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Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Public Opinion Research with Food Businesses to Support Compliance with Food Safety Regulations: 2021-2022

Research Report

Prepared for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

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Canada 

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March 2022

This public opinion research report presents the results of a telephone survey and focus groups conducted by Earnscliffe Strategy Group on behalf of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The research was conducted from January to March 2022.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des entreprises alimentaires à l'appui de la conformité à la réglementation sur la salubrité des aliments : 2021-2022

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Executive Summary

Earnscliffe Strategy Group (Earnscliffe) is pleased to present this report to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regarding qualitative and quantitative research undertaken to support food businesses' compliance with food safety regulations.

The Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) were published in Canada Gazette II in June 2018. The SFCR generally apply to food for human consumption (including ingredients) that is imported, exported, or inter-provincially traded for commercial purposes. It also applies to the slaughter of food animals from which meat products to be exported or inter-provincially traded may be derived.

The main objective of this research project was to gain insights into the views of Canadian food businesses on food safety and food safety regulations, with a focus on small food businesses, food importers and exporters, and the manufactured food sector. This study also sought to help the CFIA better understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food industry, including the growth of e-commerce. The research will inform effective implementation of, communications about, and compliance with the SFCR.

This research was required in order for the CFIA to track key indicators on awareness and confidence, as well as barriers to compliance and factors that would increase the likelihood of compliance. Feedback collected during the research will also support refinement of current products and services as well as the development and promotion of new communications products, services, guidance and tools for regulated parties to help them overcome barriers to compliance.

To meet the research objectives, Earnscliffe conducted a telephone survey of 450 Canadians who own or hold a managerial role at a business in the food sector and are responsible for regulatory compliance. Surveys were conducted between January 13-February 10, 2022 in English and French. The survey took an average of 20 minutes to complete.

Our fieldwork subcontractor for the quantitative portion was Leger. The survey was conducted via telephone from Leger's centralized call-centre using their state-of-the-art Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

The wave of qualitative research that followed the quantitative portion consisted of a series of 4 online focus groups with food business owners or employees in the food sector responsible for regulatory compliance. For each group, 6 individuals were recruited as participants. In total, 22 people participated in the focus group discussions. The 4 online focus groups were conducted with participants from across Canada. The group with participants from Quebec was conducted in French. Participants were asked for written consent for all sessions to be video recorded and audio recorded. Participants were provided with an incentive of \$350. Appendix B provides

greater detail on how the groups were recruited, while Appendix E provides the discussion guide used for the focus groups and Appendix D provides the screener used for recruiting the focus groups.

It is important to note that qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy and public opinion research. Focus group research is not designed to help a group reach a consensus or to make decisions, but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number.

The key findings of this research are presented below.

- Awareness of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) has remained stable among CFIA’s traditionally regulated parties which are the non-retail-only businesses (74% in 2022 vs 75% in 2021). With retail only businesses awareness is lower than the previous wave (48% this wave vs 60% in 2021). A few in each focus group were aware of the SFCR, but others had not heard of the regulations or at least not by that name.
- Three-quarters (77%) of survey respondents believe the SFCR apply to their business. Among those actually aware of the SFCR, 90% agree they apply.
 - Similarly, focus group participants who were aware of the SFCR believed they apply to their business, but those unaware of the regulations were unsure. Once told about the SFCR, participants agreed that they seem important. They believed that the SFCR set standards for the industry and create an even playing field for businesses. Participants also agreed these kinds of standards are important to ensuring consumers are protected.
- As noted in previous surveys, most feel they very or somewhat clearly understand the food safety regulations that apply to their business and are very confident that their business meets food safety requirements.
 - The focus groups uncovered a gap in understanding of regulations, primarily among new, small businesses. While more established businesses seemed to have a decent grasp of regulations, newer businesses said that figuring out how to be compliant was confusing or intimidating but did not wholly blame the CFIA for this. They sensed that some of their difficulty was their own ignorance, but that the CFIA could do more to explain the process in simpler terms.
 - Participants with new, smaller businesses wished that the CFIA’s website provided a more organized, comprehensive overview of the specific activities they need to

do to become SFCR compliant. Specifically, a how-to guide or workbook, as well as templates for procedures they will need to establish, would be helpful.

- The vast majority (79%) have written operating procedures on food safety, while two-thirds (64%) have a traceability program and about half have a Safe Food for Canadians licence (54%) and have written preventive controls in place (51%).
- Businesses are slightly divided over the greatest challenge posed by the SFCR. About a quarter (26%) say written preventive controls, 20% say traceability and 19% say licensing, while 35% don't feel any of these are a great challenge.
 - In the qualitative research, while some did not feel any of the SFCR elements were challenging, others, particularly newer businesses, found the process around traceability was time consuming.
- COVID-19 has had an impact on most businesses, but three-quarters agree that the CFIA has been flexible in enforcing food safety regulations to allow them to adapt to pandemic conditions (75%) and that the CFIA has provided clear guidance on how it is approaching compliance during the pandemic (73%).
- Overall, large majorities agree that the CFIA has been transparent in addressing non-compliance and reporting and publishing such instances. Slightly more feel the CFIA should not publish the names of companies that receive AMPS (44%) than feel it should (38%).
 - Focus groups participants felt it appropriate that there would be consequences for businesses not following CFIA rules and regulations, but participants hoped and/or assumed that consequences would vary in severity based on the infraction. They hoped that the CFIA would give businesses a chance to correct their errors but agreed that if a business ignored warnings or posed a significant threat to public health, that business should be named publicly.
 - If they became aware that a business in their supply chain was conducting unsafe or fraudulent activities related to food safety, virtually all agreed that they would likely sever ties with that company to protect their own reputation, as well as their consumers. Most would also consider reporting this behaviour to the CFIA.
- Usage of My CFIA remains similar to last year's survey – about a quarter (28%) have used it and the vast majority who have are satisfied with their experience.
 - In the focus groups, participants unaware of My CFIA indicated they would be interested in using such a service.

- Few use the CFIA virtual assistant / chatbot (just 14% of those who have searched for information on the CFIA website, or about 4% of the sample overall) and Ask CFIA (7% overall).
 - Participants in the focus groups were skeptical of the virtual assistant / chatbot. Most had used another virtual chatbot before and found the experience frustrating because it did not provide helpful answers to their questions.
- Very few businesses follow the CFIA on social media, but among those open to receiving information this way, the topic they would be most interested in is anything to do with new regulations or updates.

Research firm: Earnscliffe Strategy Group (Earnscliffe)
Contract number: 39903-220786/001/CY
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I hereby certify as a representative of Earnscliffe Strategy Group that the final deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed:

Date: March 11, 2022



Doug Anderson
Principal, Earnscliffe

Introduction

Earnscliffe Strategy Group (Earnscliffe) is pleased to present this report to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regarding qualitative and quantitative research undertaken to support food businesses' compliance with food safety regulations.

The Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) were published in Canada Gazette II in June 2018. The SFCR generally applies to food for human consumption (including ingredients) that is imported, exported, or inter-provincially traded for commercial purposes. It also applies to the slaughter of food animals from which meat products to be exported or inter-provincially traded may be derived.

The main objective of this research project was to gain insights into the views of Canadian food businesses on food safety and food safety regulations, with a focus on small food businesses, food importers and exporters, and the manufactured food sector. This study also sought to help the CFIA better understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food industry, including the growth of e-commerce. The research will inform effective implementation of, communications about, and compliance with the SFCR.

This research was required in order for the CFIA to track key indicators on awareness and confidence, as well as barriers to compliance and factors that would increase the likelihood of compliance. Feedback collected during the research will also support refinement of current products and services as well as the development and promotion of new communications products, services, guidance and tools for regulated parties to help them overcome barriers to compliance.

To meet the research objectives, Earnscliffe conducted a telephone survey of 450 Canadians who own or hold a managerial role at a business in the food sector and are responsible for regulatory/food safety compliance. Surveys were conducted between January 13- February 10, 2022 in English and French. The survey took an average of 20 minutes to complete.

Our fieldwork subcontractor for the quantitative portion was Leger. The survey was conducted via telephone from Leger's centralized call-centre using their state-of-the-art Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

Leger relied on sample from Info Canada, pre-screened on the basis of a series of NAICS codes agreed upon by Earnscliffe and the CFIA at the outset of the research (see Appendix A for the full list). In order to ensure sufficient sample size among the agriculture, processing/manufacturing and wholesale sectors, a quota was put in place to ensure that no more than a third of the sample was comprised of retail-only businesses. Data was also monitored to ensure that multiple locations from the same franchise were not overrepresented in the sample. The final data was weighted by industry vertical and province, based on the

proportion of businesses that fall into each NAICS code and province, as per Info Canada’s information.

The margin of error for this study was +/-4.6% at the 95% confidence interval.

The wave of qualitative research that followed the quantitative portion consisted of a series of four online focus groups with food business owners or employees in the food sector, all of whom were responsible for regulatory/food safety compliance. For each group, 6 individuals were recruited as participants. In total, 22 people participated in the focus group discussions. The 4 online focus groups were conducted with participants from across Canada. The group with participants from Quebec was conducted in French. Participants were asked for written consent for all sessions to be video recorded and audio recorded. Participants were provided with an incentive of \$350. Appendix B provides greater detail on how the groups were recruited, while Appendix E provides the discussion guide used for the focus groups and Appendix D provides the screener used for recruiting the focus groups. The following table provides a summary of the date, time, composition and number of participants in each group:

Table 1: Focus group specs and participants

Group #	Region	Language	Time	Number of participants
Wednesday March 2, 2022				
1	Atlantic Canada (New Brunswick, PEI, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador)	English	4:00 pm EST / 5:00 pm AST / 5:30 pm NST	6
2	Ontario & Nunavut	English	6:00 pm EST	5
Thursday March 3, 2022				
3	Quebec	French	5:00 pm EST	4
4	Western Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, NWT, Yukon)	English	8:00 pm EST / 7:00 pm CST / 6:00 pm MST / 5:00pm PST	7

It is important to note that qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy and public opinion research. Focus group research is not designed to help a group reach a consensus or to make decisions, but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number.

Detailed Findings

The following report contains analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative findings of this research project. The report is divided into seven sections. The first provides an overview of interactions with the CFIA and awareness of the SFCR. The second explores the food safety activities businesses engage in, and the third assess attitudes towards private certification schemes. The fourth delves deeper into specific knowledge of the SFCR. The fifth and sixth sections deal with My CFIA and Ask CFIA, respectively. The final section pertains to CFIA communications.

Note that the tables presented in this report for the quantitative findings include tracking from previous years (where possible), as well as regional and industry breaks. Other relevant variable or “firmographic” characteristics used to analyze the data can be found in the quantitative data tables, presented under a separate cover. The capital letter subscript in the tables indicates that the result for a particular cell is statistically significantly greater than a result found in the same row, in the column with the same capital letter noted in the original cell.

Awareness and knowledge of the SFCR

Over half (62%) have heard of the SFCR, down from 70% last year. To help determine the driving source of the drop in recall, we compared results over past years between businesses exclusively in retail and those not exclusively in retail. We found that awareness has remained stable among CFIA’s traditionally regulated parties which are the non-retail-only businesses (74% in 2022 vs 75% in 2021) but has fallen among the retail-only segment (48% this wave vs 60% in 2021).

This year, recall is significantly higher among processors and manufacturers (86%) than any other type of business. Recall is also significantly higher among the agriculture sector (67%) than among retail respondents (50%). Quebec (81%) businesses are also more likely to have heard of the SFCR compared to those in Ontario (66%) and the West (57%).

Qualitative Insights: Awareness of the CFIA and the SFCR

Most of the focus group participants had some knowledge of and experience with the CFIA, though the range of interactions and/or touchpoints with the CFIA varied greatly. The types of interactions they had had with the CFIA varied based on business size, tenure, and the food products they produce. For example, those who imported, exported, or processed more perishable food items, including meat, eggs and seafood had frequent interactions with the CFIA, often through CFIA inspectors and/or staff that are “entrenched within their company” and work on-site in their processing facilities. In contrast, some of the newer, smaller businesses were just getting familiar with the CFIA. They were in or had recently been through the process of ensuring their business is compliant with CFIA standards. Several noted figuring out how to

be compliant was confusing or intimidating but did not wholly blame the CFIA for this. They sensed that some of their difficulty was their own ignorance, but that the CFIA could do more to explain the process in simpler terms.

