- 2) Que fait le gouvernement pour s'assurer de la salubrité de l'approvisionnement alimentaire au Canada?
- 3) Selon vous, dans quelle mesure les aliments vendus au Canada sont bien gérés, contrôlés et réglementés?
 - Qu'est-ce qui est bien géré? Pas très bien géré?
- 4) Dans quelle mesure l'inspection des aliments au Canada est-elle efficace?
 - Qui est responsable de l'inspection des aliments?
- 5) Dans la liste des priorités du gouvernement, la salubrité des aliments est-elle mise trop haut, trop bas ou là où elle devrait se situer?
- 6) Pensez-vous que le gouvernement devrait mettre plus d'argent sur la salubrité des aliments? Que l'industrie alimentaire devrait mettre plus d'argent? Même si cela augmentait le coût de la nourriture que vous achetez?
- 7) **Quel est le plus grand défi dans le domaine de la salubrité des aliments auquel devra faire face le gouvernement dans les prochaines années? Si vous aviez à choisir un enjeu / un objectif sur lequel le gouvernement devrait se concentrer en matière de salubrité alimentaire, quel serait-il?** Animatrice : si les participants ne le mentionnent pas spontanément, demander pour ce qui suit et noter ce qui a été mentionné spontanément.
 - Salubrité des aliments importés
 - Étiquetage des produits canadiens
 - Réglementation des produits biologiques
 - Étiquetage sur la valeur nutritive
 - Salubrité de la viande et de la volaille
 - Salubrité des produits maraîchers frais
 - Pesticides et contaminants de l'environnement

6. CONFIANCE (5 minutes)

(Animatrice : Notez que certains des éléments suivants ont pu avoir été amenés lors du premier exercice. Si c'est le cas, le rappeler.)

- 1) Quelles sont les sources d'information (media, personnes) à qui vous faites confiance pour donner des informations utiles et fiables concernant les alertes et rappels d'aliments ou encore des dangers pour la santé de les consommer?
- 2) Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous confiant que les responsables gouvernementaux disent la vérité aux Canadiens lorsqu'il y a une alerte ou un rappel majeurs d'aliments?
- 3) S'il y avait une alerte ou d'un rappel majeurs d'aliments, dans quelle mesure seriez-vous prêt à coopérer / à vous conformer aux mesures touchant la salubrité alimentaire que les responsables gouvernementaux recommanderaient?

7. SOURCES D'INFORMATION (15 minutes)

- 1) Dans quelle mesure vous sentez-vous bien informé concernant la salubrité des aliments?
- 2) Quelle est votre principale source d'information en matière de salubrité des aliments (télévision, magazines, livres, médecins, publications/sites Web du gouvernement, Internet, etc.)?
- 3) Utilisez-vous les renseignements qu'on retrouve sur les étiquettes des aliments, les emballages ou aux points de vente pour juger de la salubrité des produits alimentaires? Est-ce que les étiquettes et les emballages des aliments fournissent actuellement toute l'information dont vous avez besoin? Y a-t-il de l'information importante qui manque et que vous aimeriez voir ajoutée?
- 4) Quels types d'information sur la salubrité devrait-il y avoir, si c'est le cas, sur les étiquettes ou les emballages des aliments? (si nécessaire sonder pour la température de cuisson ou de réfrigération, et l'entreposage.)
- 5) Nous avons parlé de plusieurs sujets au cours de cette discussion, comme les aliments importés, les empoisonnements alimentaires, (animatrice ajouter d'autres sujets qui ont émergé). **Selon vous, que devrait faire le gouvernement pour vous tenir mieux vous informé sur les risques liés à la salubrité des aliments?**
 - Que pourrait-il faire pour améliorer la confiance dans la salubrité des aliments disponibles au Canada? Sur quels sujets ou domaines devrait-il se concentrer?
 - Quelle est la meilleure façon pour le gouvernement de communiquer avec les Canadiens?

- 6) Saviez-vous que l'information sur les alertes et rappels d'aliments peut vous être envoyée directement chez vous par courriel? Aimerez-vous la recevoir de cette façon?
- 7) De quelle autre manière aimeriez-vous recevoir de l'information sur une alerte ou un rappel? Sonder si nécessaire : à la radio? Dans les journaux? Des messages téléphoniques automatisés? Pourquoi?
- Iriez-vous sur un site Web précis pour avoir de l'information sur la salubrité des aliments?

8. FIN DE LA DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

(Animatrice : Allez voir dans la salle d'observation pour obtenir des questions additionnelles ou d'approfondissement, etc.)

Je vais aller vérifier auprès de mes collègues derrière le miroir pour voir si je n'ai rien oublié.

À votre retour

- ***Inclure les questions/suivi (s'il y en a) des observateurs.***

Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez ajouter avant de clore cette discussion? (Faire un tour de table)

Merci. Votre participation est très appréciée!