In-person interactions with CFIA inspectors were generally regarded as neutral to positive. Participants said that the staff and inspectors are professional and generally helpful, if perhaps a bit inflexible at times in their application of the rules and regulations. A few felt that the newer inspectors they interact with don't always have a good grasp of their industry and how the impact and significance of certain rules can vary. Interactions via email were less positive. Those who had reached out to the CFIA via email to ask questions about compliance, licensing, etc. felt answers were too vague or took too long to receive.

A few in each group were aware of the SFCR, but others had not heard of the regulations or at least not by that name. A few could explain the SFCR's objectives in general terms. For example, one participant in Ontario stated, "I think overall it's [the SFCR] just sort of a, I guess a way to kind of police the industry to make sure that everybody is you know, conforming to the rules." Another participant in Atlantic Canada explained that the objective of the SFCR is "to put everybody on a level playing field and to make sure that food is safe for all the consumers." Among those who had heard of the SFCR, there was a sense that the rules were put in place to set standards for industry and protect consumers.

In contrast, many businesses had never heard of the SFCR. For example, one very self-confident veteran of the food industry explained a recent incident during which they were taken by surprise when told of a need for a certain licence for importing and had clearly been previously operating under the assumption that no such licence was needed. Until that incident, they had no idea that a Safe Food for Canadians licence was required for them to import. Later, the same participant admitted to receiving emails from the CFIA, likely about the SFCR, but had not read them.

Table 2. S8: Have you seen, read or heard anything about the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes	62%	43%	81% DE	66%	57%	67% I	86% FHI	65%	50%
No	34%	53%	18%	31% C	37% C	25% G	11%	35% G	45% FG
Not sure	4%	4%	1%	3%	6%	8% H	3%	0%	5% H
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 3. S8. Have you seen, read or heard anything about the Safe Food for Canadians Regulation?

	Yes	No	Don't know
2022	62%	34%	4%
2021	71%	26%	3%
2020	66%	26%	8%

Similarly to last year, the most common information sources about the SFCR are online (17%) and the CFIA (11%). Other sources included workplace training programs (11%) and the CFIA website (7%). Businesses in Ontario (16%) and the West (12%) are more likely to have heard of the SFCR from the CFIA, compared to Quebec businesses (2%). Similarly, processors/manufacturers (22%) and wholesalers/distributors (20%) are more likely than other types of businesses to have heard of the SFCR via the CFIA. Processors/manufacturers are also more likely to have received communication about the SFCR via email (10%) than retail businesses. Retail businesses are more likely to have heard of the SFCR via in-house training (20%) than all other businesses. Agriculture businesses (17%) are more likely to cite Canada GAP as their source, compared to all other business types.

Table 4. [If S8=Yes] Where did you hear, see or read about the regulations?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agricu lture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Online (general)	17%	16%	10%	20%	17%	12%	13%	12%	21%
CFIA (NET)	11%	13%	2%	16% C	12% C	7%	22% FI	20% I	3%
At work / Inhouse training	11%	9%	6%	12%	13%	7%	3%	5%	20% FGH
Online - CFIA website	7%	0%	9%	6%	8%	6%	17% I	10% I	0%
Courses / Training	7%	12%	21% DE	3%	4%	3%	5%	3%	10%
Through email (other)	5%	16%	4%	5%	4%	2%	5%	8%	4%
CFIA employee / inspector	4%	0%	1%	6%	5%	1%	6%	1%	5%
Media (news, newspaper)	4%	0%	7%	4%	3%	1%	3%	6%	5%
Through CFIA email	4%	0%	2%	9% C	2%	3%	10% I	3%	1%

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (training, emails)	3%	0%	18% DE	0%	0%	1%	3%	0%	5%
The government (general)	3%	4%	5%	1%	3%	2%	2%	10%	2%
Through Canada GAP	3%	6%	0%	1%	4%	17% GHI	0%	0%	0%
Through a pamphlet/printed materials	2%	0%	2%	1%	2%	0%	2%	2%	2%
Colleagues / industry events	2%	9%	1%	3%	0%	4%	1%	4%	1%
At school	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%
Inspectors / Health Inspectors (unspecified)	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%	2%
Consultants	1%	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%	0%
Newsletter (various)	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Other	8%	0%	13%	7%	7%	8%	5%	3%	11%
Don't know / Refused	12%	27%	5%	10%	16% C	27% GI	11%	14%	9%
Column n	325	16	85	123	101	52	115	57	98

Table 5. [If S8=Yes] Where did you hear, see or read about the regulations? Tracking data

Column %	2022	2021	2019
Online (general)	17%	21%	19%
CFIA (NET)	11%	28%	30%
At work / Inhouse training	11%	-	-
Online - CFIA website	7%	10%	16%
Courses / Training	7%	-	-
Through email (other)	5%	7%	26%
CFIA employee / inspector	4%	4%	8%
Media (news, newspaper)	4%	-	-
Through CFIA email	4%	2%	6%
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (training, emails)	3%	-	-
The government (general)	3%	16%	-
Through Canada GAP	3%	4%	-

Through a pamphlet/printed materials	2%	8%	20%
Colleagues / industry events	2%	33%	23%
At school	1%	-	-
Inspectors / Health Inspectors (unspecified)	1%	-	-
Consultants	1%	-	-
Newsletter (various)	1%	-	-
Other	8%	-	-
Don't know / Refused	12%	-	-

Processor/manufacturer businesses were asked separately about new requirements for the sector that came into effect in 2020. Three-quarters (73%) of processors and manufacturers from the manufactured foods sector are aware of new regulations that came into force for their sector in 2020, up from 63% in 2021. Quebec businesses are more likely to be unaware (48%) compared to those in Ontario (16%) and the West (16%).

Table 6. S3B: Did you know that new food safety requirements for this sector came into force on July 15, 2020?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Processor or Manufacturer G
Yes	73%	64%	43%	80% C	78% C	73%
No	21%	24%	48% DE	16%	16%	21%
Don't know/Not sure	6%	12%	9%	3%	6%	6%
Column n	138	6	32	55	45	138

Table 7. S3B: Did you know that new food safety requirements for this sector came into force on July 15, 2020?

	Yes	No	Don't know
2022	73%	21%	6%
2021	63%	35%	3%

Three-quarters (77%) assume that the SFCR apply to their business, up from 71% in 2021. Among those aware of the SFCR, 90% agree it applies to them, compared to 57% among those unaware. Businesses in Ontario (86%) are more likely to agree than those in the West (68%). Processors and manufacturers (91%) are significantly more likely to believe that the SFCR apply to their business than all other business types.

Qualitative Insights: Significance of the SFCR for food businesses

Those who had heard of the SFCR knew that they applied to their business, but those who had not heard of them were less sure.

To ensure that participants understood what they are, we presented them with the following definition of the SFCR: “The Safe Food for Canadians Regulations outline the rules that many food businesses in Canada need to follow. They aim to make the Canadian food system safer by focusing on prevention and allowing for faster removal of unsafe food from the marketplace. The regulations also require imported food to be prepared with the same level of food safety controls as food prepared in Canada.”

Upon reviewing this definition, most agreed that the SFCR seem important. They understood that the SFCR set standards for the industry and create an even playing field for businesses. As one participant from Western Canada explained, “If anybody disagrees with the regulations, they shouldn't be in the food industry. Because food is, you have to make sure that everything is clean, healthy, sanitized, because you are dealing with people's health.” Another in Quebec echoed this sentiment, stating “Lives depend on the safety of foods we eat. Bacteria can develop so easily in food. It's important that there are rules in place. We all try to be good people, but there are people who cut corners. We need an agency that keeps us on the right path and oversees everyone.” Participants agreed that these kinds of standards are important to creating fairness in the industry and ensuring consumers are protected. However, some felt that the private certifications they hold are more stringent and had the sense that SFCR compliance was just another box they had to check off.

A few noted the importance of ensuring imported goods meet the same safety standards as those made in Canada. They appreciated that the CFIA takes an interest in this area, though one was skeptical that the CFIA could really ensure that foreign companies comply.

Table 8. S10: As far as you know, do you think the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations apply to your business?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes	77%	60%	83%	86% E	72%	68%	91% FHI	74%	74%
No	10%	17%	14%	9%	9%	15%	5%	14%	11%
Don't know/Not sure	13%	22%	2%	5%	19% CD	17% G	4%	12%	15% G
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 9. S10: As far as you know, do you think the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations apply to your business?

	Yes	No	Don't know
2022	77%	10%	13%
2021	71%	13%	15%
2020	64%	8%	28%

Over two-thirds (71%) believe that the SFCR apply to the sale of food products online. Over three-quarters of businesses in Quebec (81%) and Ontario (80%) agree, compared to two-thirds of Western businesses (64%). Processors and manufacturers (78%) and retailers (73%) are significantly more likely to believe the SFCR apply to the sale of food products online compared to agriculture businesses, though over half (55%) of this group still agree. Among those who actually do sell food products online, over three-quarters (79%) agree that the SFCR apply to the online sale of food products.

Qualitative Insights: Selling food products online

A few participants indicated that they sell their food products online. One or two simply display their products online, and customers contact them separately (by phone, email or direct message on social media) to order. The others either have their own site or use an e-commerce platform like Shopify or Squarespace.

Most were not very knowledgeable of specific rules related to the sale of food online. Among the larger group, most assumed the rules must be the same as selling in-person. One participant was in the process of setting up their traceability plan, which included their online sales. They explained the process as follows:

“So we've just recently set up our traceability for online. So previously, it was like, you're on our website, I shipped it out to you, and I was done. But now we track everything. So when we ship out, say, one of our bars, we now keep a folder of what lot number, the date it was shipped out, the date it was created, the lot number, the day it was shipped out and to who, so we keep track of who got our like, what customer got what product and when they got it.” – Ontario business

None mentioned any requirements around labelling, but when prompted, one did agree it is important to have the same labelling available online for customers to see as they would in-person.

Table 10. S10A: As far as you know, do you think the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations apply to on-line sales of food products?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes	71%	63%	81% E	80% E	64%	55%	78% F	67%	73% F
No	9%	4%	10%	8%	10%	9%	8%	16%	9%
Don't know/ Not sure	19%	34%	9%	11%	25% CD	36% GHI	14%	16%	18%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Few feel they need food safety regulation information in a language other than English or French, but among those who would benefit from this, the most commonly sought-after languages are Spanish (5%), Punjabi (5%) and Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese) (5%). There are significant regional differences when it comes to this question - businesses in Ontario (23%) and the West (17%) are much more likely than those in other regions to request information in any other language. In Ontario, languages that might be helpful include Chinese (10%), Spanish (9%), Punjabi (6%), Hindi (6%), Arabic (5%) and Portuguese (4%). In the Western provinces, Punjabi (6%) is the language that would be most helpful, followed by Hindi (4%) and Spanish (4%). Among businesses that sell ethnic food products, over a quarter (28%) agree that information in another language could be helpful. Among this group, Spanish (9%) and Hindi (9%) are most in-demand.

Qualitative Insights: Food safety information in languages other than English and French

Most of the businesses included in the research did not feel they needed CFIA information in languages other than French and English. However, a couple of participants in the Quebec group felt that Spanish could be useful because many workers in their industry (agriculture) speak Spanish. A few participants also felt that although they might not need information in other languages, since Canada is a diverse country, it is likely that offering food safety information in many languages would be beneficial to some.

Table 11. S15B: Would it be helpful to have information about food safety regulations in a language other than French and English?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Spanish	5%	0%	3%	9% C	4%	12%	4%	5%	4%
Punjabi	5%	0%	0%	6% C	6% C	7%	7%	7%	3%

Chinese	5%	0%	0%	10% CE	3%	1%	4%	10% F	4%
Hindi	4%	2%	0%	6% C	4% C	0%	5% F	3%	5% F
Arabic	1%	0%	0%	5% CE	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Portuguese	1%	0%	0%	4% CD	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Vietnamese	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	3%	2%
Italian	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Korean	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	2%	1%
Thai	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
German	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Greek	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Tagalog	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Dutch	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Ukrainian	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Turkish	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No, not needed	69%	97%	97% DE	58%	65%	70%	70%	70%	69%
Other (specify)	2%	0%	0%	3%	3%	1%	1%	3%	3%
Yes (NET)	16%	2%	3%	23% C	17% C	16%	18%	19%	14%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	15%	2%	0%	20% C	18% C	15%	12%	11%	17%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Food safety activities

As in previous years, most feel they very (72%) or somewhat (21%) clearly understand the food safety regulations that apply to their business. Very few (7%) do not clearly understand these regulations. The percentage of processor/manufacturer businesses who very clearly understand (79%) is significantly greater than the percentage who say the same among wholesalers and distributors (62%). Importers (61%) are less likely than businesses involved in other activities to say they very clearly understand the food safety regulations that apply to them.

Qualitative Insights: Understanding of food safety regulations

The qualitative research exposed some gaps in understanding of food safety regulations. Most of the more established, larger businesses seemed to have a decent grasp of the relevant regulations. Many, as noted above, have direct interaction with the CFIA and its inspectors on a

regular basis. They often have a team of individuals who share responsibility for food safety and ensuring compliance.

In contrast, the newer, smaller businesses either lacked awareness and, for the most part, were attempting to better understand the regulations that apply to their business. As one participant in Ontario explained the challenges they had faced determining how to become compliant with the regulations, “It is difficult unless you know someone who knows how to work through the system, you won't know where to turn. You have no clue what's next. You know, I've been lucky enough to be in a food program where they're helping me through each and every single piece of documentation that I need to have.” Some, including this participant, had resorted to using third-party, private programs (for example, Dicentra, Canada GAP) to help develop their food safety protocols because they found the information provided by the CFIA confusing. They appreciated that these programs guided them through different processes and provided contextual examples.

Table 12. A1: On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means 'not at all clearly' and 7 means 'very clearly', how well do you feel that you understand the food safety regulations that apply to your foods?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agric ulture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Very clearly (6-7)	72%	62%	78%	72%	71%	66%	79% H	62%	72%
Somew hat clearly (4-5)	21%	21%	19%	22%	21%	21%	19%	31%	20%
Not very clearly	7%	17%	3%	6%	7%	9%	2%	7%	8% G
Don't know	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 13. A1: On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means 'not at all clearly' and 7 means 'very clearly', how well do you feel that you understand the food safety regulations that apply to your foods?

	Very clearly (6-7)	Somewhat clearly (4-5)	Not very clearly (1-3)
2022	72%	21%	7%
2021	74%	20%	6%
2020	79%	17%	3%
2019	69%	23%	7%

The vast majority (79%) have written operating procedures on food safety, while two-thirds (64%) have a traceability program and about half have a Safe Food for Canadians licence (54%) and have written preventive controls in place (51%). Regionally, businesses in Ontario are more likely to have written/documented standard operating procedures (88%) and traceability programs (72%) compared to those in the West. Processors/manufacturers are more likely than all other business types to have a traceability program (90%). They are also more likely (90%) than agriculture (75%) and retail (75%) businesses to have written/documented standards. Processors and manufacturers (78%), along with wholesalers (70%) are more likely than agriculture (45%) and retail businesses (43%) to have a Safe Food for Canadians licence. Businesses aware of the SFCR are significantly more likely than those who are unaware to have a traceability program (76% vs 46%), a Safe Food for Canadians licence (65% vs 39%) and preventive controls (63% vs 33%).

In previous iterations of this survey, this question was only asked of non-retail businesses. In order to compare results from past waves to this survey, we have removed retail-only businesses from table 14 below. The percentage of non-retail only businesses with written/documented operating procedures on food safety is up from 2021 (85% from 76%). The percentage who have a traceability program has remains steady (78%) compared to 2021 (77%), as has the proportion that have preventive controls in place (67% in 2022 vs 66% in 2021).

Table 13. A2: Which of the following activities, if any, applies at your company?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Has written/documented standard operating procedures on food safety.	79%	62%	79%	88% E	76%	75%	90% FI	80%	75%
Has a traceability program established	64%	69%	66%	72% E	58%	63%	90% FHI	75% I	52%
Has a Safe Food for Canadian licence	54%	61%	61%	56%	49%	45%	78% FI	70% FI	43%
Has preventive controls in place, which are outlined in a written plan such as a HACCP based plan, QMP or other program	51%	50%	59%	60%	44%	59%	78%	65%	35%
Has preventive controls in place, but not written or	32%	41%	46% DE	27%	31%	39%	23%	32%	34%

documented in a plan									
None of the above	6%	3%	5%	6%	6%	5%	1%	3%	9%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 14: [NON-RETAIL ONLY] A2: Which of the following activities, if any, applies at your company?

Tracking data

Column %	2022	2021	2020	2019
Has written/documented standard operating procedures on food safety.	85%	76%	43%	78%
Has a traceability program established	78%	77%	72%	62%
Has a Safe Food for Canadian licence	69%	-	-	-
Has preventive controls in place, which are outlined in a written plan such as a HACCP based plan, QMP or other program	67%	66%	71%	60%
Has preventive controls in place, but not written or documented in a plan	33%	42%	35%	45%

Importers were asked whether they are aware that a Safe Food for Canadians licence is required to import food products. Over half (62%) are clearly aware while 15% are somewhat or vaguely aware. About a quarter (23%) are not aware.

Table 15. Z2 [for importers only]: Were you aware a Safe Food for Canadian licence is required to import food products into Canada?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes, clearly aware	62%	42%	70%	60%	62%	69%	86%	71%	33%
Yes, somewhat or vaguely aware	15%	58%	14%	19%	8%	31%	2%	18%	19%
No, not aware	23%	0%	16%	20%	29%	0%	12%	9%	48%
Don't know / Not Sure	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Column n	141	4	26	61	50	12	48	47	36

Private certification schemes

About a third (37%) use a food safety or quality control certification system. Businesses in Ontario (43%) and the West (38%) are more likely to use them than those in Quebec (24%). Processors/manufacturers are more likely to use them than retailers (53% vs 30%). Businesses that are more likely to use a food safety or quality control certification system include exporters (66%), those that prepare/process/treat/manufacture/preserve food for export (57%), grade/label/package food for export (64%), grow fruit or vegetables for export (56%) and convey food across provincial lines (57%), particularly when compared to importers (41%) and retailers (33%).

Table 16. Z1: Do you use a food safety or quality control certification system such as GFSI, ISO or QMP?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agri culture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes	37%	37%	24%	43% C	38% C	40%	53% I	40%	30%
No	54%	44%	69% DE	49%	55%	54%	44%	51%	59% G
Don't know / Not Sure	9%	19%	8%	8%	8%	6%	3%	9%	11%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

The vast majority (82%) support the use of private certification systems, almost identical to the 2021 results for this question (83%). Support is almost universal in Ontario (95%) and lower in Quebec (73%) and the West (77%). Processors/manufacturers are more likely to support their use (89%) than retailers (78%).

Qualitative Insights: Private certification schemes

Many businesses in the focus groups had systems in place to satisfy private certifications. These included GFSI, SQF, ISO and Canada GAP. Most of these businesses had these certifications because they are required by major retailers (for example, Walmart, Costco, Loblaws, etc.) to sell in their stores or be used in their processing. One was in the process of obtaining the SQF certification in order to import products from the Caribbean and export their product across North America.

None opposed the use of these systems and for some, as noted above, they are vital to their business. For smaller businesses, there was a sense that the cost of these systems may be prohibitive, and they may not be necessary for all, given that the CFIA already has standards in place that they have to abide by.

Those who were familiar with private certification systems were convinced that the requirements for achieving these certifications were more stringent than for satisfying the CFIA’s regulatory requirements:

“I think the private certification processes for each, like VCRS or FSC 22,000 or SQF level two, they’re very extensive, and they cover every possible scenario, much more than any government regulation would. And it’s clear because it’s documented and step by step, you have to follow every step to get certified and if there are any gaps in it, there’s a third-party auditor who will spend at least three days going through your procedure book to see if they can find any holes and then they check your actual procedures that you’re following your manual.” – Ontario business

“I felt it [Canada GAP] was more stringent. And therefore, I think I appreciated it. And how well it was laid out to us... So when you go with Canada GAP specifically, they give you a manual and how to become GAP compliant. And you by the time you’re done this manual, you are GAP compliant, because it has every form that you need to fill out. It’s not just explaining it, you actually, it’s like a workbook almost. And by the time you finish this workbook, which is huge. You know, like it is it’s a fairly large manual. It’s [the certification] done.” – Business in Western Canada

Notably, some spent less (or little) time specifically ensuring they were CFIA-compliant because they viewed the private certifications as more stringent than anything the CFIA would require or because they simply assumed that the private scheme covered all the regulations that they needed to be compliant with.

When pressed on the issue, respondents agreed that the CFIA should still have its own rules and regulations. They felt that there is a need for government-set standards to ensure the food industry’s rules are standardized and is not a “free for all”. They also felt the CFIA’s rules and regulations are important because they provide guidance for smaller businesses who cannot afford or would not benefit from private systems.

Table 17. A3: Whether or not you participate in a private certification scheme, do you support their role in achieving compliance with food safety regulations?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agri culture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes	82%	86%	73%	95% CE	77%	89%	89% I	81%	78%
No	10%	8%	22% DE	3%	10% D	4%	7%	12%	12%
Don't know	8%	6%	5%	2%	13% D	8%	3%	7%	10% G
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 18. A3: Whether or not you participate in a private certification scheme, do you support their role in achieving compliance with food safety regulations? Tracking data

	Yes	No	Don't know
2022	82%	10%	8%
2021	83%	9%	7%
2020	79%	8%	13%

Knowledge about the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations

Businesses that were non-retail only were asked which of the three key elements of the SFCR (written preventive controls, traceability, licensing) are the most challenging. As in previous years, about a quarter (26%) feel the biggest challenge related to the SFCR are the written preventive controls, similar to 2021 (29%). One-fifth feel either traceability (20%) or licensing (19%) are the biggest challenges, both down slightly from 2021. About a third (35%) do not feel any of these are the biggest challenge, up from 25% last year. Licensing poses more of a challenge to those in Ontario (21%) compared to those in Quebec (9%). Wholesalers and distributors are the most likely of all business types to find traceability the most challenging (29%), particularly compared to agriculture businesses (10%).

Qualitative Insights: Challenging elements of the SFCR

Participants were asked if any of the three key elements of the SFCR (traceability, preventive control plans and licensing) pose a greater challenge to them than others. A few did not feel any of these are particularly challenging. They already have practices in place to address them. Others, particularly newer businesses, found the process around traceability was difficult. For newer businesses, setting up a traceability system was time consuming. For others, complying with their own traceability requirements are a challenge (for example, fish/seafood processors need to ensure all the fishermen they buy from are complying), though not insurmountable.

Table 19. [NON-RETAIL ONLY] B3: From your perspective which of the following three key food safety elements of the SFCR would be your biggest challenge? Is it...

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Written preventive controls	26%	27%	34%	29%	23%	25%	22%	26%	34%

Traceability of food products	20%	36%	20%	20%	18%	10%	22%	29% F	19%
Licensing	19%	24%	9%	21% C	19%	23%	19%	15%	17%
None of the above	35%	13%	37%	31%	40%	42%	37%	30%	30%
Column n	314	14	50	131	119	68	127	73	47

Table 20. [NON-RETAIL ONLY] B3: From your perspective which of the following three key food safety elements of the SFCR would be your biggest challenge? Is it...

	Written prevention controls	Traceability of food products	Licensing	None of the above
2022	26%	20%	19%	35%
2021	29%	25%	21%	25%
2020	27%	24%	15%	34%
2019	30%	45%	16%	9%

Businesses are very confident that they meet all food safety regulations; 86% are very confident (6-7 on a 7-point scale), up from 79% last year. Another 11% are somewhat confident, while just 1% are not very confident. There is little difference between businesses based on region and the type of business when it comes to confidence that they meet food safety regulations and requirements.

Table 21. B4: If your business was subject to a CFIA inspection today, how confident are you that you would meet food safety regulations and requirements?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	Wes t E	Agricultur e F	Processor or Manufacture r G	Wholesale r or distributor H	Retail I
Very confident (6-7)	86%	88%	82%	89%	85%	83%	83%	86%	87%
Somewhat confident (4-5)	11%	12%	15%	8%	13%	11%	15%	6%	12%
Not very confident (1-3)	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Don't know	2%	0%	2%	2%	2%	5%	0%	7%	1%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 22. B4: If your business was subject to a CFIA inspection today, how confident are you that you would meet food safety regulations and requirements?

	Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not very confident	Don't know
2022	86%	11%	1%	2%
2021	79%	15%	4%	2%
2020	80%	15%	2%	3%
2019	92%	6%	1%	1%

A quarter (24%) say they know a great deal (6-7 on a 7-point scale) about Establishment-based risk analysis, while 22% know some (4-5). Slightly less than half (45%) say they do not know much. The percentage who say they know a great deal is up slightly from 2021 (18%). Quebec-based businesses are more likely to say they know a great deal about Establishment-based risk analysis than those in the West (37% vs 19%). Processors and manufacturers are more likely to say they know a great deal (37%) than all other types of businesses.

Table 23. B6: On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means nothing at all and 7 means a great deal, how much have you read or heard about Establishment-based Risk Analysis?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retailer I
Great deal (6-7)	24%	14%	37% E	26%	19%	22%	37% FHI	22%	19%
Some (4-5)	22%	27%	30%	22%	19%	19%	31%	17%	20%
Not much (1-3)	45%	56%	31%	43%	48%	53% G	28%	56% G	47% G
Don't know	9%	3%	3%	8%	13%	5%	4%	5%	14%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 24. B6: On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means nothing at all and 7 means a great deal, how much have you read or heard about Establishment-based Risk Analysis?

	Great deal (6-7)	Some (4-5)	Not much (1-3)	Don't know
2022	24%	22%	45%	9%
2021	18%	29%	50%	3%

A third (33%) say COVID-19 has forced them to make large changes to the way they do business, while another 45% say they have made moderate changes. About one-in-five (22%) say they have made minimal to no changes. Notably, the percentage who say they have had to make large changes has risen from 26% in 2021. Agriculture businesses seem least affected by COVID - almost half (46%) say they made minimal to no changes, compared to a quarter of processors/manufacturers (24%) and wholesalers (25%) and 14% of retailers. Importers (38%) and those who sell to consumers in person or online (37%) are more likely to say they had to make major changes, while those who grow fruit or vegetables seem the least affected (51% say they made minimal to no changes).

Table 25. C6: In thinking of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way your business operates currently, which of the following most closely describes how your business has been affected? Would you say...

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agricu Iture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
You had to make large changes to how you conduct your business operations	33%	27%	35%	33%	34%	22%	32%	25%	39% F
You had to make moderate changes	45%	58%	40%	48%	43%	32%	43%	49%	47%
You made minimal to no changes to how you conduct your business operations	22%	15%	24%	19%	23%	46% GHI	24%	25%	14%
Don't know / Not Sure	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 26. C6: In thinking of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way your business operates currently, which of the following most closely describes how your business has been affected? Would you say...

	Large changes	Moderate changes	Minimal changes	Don't know
2022	33%	45%	22%	0%

2021	26%	53%	21%	1%
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Most strongly (42%) or somewhat agree (33%) that the CFIA has been flexible in the enforcement of its regulations to allow businesses to adapt to COVID-19. The percentage who strongly agree is up from 34% in 2021. Processors and manufacturers are more likely to strongly agree (58%) than agriculture businesses (39%) and retailers (35%). Exporters (62%) and those who prepare/process/treat/manufacture food for export (62%) are more likely than importers (44%) and those who sell retail in person (39%) and online (41%) to agree.

Table 27. C7B: On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means 'do not agree at all' and 7 means 'strongly agree', how would you rate the following statements? The CFIA has been flexible in the enforcement of food safety regulations to allow businesses to adapt to the challenges of COVID-19

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	Wes t E	Agricultur e F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesale r or distributor H	Retail I
Strongly agree (6-7)	42%	40%	37%	48%	40%	39%	58% FI	44%	35%
Somewhat agree (4-5)	33%	46%	41%	26%	33%	24%	29%	33%	37%
Do not agree (1-3)	12%	6%	10%	13%	13%	18% G	5%	7%	16% G
Don't know	12%	8%	12%	12%	13%	19%	8%	16%	11%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 28. C7B: On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means 'do not agree at all' and 7 means 'strongly agree', how would you rate the following statements? The CFIA has been flexible in the enforcement of food safety regulations to allow businesses to adapt to the challenges of COVID-19. Tracking data.

Column %	2022	2021
Strongly agree (6-7)	42%	34%
Somewhat agree (4-5)	33%	27%
Do not agree (1-3)	12%	11%
Don't know	12%	28%

Over two-thirds strongly (39%) or somewhat agree (34%) that the CFIA has provided clear guidance on how it is approaching compliance and enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The percentage who strongly agree has risen slightly from 35% in 2021, and the percentage who somewhat agree is up as well from 26% in 2021.

Table 29. C7: On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means 'do not agree at all' and 7 means 'strongly agree', how would you rate the following statements? The CFIA has provided clear guidance on how it is approaching compliance and enforcement of food rules and regulations during COVID-19

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agri culture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Strongly agree (6-7)	39%	40%	37%	43%	37%	31%	40%	37%	41%
Somewhat agree (4-5)	34%	29%	38%	30%	35%	33%	36%	35%	32%
Do not agree (1-3)	21%	25%	15%	15%	25%	23%	19%	27%	20%
Don't know	7%	6%	10%	12% E	3%	13% H	5%	1%	7%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 30. C7: On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means 'do not agree at all' and 7 means 'strongly agree', how would you rate the following statements? The CFIA has provided clear guidance on how it is approaching compliance and enforcement of food rules and regulations during COVID-19. Tracking data.

Column %	2022	2021
Strongly agree (6-7)	39%	35%
Somewhat agree (4-5)	34%	26%
Do not agree (1-3)	21%	19%
Don't know	7%	21%

Among importers in the manufacturing/processing sector who are not clearly aware of the new licence requirements for importing in their sector, half (54%) say they are confident their business is ready to comply with all SFCR requirements. One-in-five (19%) are somewhat ready and a quarter (27%) do not know. Among those who do not feel ready, two-thirds say it will take them under 6 months to be ready. Note that sample sizes for both these questions are small and results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 31. [IMPORTERS IN MANUFACTURING/PROCESSING NOT CLEARLY AWARE OF NEW REQUIREMENTS] Z3: Thinking about the SFCR and the requirements for licensing, written preventive control plans and traceability, how confident are you that your business is ready to fully comply with all requirements of the SFCR?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agri culture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Ready (6-7)	54%	-	50%	33%	59%	-	31%	100%	50%

Somewhat ready (4-5)	19%	-	25%	33%	15%	-	27%	0%	22%
Not ready (1-3)	0%	-	0%	0%	0%	-	0%	0%	0%
Don't know	27%	-	25%	33%	26%	-	42%	0%	29%
Column n	15	0	4	3	8	0	5	2	8

Table 32. Z4: How much time do you think is required before regular CFIA compliance and enforcement activities begin?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Less than 3 months	25%	-	0%	100%	18%	-	0%	49%	18%
3 months to less than 6 months	40%	-	50%	0%	44%	-	50%	0%	58%
6 months to less than 9 months	6%	-	50%	0%	0%	-	50%	0%	0%
We need more than 9 months to become fully ready	14%	-	0%	0%	18%	-	0%	0%	24%
Don't know	15%	-	0%	0%	19%	-	0%	51%	0%
Column n	8	0	2	1	5	0	2	2	4

Asked how the CFIA can provide resources to help businesses familiarize themselves with the SFCR, about half (55%) do not provide an answer. Among those who do, the most common ideas are sending information via email (8%), contacting or visiting businesses directly (6%), better communication in general (5%), providing training (4%) and improving the website/online services (4%). Quebec businesses stand out as desiring more email communication (22%) than those in other regions. Processors and manufacturers are the most keen to visit businesses directly (13%).

Table 33. Z5: Can you provide some thoughts on how the CFIA could better assist businesses who may not be familiar with the CFIA and the SFCR

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
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Communication by email / send information/documentation by email	8%	15%	22% DE	6%	5%	10%	11% H	2%	8%
More information (unspecified)	8%	13%	8%	7%	7%	14%	5%	5%	7%
Meet people / visit the businesses / contact businesses directly	6%	0%	13%	7%	5%	0%	13% FI	8% F	5% F
Better communication (unspecified)	5%	2%	3%	6%	7%	9%	6%	3%	5%
Provide training	4%	0%	5%	6%	3%	3%	9% H	2%	3%
Improve the website / online services	4%	2%	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%
Communication by mail	4%	2%	9% E	6%	1%	2%	3%	0%	5%
More ads / ad campaign	2%	0%	8% E	2%	0%	0%	0%	6%	2%
Provide a clear outline/guide/template of what is required	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Simplify the wording in documentations/communications	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	4% I	2%	0%
Collaborate/coordination with local food safety groups	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Other	6%	3%	3%	7%	7%	5%	10%	7%	5%
Nothing	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Don't know / Refused	55%	72%	33%	54% C	60% C	53%	40%	61% G	61% G
Column n	450	32	10 7	16 3	148	71	138	76	164

Almost three-quarters (72%) agree that the CFIA has been very transparent (38%) or somewhat transparent (34%) in assessing non-compliance with regulations. Half of processors/manufacturers (54%) agree the CFIA has been transparent, significantly higher than all other types of businesses. Over half of those who prepare/process/treat/manufacture food for export (54%) and grade/label/package food for export (52%) also agree.

Table 34. Z99: In your opinion, how transparent do you think the CFIA is when it comes to assessing non-compliance of regulations? Please answer on a scale of 1-7 with 1 being not at all transparent, and 7 being very transparent.

Column %	Tota l A	AC B	QC C	ON D	Wes t E	Agricul tur F	Process or Manufac ture G	Wholesale r or distrib utor H	Retai l I
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Transparent (6-7)	38%	33%	36%	43%	37%	35%	54% FHI	35%	33%
Somewhat transparent (4-5)	34%	44%	38%	33%	31%	25%	24%	36%	39%
Not transparent (1-3)	14%	15%	12%	13%	15%	15%	10%	23% G	15%
Don't know	14%	8%	15%	11%	17%	25%	13%	6%	13%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Over two-thirds agree that the CFIA has either been very transparent (38%) or somewhat transparent (32%) when it comes to reporting and publishing non-compliance. Few (14%) feel the CFIA is not being transparent in this respect. Almost half of processors (47%), along with 44% of wholesalers and a third (36%) of retailers agree the CFIA is being very transparent, significantly higher than the percentage of agriculture businesses (21%) who say the same. Half of those who prepare/process/treat/manufacture food for export (49%) say the CFIA has been very transparent, significantly more than importers (27%), those who send food across provincial borders (40%), sell food directly to consumers (37%) and sell online (36%).

Table 35. Z100: How transparent do you think the CFIA is when it comes to reporting (publishing) non-compliance? Please answer on a scale of 1-7 with 1 being not at all transparent, and 7 being very transparent.

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	Wes t E	Agricultur e F	Processor or Manufacture r G	Wholesale r or distributor H	Retail I
Very transparent (6-7)	38%	42%	33%	40%	37%	21%	47% F	44% F	36% F
Somewhat transparent (4-5)	32%	37%	40%	27%	32%	33%	28%	28%	34%
Not transparent (1-3)	14%	17%	12%	17%	12%	17%	10%	11%	16%
Don't know	17%	4%	16%	16%	19%	28%	16%	17%	14%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Asked whether the CFIA should publish the names of companies that receive Administrative Money Penalties (AMPs), businesses are fairly divided. Over a third (38%) agree with publishing their names to improve industry quality, while 44% agree more with the statement that AMPs are a minor fine and can happen to good companies, so publishing their names would not be

helpful. Businesses in Ontario (46%) and Quebec (51%) are more likely than those in the West to support publishing the names of companies that receive AMPs. Over half (54%) of processors and manufacturers believe AMPs are a minor fine and can happen to good companies, so publishing their names does not help, significantly more than retailers (39%).

Qualitative Insights: Enforcement and transparency

Most either knew that there are, or assumed there likely are, consequences for businesses who break CFIA rules, but few had heard of any specific cases and those tended to be via word-of-mouth. The most common consequence mentioned was fines. A few noted that consequences can escalate, from warnings to fines to losing a licence.

It seemed appropriate to all that there would be consequences for businesses not following CFIA rules and regulations, but participants hoped and/or assumed that consequences would vary in severity based on the infraction. For example, participants felt that businesses should be given a chance to correct a small administrative error, but if they purposefully do things that put consumers at risk, they should be more severely punished.

Participants hoped a similar approach would be taken when it comes to publishing the names of businesses who do not follow the rules. As one participant in Atlantic Canada said, “I think it depends on the severity of the issue. I don't know that everything should be published. I think it just would depend on the severity of what happened.” Another in Ontario provided a similar view, “Well, if it's a minor violation, again, corrective action, dealing with the employees, but if it's say, just blatant disregard that could result in a full scale real recall, and people are getting sick then I think yes. that definitely it [publishing the names of companies] has to be there and it's going to be in the news media anyways, if it gets to that point.” The general sense was that the CFIA should give businesses a chance to correct their errors, but participants agreed that if a business ignored warnings or posed a significant threat to public health, that business should be named publicly.

While most agreed they would want to know which businesses have not followed CFIA rules and regulations, virtually none had sought out this information, and were not sure whether the CFIA makes this information public. Relatedly, many simply did not know enough to be able to answer whether the CFIA is transparent in its enforcement and compliance activities.

If they became aware that a business in their supply chain was conducting unsafe or fraudulent activities related to food safety, virtually all agreed that they would likely sever ties with that company. One participant explained, “We check all our vendors out thoroughly, including having people go to their plants. We're expected to have certain standards, we demand the same of our suppliers. If there was a violation, we would either stop buying from them and find an alternative source.” Participants also agreed that continuing to work with such a company would put their own reputation at risk. A few said they might reach out to the company and see if they

were aware of their infraction and intended to correct their behaviour, but still would be wary of doing business with them.

A few said, unprompted, that they would report a business conducting unsafe or fraudulent activities. When asked directly, most agreed that they would consider reporting the business:

“I think that, yes, I would report them, and I would feel that I would have to, in order to save my own business and my liabilities, and then my livelihood could be at stake, right. So we need to make sure that other businesses we may have dealings with know that because that is our responsibilities to make sure what we are giving to our consumers is safe.” – Business in Western Canada

“We have [reported a business] in the past. Because when it affects our business, we have no choice. And we don't like it when other people aren't held to the same standard that we're held to because we buy from other federal plants as well. We don't kill cows or chickens or anything. So we have to bring it from somewhere. And so when they don't seem to follow the same rules and regulations we, as awful as it sounds, we have no choice but to report it.” – Business in Atlantic Canada

Again, businesses were concerned that failure to report such behaviour could impact not only consumers, but their reputation as well. Most indicated they would consider reporting a business that failed to follow rules to the CFIA, though some did not know which association or organization would be most appropriate. Many, though not all, said they would feel more comfortable reporting businesses anonymously.

Table 36. Z101: Which of the following statements is closest to your view...

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
AMPS are a minor fine and can happen to good companies, publishing their names doesn't help	44%	61%	36%	37%	49%	50%	54% I	40%	39%
Publishing the names of companies that receive AMPS will help the whole	38%	19%	51% E	46% E	32%	24%	36%	29%	44% F

industry improve by highlighting quality									
Neither of these statements represents my view	18%	20%	13%	17%	20%	26%	11%	31% GI	16%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

My CFIA

Over a quarter (28%) have heard of and used My CFIA, an almost identical percentage as in 2021 (27%). Regionally, businesses in Ontario (38%) are most likely to have used it. Among business types, processors and manufacturers are most likely to have used My CFIA (59%), followed by wholesalers (47%) and a third of agriculture businesses (35%). All are significantly more likely to have used My CFIA than retailers (8%). Most (87%) of the latter have not heard nor used My CFIA. There is significant variation in uptake of My CFIA depending on the types of business activities respondents engage in. Over half of businesses that import (53%) or send food across provincial/territorial borders (63%) have used My CFIA, while over two-thirds of businesses that export (69%), prepare, process, treat or manufacture food for export (69%) and grade, label or package food for export (71%) have used My CFIA.

Qualitative Insights: My CFIA

When asked directly, none claimed to have heard of the My CFIA, though one or two recalled it vaguely as the discussion continued. There was some appetite for a service like My CFIA. During a discussion about the SFCR and updates to food safety regulations, one participant said they wished there was a service for food businesses that, like My CRA, would send them a notification to let them know they needed to visit the CFIA site to review changes affecting their business. A few others agreed that this would be useful.

Table 37. E1: Have you ever heard, seen or read anything about the CFIA's online portal called "My CFIA"?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agri culture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes, I used it	28%	20%	18%	38% CE	25%	35% I	59% FI	47% I	8%
Yes, but never used it	8%	11%	5%	9%	9%	20% HI	11%	6%	5%
No	64%	70%	77% D	53%	66%	45%	30%	47% G	87% GHI

Don't know/Refused	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 38. E1: Have you ever heard, seen or read anything about the CFIA's online portal called "My CFIA"?

	Have heard and used it	Have heard and never used it	Have not heard of it	Don't know
2022	28%	8%	64%	0%
2021	27%	13%	60%	1%
2020	16%	10%	72%	2%
2019	18%	10%	71%	1%

Among those who use My CFIA, the most common reasons for doing so are for a new licence request (67%) and licence renewal (63%). Under half used it for registration (43%), while close to a third (37%) used it for a permit. A quarter (26%) used it for an export certificate. The hierarchy of reasons for using My CFIA has not changed from 2021, but the percentage who say they used My CFIA for licence renewal has risen from 2021 (63% vs 55%).

Table 39. E2: Have you ever used the portal for a...

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agri culture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
New licence request	67%	44%	85%	63%	69%	60%	76%	75%	40%
Licence renewal	63%	33%	75%	68%	60%	66%	72%	79%	20%
Registration	43%	38%	30%	43%	47%	33%	56%	48%	14%
Permit	37%	8%	41%	33%	44%	39%	42%	51%	6%
Export certificate	26%	0%	41%	18%	32%	29%	34%	23%	0%
You've only enrolled and have not used it for anything in particular	6%	8%	4%	7%	4%	9%	3%	6%	10%

General information	3%	0%	0%	2%	4%	0%	3%	5%	3%
Importing	2%	0%	4%	1%	2%	5%	1%	0%	0%
You used the portal for other purposes	4%	0%	0%	4%	5%	5%	5%	2%	0%
Don't know/ Can't remember / Refused	11%	27%	0%	6%	17%	11%	3%	3%	41%
Column n	167	9	24	79	55	30	80	43	14

Table 40. E2: Have you ever used the portal for a... Tracking data.

Column %	2022	2021	2020	2019
New licence request	67%	70%	69%	65%
Licence renewal	63%	55%	32%	32%
Registration	43%	44%	45%	44%
Permit	37%	32%	16%	28%
Export certificate	26%	23%	24%	14%
You've only enrolled and have not used it for anything in particular	6%	4%	24%	10%
General information	3%	-	-	-
Importing	2%	-	-	-
You used the portal for other purposes	4%	-	-	10%
Don't know/ Can't remember / Refused	11%	5%	7%	2%

As in previous years, the vast majority of those who have used My CFIA are satisfied with it. In fact, about half (47%) are very satisfied while 39% are somewhat satisfied. Just 12% are not satisfied.

Table 41. E3: Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with “My CFIA” on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied.

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Very satisfied (6-7)	47%	54%	56%	44%	48%	42%	47%	49%	46%
Somewhat satisfied (4-5)	39%	16%	22%	46%	39%	36%	39%	39%	48%
Not satisfied (1-3)	12%	29%	23%	11%	10%	17%	14%	9%	7%
Don't know	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	4%	0%	3%	0%

Column n	167	9	24	79	55	30	80	43	14
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Table 42. E3: Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with “My CFIA” on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied. Tracking data.

	Very satisfied (6-7)	Somewhat satisfied (4-5)	Not very satisfied (1-3)	Don't know
2022	47%	39%	12%	1%
2021	50%	36%	12%	1%
2020	40%	47%	10%	2%
2019	47%	36%	14%	2%

Businesses’ biggest challenges finding information on CFIA food safety regulations and requirements include that the website is difficult to navigate (12%) and that there is a lack of clear information (9%). Last year, both were also the top issues, though the order was reversed (13% lack of clear information, 8% website not user friendly). However, the plurality (42%) say they encounter no real challenges finding this information. Similarly, over half (56%) do not identify any topics that they feel are challenging to find information on.

Qualitative Insights: CFIA website

Most participants had visited the CFIA website at some point. Typically, they had visited it to find information about regulations, compliance and licensing. The website was a pain-point for smaller, newer businesses developing their food safety compliance plans. Several found the information on the website very dense and difficult to search. One participant explained, “I would say it's the typical boring Government of Canada website. And it's not easy to navigate. And it's a lot of words. And it's difficult to find anything. And it would be nice if there was just an easy search area.” Many agreed that the website could be more user-friendly. Some suggestions related to navigability and searching. Essentially, the businesses wanted to be able to visit the site, and find all the regulations that apply to them, and any relevant updates, all in one place. Another suggestion was providing templates for documentation (for example, traceability forms) or how-to guides for new businesses that would take them through the all the SFCR requirements.

Table 43. E7: In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge in finding information on food safety regulations or requirements?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I

Website is not user-friendly / difficult to navigate	12%	11%	8%	16%	12%	10%	20%	14%	10%
Lack of clear information / difficult to understand	9%	7%	9%	8%	9%	6%	13%	15%	6%
Research / finding information is too time-consuming	4%	0%	7%	5%	4%	6%	6%	2%	3%
Too much information / high volume of information	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	6%	9%	1%
Consistent information	3%	0%	1%	3%	3%	5%	1%	1%	3%
Lack of notifications / updates	2%	0%	1%	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%
Lack of contact with customer service / not responsive	1%	0%	4%	1%	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%
Having somebody to call	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Other	2%	0%	2%	4%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Any	37%	21%	37%	44%	35%	36%	56% FI	47% I	28%
None / No challenges	42%	57%	30%	36%	47% C	33%	32%	32%	50% FGH
Don't know / Refused	21%	22%	32% DE	20%	18%	30%	11%	21%	22%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 44. E7: In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge in finding information on food safety regulations or requirements? Tracking data.

Column %	2022	2021	2020	2019
Website is not user-friendly / difficult to navigate	12%	8%	10%	8%
Lack of clear information / difficult to understand	9%	13%	9%	13%
Research / finding information is too time-consuming	4%	6%	4%	6%
Too much information / high volume of information	4%	7%	5%	8%

Consistent information	3%			
Lack of notifications / updates	2%	5%	4%	4%
Lack of contact with customer service / not responsive	1%	2%	3%	3%
Having somebody to call	1%			
Other	2%	1%	6%	1%
None / No challenges	42%	38%	25%	46%
Don't know / Refused	21%	38%	36%	5%

About half (56%) do not name a specific CFIA topic that is difficult to get clear information on. A quarter (25%) identify something that was difficult to get clear information on. Processors and manufacturers (44%) and agriculture businesses (32%) are more likely than wholesalers (23%) and retailers (16%) to have difficulty finding information about any topic. Among processors and manufacturers, labelling is the topic they find most challenging to get information about. Those involved in exporting, including exporters themselves (13%) and those who prepare food for export (15%), also find information about labelling to be the most challenging to get clear answers on.

Table 45. E8: Thinking about CFIA resources, what topics, if any, was it difficult to get clear information on?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agri culture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesale r or distributor H	Retail I
Labelling / labelling requirements (in different country, what is optional, etc.)	5%	0%	4%	7%	5%	2%	12% FI	6%	2%
Food conservation	2%	0%	9% DE	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	4% FH
Importing / importing requirements	2%	0%	1%	1%	3%	3%	0%	2%	2%
Exporting / exporting requirements	2%	0%	1%	1%	3%	4%	4%	3%	0%

Licensing / obtaining a licence	1%	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	0%
Import licensing	1%	0%	0%	3%	1%	3%	4% HI	0%	0%
Information on regulations / explanation of regulations	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%	0%
Updates / news (unspecified)	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	0%
General information	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
COVID-19 regulations	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	1%
Food safety	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%
Recalls	0%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Pesticides	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Other	6%	0%	6%	4%	9%	13%	9%	3%	4%
Any	25%	8%	26%	23%	27%	32% I	44% HI	23%	16%
Nothing in particular	56%	75%	55%	54%	55%	55%	45%	51%	62%
Don't know/Refused	19%	17%	19%	23%	18%	12%	12%	26%	23%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

The most common sources of regulatory information for businesses are the CFIA website (33%), Google (16%), the Government of Canada generally (16%) and other online sources (9%). Businesses in Ontario (41%) and the West (34%) are more likely than those in Quebec (14%) to visit the CFIA website. Two-thirds of processors/manufacturers (68%) visit the CFIA website for regulatory information, significantly more than agriculture businesses (41%), wholesalers (47%) and retailers (14%). Retailers (20%) and wholesalers (23%) are more likely to use Google than processors (7%).

Table 46. E9: Where do you look when looking for regulatory information?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
CFIA website	33%	34%	14%	41% C	34% C	41% I	68% FHI	47% I	14%
Government of Canada website	16%	5%	13%	20%	16%	15%	18%	10%	18%
Google	16%	11%	9%	16%	18%	10%	7%	23% G	20% G
Online / internet (unspecified)	9%	4%	7%	8%	10%	11% G	2%	8%	11% G
Provincial government website	7%	9%	1%	4%	11%	5%	2%	1%	12% GH
Company website / head office	6%	11%	13% E	8%	2%	3%	0%	5%	9% G
Colleagues / Industry meetings	4%	0%	6%	4%	4%	1%	7% F	1%	5%
Inspector	4%	6%	3%	3%	4%	6%	4% H	1%	4% H
Other website	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	1%	4%
MAPAQ website	3%	0%	23% DE	0%	0%	2%	6% H	0%	3%
Phone call to CFIA	3%	5%	0%	1%	5% C	4%	5% H	0%	2%
Health Canada website	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	5%	5%	1%
Word of mouth	3%	5%	7% D	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Food safety websites	2%	5%	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%
Local health unit	1%	0%	4% E	3%	0%	1%	0%	2%	2%
Consultant	1%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	0%
CanadaGAP	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Wholesaler / Manufacturer / Distributor	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
FDA website	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%
Seminars	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Other	8%	7%	13% E	11%	5%	11%	15% I	8%	4%
Don't know / Can't	3%	7%	3%	3%	3%	7%	1%	3%	3%

remember / Refused									
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Just 14% of those who have visited the CFIA website have used the CFIA virtual assistant / chatbot and among the few who have used it, most found it very useful (36%) (6-7 on a 7-point scale) or somewhat useful (45%) (4-5). Note that the sample size for this question is small, and results should be interpreted with caution.

Qualitative Insights: CFIA website virtual assistant / chatbot

None had used the virtual assistant / chatbot feature on the website, though one recalled seeing it pop up. There was some skepticism that it would be helpful. Most had used another virtual chatbot and found it frustrating because the automated responses to their questions had not provided a satisfying answer. They would prefer to speak to a real person, even if they had to wait to get in touch with someone. In fact, one person spoke of learning to get around the AI programming in order to be more quickly redirected to a live agent.

Table 47. E10: While using the CFIA website to look for regulatory information, Did you use the chatbot or virtual assistant?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes	14%	11%	10%	19%	11%	8%	15%	16%	17%
No	83%	84%	85%	79%	85%	92%	80%	84%	81%
Don't know/Not sure	3%	5%	5%	1%	4%	0%	6% H	0%	3%
Column n	178	12	17	79	70	28	87	39	25

Table 48. E11: How useful was the chatbot or virtual assistant in providing you an answer? Please answer on a scale of 1-7, where 1 is not at all useful, and 7 is very useful.

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Useful (6-7)	36%	0%	0%	24%	59%	0%	26%	61%	48%
Somewhat useful (4-5)	45%	100%	52%	42%	41%	0%	57%	28%	52%
Not useful (1-3)	19%	0%	48%	33%	0%	100%	18%	10%	0%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Column n	23	1	2	11	9	1	11	6	5

Asked about their interest in topics for future CFIA webinars, the most often named include preventive control plans (21%), labelling (20%) and how to use My CFIA to apply for licences and other permissions (15%). Preventive control plans are most interesting to those in Ontario (23%) and the West (24%). For processors/manufacturers and wholesalers, labelling (30%) is among the topics of greatest interest. Wholesalers would also appreciate a session on import requirements (32%). Businesses that export prioritize labelling (32%) and traceability (21%). Importers, perhaps unsurprisingly, would be interested in a session dealing with import requirements (20%), as well as labelling (23%).

Qualitative Insights: CFIA webinars

Many were interested in webinars offered by the CFIA, with the caveat that they would need to know that the sessions would be relevant to their business. For example, new businesses hoped for a session that would guide them through the various steps they need to take to obtain a licence, including the timelines for submitting paperwork. Industry-specific sessions would also be welcome (for example, for seafood, or agriculture). The idea of a webinar for women entrepreneurs was well-received by women running small businesses.

Table 49. D5: If the CFIA was holding webinars, what topics are you most likely to make time to attend?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Preventive control plans	21%	12%	12%	23% C	24% C	16%	15%	20%	24%
Labelling	20%	17%	18%	23%	19%	11%	30% FI	30% FI	15%
How to use MY CFIA to apply for licences and other permissions	15%	21%	12%	15%	15%	29% I	17%	15%	10%
Traceability	12%	12%	12%	14%	11%	19%	13%	19% I	7%
Import requirements	10%	2%	10%	12%	10%	4%	11%	32% FGI	6%
Food safety	8%	11%	6%	9%	8%	2%	6%	5%	11%
Regulations / changes to regulations	6%	7%	5%	6%	6%	7%	12%	5%	3%
COVID-19 / COVID-19 safety/regulations	2%	0%	1%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	4% FGH
Food processing	2%	0%	3%	1%	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Food recall / how to handle food recalls	1%	4%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%	1%

Inspection protocols / information on inspections	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	2%	0%	1%
Allergens	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	4% FHI	0%	0%
Nothing	1%	0%	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
General information	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Livestock handling/care	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%	0%
Conservation	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Safety issues	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Licensing	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Packaging	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Export requirements	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Pesticide information	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Other (please specify)	4%	6%	3%	5%	3%	9%	5%	2%	3%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	36%	45%	51%	29%	35%	37%	24%	32%	41%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Ask CFIA

Few (7%) have used Ask CFIA, while 10% have heard of it, but not used it. Most (83%) have never heard of it, similar to 2021 results (81%). About a third (30%) of processors and manufacturers have heard of it, including 14% who have used it, significantly more than the proportion of wholesalers (4%) and retailers (5%) that have used it.

Table 50. F1: Are you aware of a service offered by the CFIA called “Ask CFIA”?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Yes, I used it	7%	0%	5%	8%	8%	7%	14% HI	4%	5%
Yes, but never used it	10%	7%	2%	13% C	10% C	2%	16% F	14% F	8%
No	83%	90%	93%	79%	82%	90% G	69%	82%	88% G
Don't know/Refused	1%	3%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 51. F1: Are you aware of a service offered by the CFIA called “Ask CFIA”? Tracking data.

	Yes, I used it	Yes, but never used it	No	Don't know
2022	7%	10%	83%	1%
2021	5%	13%	81%	1%

Among the few who have used Ask CFIA, 40% are satisfied with it (6-7 on a 7-point scale) and 17% are somewhat satisfied (4-5 on a 7-point scale), while 43% were not satisfied. Satisfaction is lower than in 2021 but since the sample size for this question is small, results should be interpreted with caution.

The most commonly cited reasons for using Ask CFIA are because information they had previously found was not clear (28%), they could not find the information after searching the CFIA site (15%) and the question the business needed answered was complicated (8%).

Table 52. F2: Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with “Ask CFIA” on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied.

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Satisfied (6-7)	40%	-	14%	57%	34%	58%	30%	20%	50%
Somewhat satisfied (4-5)	17%	-	70%	22%	4%	11%	21%	57%	7%
Not satisfied (1-3)	43%	-	16%	21%	62%	31%	49%	23%	43%
Don't know	0%	-	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Column n	35	0	6	18	11	7	20	4	4

Table 53. F2: Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with “Ask CFIA” on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied.

	Satisfied (6-7)	Somewhat satisfied (4-5)	Not satisfied (1-3)
2022	40%	17%	43%
2021	44%	38%	18%

Table 54. F4: Why did you decide to use the Ask CFIA service?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor	Retail I
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								H	
Information I found wasn't clear	28%		0%	16%	40%	31%	18%	0%	43%
Couldn't find information I needed after searching on the CFIA website	15%		16%	12%	17%	28%	17%	57%	0%
My question was complicated / complex	8%		0%	7%	10%	17%	13%	0%	0%
After hearing about the service from another source	1%		14%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Didn't know was using the service (just completed the contact us/feedback form)	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	7%		0%	10%	6%	10%	13%	0%	0%
Don't know / Refused	43%		70%	55%	31%	31%	36%	43%	57%
Column n	35	0	6	18	11	7	20	4	4

Communications and social media

Most (88%) do not follow the CFIA on social media, down slightly over the past two years from 91% in 2020. Just 5% follow the CFIA on Facebook, 4% follow the CFIA on LinkedIn and 2% follow on Instagram and Twitter, respectively. Significantly more processors and manufacturers (13%) follow the CFIA on LinkedIn. Importers seem a bit more engaged with the CFIA on social media than other businesses – almost a quarter (24%) follow the CFIA on social media.

Among those would like to obtain more information from the CFIA on social media, new regulations and updates are the top interest (7%) (as was the case in 2021) followed by all food safety regulations generally (4%). Processors and manufacturers are more likely than other business types to obtain more information about new regulations on social media (13%).

Qualitative Insights: Preferred methods of communication with the CFIA

The focus group sessions did not specifically address the CFIA’s social media presence. Instead, participants were asked how they receive communications from the CFIA, if at all. When asked, some said that they receive communication from the CFIA. Those who do receive CFIA communications said they receive email updates about changes to rules and, for newer businesses, the process of becoming compliant. Of note, not all who get the CFIA emails actually read them. Some find it hard to keep track of them because of the high volume of emails they receive in general. Another said they only read them if the email subject line suggests the information contained within may be significant for their business. One noted that the emails are often very dense and wished that they were simpler, broken down into brief summaries with links to resources with greater detail if the reader requires it.

None had heard of the CFIA podcast, “Inspect and Protect”. Participants did not like the name of the podcast, finding it a bit intimidating rather than interesting. However, participants were open to listening to a CFIA podcast, provided it was brief (15 minutes) and included engaging guests. They suggested a few different names, including “Canadian Food in Action” and “Safe Food for Canadians Update”.

Table 55. G1: Do you follow the CFIA on any of the following social media platforms?

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
Facebook	5%	6%	12% E	5%	4%	6%	4%	9%	5%
Twitter	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%	4%	2%	4%	1%
Instagram	2%	0%	2%	0%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%
LinkedIn	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	13% I	7% I	0%
YouTube	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
None of the above	88%	92%	83%	89%	89%	86%	81%	83%	93%
Column n	450	32	107	163	148	71	138	76	164

Table 56. G1: Do you follow the CFIA on any of the following social media platforms? Tracking data.

Column %	2022	2021	2020
Facebook	5%	4%	5%
Twitter	2%	2%	2%
Instagram	2%	2%	2%
LinkedIn	4%	5%	2%
YouTube	0%	-	-
None of the above	88%	90%	91%

Table 57. G2: What kind of information would you like to obtain or would like to see more of on the CFIA's social media channels

Column %	Total A	AC B	QC C	ON D	West E	Agriculture F	Processor or Manufacturer G	Wholesaler or distributor H	Retail I
New regulations / regulatory changes and updates	7%	0%	9%	8%	7%	8%	13% HI	5%	5%
Everything / all food safety regulations	4%	7%	6%	3%	3%	0%	2%	1%	6% FH
Product recalls	3%	7%	3%	4%	2%	3%	8%	4%	1%
General information clearly explained / tips	3%	4%	9% DE	2%	2%	4%	4%	3%	3%
COVID-19 information	2%	3%	1%	3%	2%	1%	0%	0%	3%
Information about the CFIA itself / transparency	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	5%	0%	3%	1%
Labelling	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Time sensitive alerts / reminders	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Industry and product-specific information that applies to my business	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Training / educational resources	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	3%	4%	3%	1%	4%	7%	1%	2%	3%
Nothing	20%	29%	11%	24% C	20%	30% H	20%	10%	21%
Don't use social media	26%	21%	14%	25% C	31% C	26%	29%	28%	24%

Don't know/Refused	32%	28%	46%	30%	29%	18%	27%	48% FG	33% F
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Table 58. G2: What kind of information would you like to obtain or would like to see more of on the CFIA's social media channels. Tracking data.

Column %	2022	2021
New regulations / regulatory changes and updates	7%	14%
Everything / all food safety regulations	4%	5%
Product recalls	3%	4%
General information clearly explained / tips	3%	3%
COVID-19 information	2%	1%
Information about the CFIA itself / transparency	1%	-
Labelling	0%	-
Time sensitive alerts / reminders	0%	2%
Industry and product-specific information that applies to my business	0%	6%
Training / educational resources	0%	1%
Other	3%	3%
Nothing	20%	2%
Don't use social media	26%	26%
Don't know/Refused	32%	28%

Firmographics

This research included a series of “firmographic” questions to help the CFIA better understand the makeup and activities of the businesses surveyed. Note – all results in this section are weighted.

Table 59. Sample profile

Region*	%	Business Activity	%
BC	22%	Sell food products at retail directly to consumers	72%
Alberta	18%	Import food products	25%
Prairies	9%	Send or convey food products across provincial or territorial borders (wholesaler/ distributors)	24%
Ontario	30%	Prepare, process, treat, manufacture or preserve food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	22%

Quebec	14%	Sell food products online	21%
Atlantic Canada	6%	Grade, label or package food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	19%
No. of employees*	%	Export food products	19%
1-4	34%	Grow fruit, vegetables or grains for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	10%
5-9	20%	Produce organic food	10%
10-19	19%	Ethnic foods	%
20-49	14%	Yes	21%
50-99	7%	No	78%
100-249	4%	Don't know / Not Sure	1%
250-499	2%	Indigenous ownership	22%
Business revenue*	%	Yes	6%
Less than \$500,000	14%	No	91%
\$500,000 - 1 million	11%	Don't know/Not sure	2%
\$1 - 2.5 million	28%	Import activities	%
\$2.5 - 5 million	20%	Yes, we import directly	5%
\$5 - 10 million	8%	Yes, we import through a broker	18%
\$10 - 20 million	9%	Yes, we use a broker sometimes and import directly ourselves	9%
\$20 - 50 million	7%	No, we do not import any food products	66%
\$50 - 100 million	2%	Rather not say	1%
Industry/sector	%	Women in senior management	%
Agriculture	13%	None	15%
Processor or Manufacturer	22%	1%-25%	21%
Wholesaler or distributor	11%	More than 25%-50%	35%
Retailer	53%	More than 50% to less than 100%	12%
Other	1%	100%	10%
	No data	Don't know	7%
		Visible minorities in senior management	%
		None	50%
		1-less than 50%	20%
		50%-100%	16%
		Don't know	14%

S2. Which of the following categories best describes your business? S4. Which of the following activities apply to your business? S14. Would you classify your company as Indigenous owned or operated? S15A. Do you import any food products either yourself or through a broker? S16. Can you provide an approximate percentage of individuals with a senior management role that identify as women? S17. Can you provide an approximate percentage of individuals with a senior management role (including owners) who might identify as a visible minority?

*Data pulled from InfoCanada list

Conclusions

According to the survey results, about three-quarters of non-retail only businesses are aware of the SFCR, while significantly fewer retail-only businesses, though still almost half, are aware. Awareness remains stable among the non-retail only businesses, but has fallen among the retail-only group. Even among those not familiar with them, the overall sense is that the SFCR are important and set a necessary standard for all Canadian food businesses and, vitally, imported products. Most of those who have heard of the SFCR agree that they apply to their business and that proportion has increased over the last two years, though there is some uncertainty as to whether they apply among those exposed to the concept for the first time during the research.

As has historically been the case, most businesses feel they understand the food safety regulations that apply to them. However, the qualitative research exposed a gap in understanding that was most prominent among new businesses. Several of these participants explained that the process of learning and understanding the regulations they need to comply with is intimidating and confusing. Consequently, they have turned to third-party organizations to help them develop the necessary protocols, but wished the CFIA offered clearer, more comprehensive information for new businesses.

Businesses are divided over the greatest challenge posed by the SFCR. Roughly equal proportions say that one of written preventive controls, traceability or licensing are the most challenging. Anecdotally, a few focus group participants identified traceability as the most challenging element. However, about a third of survey respondents do not find any of these elements particularly challenging. Focus group participants who felt this way said that they already have the procedures in place to comply with all three elements, so SFCR compliance for them just involves doing a bit of administrative work.

About a third of businesses surveyed use a private food safety or quality control certification. Discussions in the qualitative research suggest that businesses that have such certifications in place need them to fulfill requirements set out by major retailers (for example, Walmart, Loblaws, Costco, etc.). Those who were familiar with private certification systems were fairly convinced that the requirements for achieving them were more stringent than for satisfying the CFIA's regulatory requirements, though when pressed, respondents did feel the CFIA needs its own rules to ensure a level playing field among food businesses in Canada.

Most agree that the CFIA has been transparent in addressing non-compliance as well as reporting and publishing such instances. Asked whether the CFIA should publish the names of companies that receive AMPS, businesses are fairly divided. Discussion during the focus groups shed light on this division and uncovered a more nuanced position. All the businesses agreed that there should be consequences for those who break the rules and assumed there

were, though not all could explain what the consequences are. They hoped that the penalties would vary based on the severity of the infraction. For example, they felt a business should be given warnings to correct minor errors, but if businesses purposefully do things that put consumers at risk, they should be more severely punished.

The CFIA website is the most common source businesses use for regulatory information. However, many feel the website is not user-friendly, difficult to search and dense. Uptake in the usage of My CFIA has risen over the years, but many businesses remain unfamiliar with it. The discussion in the focus groups suggests there is an appetite for such a service, but that awareness is lacking. Many are skeptical of the website's virtual assistant / chatbot feature and would prefer to speak with a live representative about their questions.

While the website and digital services are areas in which businesses feel the CFIA could improve its information and communications, they are open to hearing from the Agency through other avenues. The idea of webinars was met with enthusiasm, particularly if they were industry or product specific or tailor-made for new businesses.

Appendix A – Survey Methodology Report

Survey methodology

Earnscliffe Strategy Group's overall approach for this study was to conduct a telephone survey of 450 individuals who own a food business or work at one and are responsible for ensuring the business complies with food safety regulations. A detailed discussion of the approach used to complete this research is presented below.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire for this study was designed by the CFIA in collaboration with Earnscliffe and provided for fielding to Leger. The survey was offered to respondents in both English and French and completed based on their preferences.

Sample design and selection

The sampling plan for the study was designed by Earnscliffe in collaboration with the CFIA. Sample selection was based on a selected list of NAICS codes provided by the CFIA. Leger used sample provided by InfoCanada, which has been used in the past for CFIA projects. The tables below lists the NAICS codes used for sampling and the proportion of the sample that is constituted by each code on the InfoCanada list, as well as the proportion of the sample by province:

CFIA – Public Opinion Research with Food Businesses to Support Compliance with Food Safety Regulations: 2021-2022

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (11)					
NAICS	Descriptions	%	NAICS	Description	%
11121101	Potato Farming	0.1	11231001	Chicken Egg Production	0
11121901	Other Vegetable (Except Potato) & Melon Farming	0.1	11233001	Turkey Production	0
11133101	Apple Orchards	0	11251901	Other Aquaculture	0.1
11133103	Apple Orchards	0	11251903	Other Aquaculture	0.2
11133104	Apple Orchards	0.1	11251904	Other Aquaculture	0.1
11133402	Berry (Except Strawberry) Farming	0.1	11292001	Horse & Other Equine Production	0.1
11133902	Other Noncitrus Fruit Farming	0.2	11293002	Fur-Bearing Animal & Rabbit Production	0
11141101	Mushroom Production	0	11293004	Fur-Bearing Animal & Rabbit Production	0
11141902	Other Food Crops Grown Under Cover	0.9	11299001	All Other Animal Production	0
11100801	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	0.1	11299002	All Other Animal Production	0
11199803	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	0.1	11299003	All Other Animal Production	0
11199804	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	0.2	11299007	All Other Animal Production	0
11199806	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	4.6	11299013	All Other Animal Production	0
11199807	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	0	11299017	All Other Animal Production	0
11199808	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	0	11421001	Hunting & Trapping	0.4
11199809	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	0.4	11421004	Hunting & Trapping	0
11199810	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	0.3	11421005	Hunting & Trapping	0
11199811	All Other Miscellaneous Crop Farming	0.1	11421006	Hunting & Trapping	0
11212001	Dairy Cattle & Milk Production	0.5	11421009	Hunting & Trapping	0
11212002	Dairy Cattle & Milk Production	0.1			
Manufacturing					
31121102	Flour Milling	0.2	31161501	Poultry Processing	0.2
31121106	Flour Milling	0.1	31171001	Seafood Product Preparation & Packaging	0
31121107	Flour Milling	0	31171003	Seafood Product Preparation & Packaging	0.5
31121301	Malt Manufacturing	0	31171004	Seafood Product Preparation & Packaging	0
31122402	Soybean & Other Oilseed	0	31171007	Seafood Product Preparation &	0

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	Processing			Packaging	
31122501	Fats & Oils Refining & Blending	0	31171008	Seafood Product Preparation & Packaging	0.5
31122505	Fats & Oils Refining & Blending	0	31181101	Retail Bakeries	0
31122508	Fats & Oils Refining & Blending	0	31181102	Retail Bakeries	9.7
31122511	Fats & Oils Refining & Blending	0	31181103	Retail Bakeries	0
31122512	Fats & Oils Refining & Blending	0	31181104	Retail Bakeries	0
31122516	Fats & Oils Refining & Blending	0	31181105	Retail Bakeries	0
31123001	Breakfast Cereal Manufacturing	0	31181202	Commercial Bakeries	.5
31131401	Cane Sugar Manufacturing	0	31182101	Cookie & Cracker Manufacturing	0
31131403	Cane Sugar Manufacturing	0	31182403	Dry Pasta Dough/Flour Mixes Mfg-Purchased Flour	0
31135101	Chocolate/Confectionary Mfg From Cacao Beans	0.7	31182404	Dry Pasta Dough/Flour Mixes Mfg-Purchased Flour	0.1
31135201	Confectionary Mfg From Purchased Chocolate	0.2	31191102	Roasted Nuts & Peanut Butter Manufacturing	0
31141102	Frozen Fruit Juice & Vegetable Manufacturing	0	31191901	Other Snack Manufacturing	0.1
31141202	Frozen Specialty Food Manufacturing	0.1	31191905	Other Snack Manufacturing	0
31141203	Frozen Specialty Food Manufacturing	0	31191906	Other Snack Manufacturing	0
31141204	Frozen Specialty Food Manufacturing	0	31192001	Coffee & Tea Manufacturing	0.4
31142101	Fruit & Vegetable Canning	0.1	31192002	Coffee & Tea Manufacturing	0.1
31142103	Fruit & Vegetable Canning	0.1	31194101	Mayonnaise Dressing & Other Prepared Sauce Manufacturing	0
31142104	Fruit & Vegetable Canning	0	31194103	Mayonnaise Dressing & Other Prepared Sauce Manufacturing	0
31142106	Fruit & Vegetable Canning	0.1	31194202	Spice & Extract Manufacturing	0
31142107	Fruit & Vegetable Canning	0	31194203	Spice & Extract Manufacturing	0
31142303	Dried & Dehydrated Food Manufacturing	0	31199901	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	0.1
31151201	Creamery Butter Manufacturing	0	31199902	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	0
31151301	Cheese Manufacturing	0	31199905	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	0
31151402	Dry Condensed & Evaporated Dairy Products Mfg	0	31199906	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	2.6
31152001	Ice Cream & Frozen Dessert Manufacturing	0.1	31199908	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	0.1
31161101	Animal (Except Poultry) Slaughtering	0	31199910	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	0
31161102	Animal (Except Poultry)	0.9	31199913	All Other Miscellaneous Food	0

CFIA – Public Opinion Research with Food Businesses to Support Compliance with Food Safety Regulations: 2021-2022

	Slaughtering			Manufacturing	
31161103	Animal (Except Poultry) Slaughtering	1	31199917	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	0
31161104	Animal (Except Poultry) Slaughtering	0	31199919	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	0
31161202	Meat Processed From Carcasses	.6	31199920	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	0
31161205	Meat Processed From Carcasses	0	31211101	Soft Drink Manufacturing	0
31161207	Meat Processed From Carcasses	0	31211102	Soft Drink Manufacturing	0
31161301	Rendering & Meat By-product Processing	0	31211103	Soft Drink Manufacturing	0
31161302	Rendering & Meat By-product Processing	0			
	Wholesale Trade				
42441003	General Line Grocery Merchants Wholesalers	0	42449010	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42441004	General Line Grocery Merchants Wholesalers	0	42449011	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.6
42441005	General Line Grocery Merchants Wholesalers	1.8	42449013	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42442001	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesalers	0.1	42449015	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.4
42442002	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449017	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.1
42442003	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449018	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42442004	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449019	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42442005	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesalers	3.9	42449022	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42442006	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesalers	0.1	42449024	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42442007	Packaged Frozen Food Merchant Wholesalers	0.3	42449026	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42443009	Dairy Product (Exc Dried Or		42449027	Other Grocery & Related	0.2

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	Canned) Merchant Wholesalers			Products Merchant Wholesalers	
42443010	Dairy Product (Exc Dried Or Canned) Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449030	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42443012	Dairy Product (Exc Dried Or Canned) Merchant Wholesalers	0.1	42449032	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.3
42443013	Dairy Product (Exc Dried Or Canned) Merchant Wholesalers	0.1	42449033	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42444001	Poultry & Poultry Product Merchant Wholesalers	0.2	42449034	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.4
42444002	Poultry & Poultry Product Merchant Wholesalers	0.1	42449035	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42444003	Poultry & Poultry Product Merchant Wholesalers	0.2	42449037	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.1
42445002	Confectionary Merchant Wholesalers	0.1	42449042	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.1
42445004	Confectionary Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449044	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42445008	Confectionary Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449046	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.2
42445010	Confectionary Merchant Wholesalers	0.1	42449047	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.6
42446001	Fish & Seafood Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449050	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42446002	Fish & Seafood Merchant Wholesalers	0.8	42449055	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42447002	Meat & Meat Product Merchant Wholesalers	0.1	42449056	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42447005	Meat & Meat Product Merchant Wholesalers	0.6	42449057	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0
42447006	Meat & Meat Product Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449061	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0

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42448007	Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Merchant Wholesalers	0	42449064	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchant Wholesalers	0.5
42448008	Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Merchant Wholesalers	0.4	42451002	Grain & Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers	1.3
42448009	Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Merchant Wholesalers	1.2	42451005	Grain & Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers	0.2
42448010	Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Merchant Wholesalers	0	42459003	Other Farm Product Raw Material Merchant Wholesalers	0
42448011	Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Merchant Wholesalers	0	42459005	Other Farm Product Raw Material Merchant Wholesalers	0.1
42449002	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchants Wholesalers	0	42459007	Other Farm Product Raw Material Merchant Wholesalers	0
42449003	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchants Wholesalers	0.4	42459008	Other Farm Product Raw Material Merchant Wholesalers	0
42449005	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchants Wholesalers	0.5	42459010	Other Farm Product Raw Material Merchant Wholesalers	0
42449006	Other Grocery & Related Products Merchants Wholesalers	0	42459017	Other Farm Product Raw Material Merchant Wholesalers	0.3
Retail Trade					
44511001	Supermarkets/Other Grocery (Excluding Convenience) Stores	0	44529902	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.4
44511002	Supermarkets/Other Grocery (Excluding Convenience) Stores	0	44529903	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44511003	Supermarkets/Other Grocery (Excluding Convenience) Stores	19.5	44529905	All Other Specialty Food Stores	6.9
44511005	Supermarkets/Other Grocery (Excluding Convenience) Stores	0	44529906	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44511006	Supermarkets/Other Grocery (Excluding Convenience) Stores	0	44529907	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.4
44511007	Supermarkets/Other Grocery (Excluding Convenience) Stores	0.2	44529909	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44511008	Supermarkets/Other Grocery (Excluding Convenience) Stores	0	44529910	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44512001	Convenience Stores	16	44529911	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44521001	Meat Markets	0	44529912	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.3
44521003	Meat Markets	0	44529914	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.2
44521004	Meat Markets	0	44529915	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0

44521006	Meat Markets	1.7	44529917	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44521009	Meat Markets	0.1	44529918	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44521010	Meat Markets	0.1	44529920	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.2
44521012	Meat Markets	0	44529921	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44522003	Fish & Seafood Markets	0	44529923	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44522004	Fish & Seafood Markets	0.8	44529924	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.1
44523001	Fruit & Vegetable Markets	0.2	44529927	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.2
44523003	Fruit & Vegetable Markets	1.2	44529929	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.1
44523005	Fruit & Vegetable Markets	0.2	44529930	All Other Specialty Food Stores	1.1
44523006	Fruit & Vegetable Markets	0	44529932	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.2
44529202	Confectionary & Nut Stores	0.8	44529934	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0.2
44529204	Confectionary & Nut Stores	0	44529936	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44529205	Confectionary & Nut Stores	0.1	44529938	All Other Specialty Food Stores	0
44529206	Confectionary & Nut Stores	0.1			

Province	Total on list (%)
Quebec	14%
Ontario	30%
Manitoba	6%
Saskatchewan	3%
British Columbia	22%
Alberta	18%
Newfoundland	2%
New Brunswick	2%
Nova Scotia	2%
PEI	1%
Territories	0%

The final data were weighted to the proportion of businesses that fall into each NAICS code and province as per InfoCanada information.

Data collection

The survey was conducted in English and in French, based on the respondent's preference, from January 13 to February 10, 2022. The survey was undertaken with Leger's Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

Targets/weighting

The only quota set for this study was a cap on retail-only businesses to ensure that they made up no more than a third of the sample. Data was also monitored to ensure that multiple locations from the same franchise were not overrepresented in the sample. The final data was weighted by industry vertical and province, based on the proportion of businesses that fall into each NAICS code and province, as per Info Canada's information.

Nonresponse

The potential for non-response bias exists since certain types of people may be less willing to participate in research.

Quality controls

Prior to launching the survey, Earnscliffe tested the links to ensure programming matched the questionnaire. Leger conducted a pre-test of the survey, during which we identified that the questionnaire was taking respondents longer than estimated to complete. Upon completion of the pre-test, Earnscliffe reviewed the recordings to identify way in which questions could be rephrased to save time and worked with the CFIA to remove enough questions from the questionnaire to ensure that interviews would be completed within 20 minutes.

Leger's data collection quality control process is concretely based on the following elements:

- Assigning every project a project leader who is ultimately responsible for the quality of the final product, thereby strengthening the sense of internal responsibility;
- Ensuring that the client's objectives precisely correlate with the final questionnaire, strictly ensuring that all targeted dimensions are unequivocally included in the guide;
- Individually examining the formulation of every question beforehand to ensure simplicity of expression, clear syntax and a precise notion of the field covered;
- Looking for contamination effects beforehand, that is ensuring that the location of a question in the questionnaire does not have an undue effect on the following answers (this is generally done by providing information indirectly to the participants, thereby rendering the sampling unrepresentative);
- A strict comparison of the computerised version of the questionnaire with the reference questionnaire approved by the client;
- Checking the programmed jumps in the computerised system before the pre-test;
- Holding a pre-test to ensure the questions are easily understood, to check the concepts, and to look for any possible ambiguities or logical jumps in the questions, etc. The pre-

test is preferably held in the presence of the client (audio monitoring) and interviewers are debriefed afterwards so all dimensions can be explored;

- Using the best interviewers, from our Elite network, for the pre-test, since their thousands of hours of field experience enable them to quickly discern any questions that are badly written, ambiguous, unclear or too general. No one is better suited to detect anomalies at this stage where they can still be easily corrected;
- In-depth training of interviewers so they understand the context of every study and the meaning of every question;
- Insistence on open or semi-open questions, in order to specify the type of answer expected and to avoid vague and general answers as much as possible;
- Heavy monitoring by the supervisors to facilitate the detection of any problematic questions. This involves being attentive to the interviewers' thoughts and concerns and encouraging them to voice them, even after the pre-test;
- Constant audio monitoring of the survey, along with simultaneous monitoring of the information entered into the computer. This allows the supervisor to control the quality of the interview and the correct correlation between the information supplied and the codes entered;
- Using software that does not allow input errors or unexpected jumps, etc. The logical validation is therefore carried out beforehand and not after the fact;
- Constant rigour throughout the process, but particularly at the beginning insofar as the comprehensibility of the questions is concerned. Even if the pre-test has already taken place, the complexity and length of the questionnaires means that some questions might have to be modified to ensure they are more easily understood (without modifying the sense). These modifications are always carried out in complete agreement with the client;
- Open questions are coded according to an initial sampling of answers in the file and by the creation of codes that are submitted to the client for approval.
- The interviewers' performance is monitored on a daily basis using the Command Center software which enables corrections to be carried out quickly.

Reporting

Results with upper-case sub-script in the tables presented in this report (and those under a separate cover) indicate that the difference between the demographic groups analysed are significantly higher than results found in other columns in the table. In the text of the report, unless otherwise noted, demographic differences highlighted are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. The statistical test used to determine the significance of the results was the Z-test.

This study references tracking data from previous waves of CFIA research with food businesses. The reports for these studies are linked below:

- [Public Opinion Research with Food Businesses to Support Compliance with Food Safety Regulations: 2020-2021, Final Report, POR 086-20](#)
- [Public Opinion Research with Food Businesses to Support Compliance with Food Safety Regulations: 2018-2019, Final Report, POR 02918](#)

- [Public Opinion Research with Food Businesses to Support Compliance with Food Safety Regulations: 2019-2022, Final Report, POR 059-19.](#)

Results

Final dispositions

The response rate for this survey was 8%.

Table 61: Disposition report

	B2B
Total Numbers Attempted	7,402
Invalid	0
NIS, fax/modem, business/non-res.	125
Unresolved (U)	4303
Busy	54
No answer, answering machine	4249
In-scope - Non-responding (IS)	2392
Household refusal	0
Respondent refusal	1160
Language problem	282
Illness, incapable	17
Selected respondent not available	485
Qualified respondent break-off	448
In-scope - Responding units (R)	582
Language disqualify	132
No one 18+	
Other disqualify	
Completed interviews	450
Response Rate = R/(U+IS+R)	8.00%

SAMPLE PROFILE: UNWEIGHTED VS. WEIGHTED DISTRIBUTIONS

Table 62: Unweighted and Weighted Sample by region

Region	Unweighted Sample	Weighted Sample

Atlantic	32	28
Quebec	107	65
Ontario	163	136
Manitoba/Saskatchewan	32	42
Alberta	53	81
British Columbia/Territories	63	99

Table 63: Unweighted and Weighted Sample by business sector

Business Sector	Unweighted Sample	Weighted Sample
Agriculture	71	60
Processor/Manufacturer	138	99
Wholesaler/Distributor	76	51
Retailer	164	239
Other	5	3

Table 64: Unweighted and Weighted Sample by business activities

Business activities	Unweighted Sample	Weighted Sample
Sell food products at retail directly to consumers	285	323
Import food products	141	112
Send or convey food products across provincial or territorial borders (wholesaler/ distributors)	158	107
Prepare, process, treat, manufacture or preserve food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	134	98
Sell food products online	105	94
Grade, label or package food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	116	86
Export food products	117	83
Grow fruit, vegetables or grains for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	58	46
Produce organic food	57	45

Table 65: Unweighted and Weighted Sample by business size

Number of employees	Unweighted Sample	Weighted Sample
1-4	150	152
5-9	107	90
10-19	73	84
20-49	61	64
50-99	27	30
100-249	21	19
250-499	8	9

500+	3	2
------	---	---

Table 66: Unweighted and Weighted Sample by business revenue

Business revenue	Unweighted Sample	Weighted Sample
Less than \$500,000	54	62
\$500,000 - 1 million	49	51
\$1 - 2.5 million	115	124
\$2.5 - 5 million	74	90
\$5 - 10 million	50	34
\$10 - 20 million	47	41
\$20 - 50 million	39	32
\$50 million+	16	11

Margin of Error

The margin of error for this survey is +/-4.6% at the 95% confidence interval.

Appendix B – Focus group methodology report

Methodology

The qualitative phase of the research included a series of four online focus groups with owners and employees of micro, small and medium-sized Canadian food businesses, all of whom were responsible for regulatory compliance. One group was conducted in each of the following regions: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario & Nunavut, and Western Canada (including the Territories). The groups were approximately 90 minutes in length and participants received an honorarium of \$350. Six participants were recruited for each group.

The table below shows the date, time and composition of each group, along with the number of participants per group.

Table 67: Focus group composition

Group #	Region	Language	Time	Number of participants
Wednesday March 2, 2022				
1	Atlantic Canada (New Brunswick, PEI, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador)	English	4:00 pm EST / 5:00 pm AST / 5:30 pm NST	6
2	Ontario & Nunavut	English	6:00 pm EST	5
Thursday March 3, 2022				
3	Quebec	French	5:00 pm EST	4
4	Western Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, NWT, Yukon)	English	8:00 pm EST / 7:00 pm CST / 6:00 pm MST / 5:00pm PST	7

Recruitment

Participants were recruited using a recruitment screener (see Appendix D). for each group, 6 participants were recruited.

The target audiences were micro, small and medium-sized Canadian food businesses. All participants were responsible for regulatory compliance and food safety within their business. The screener contained a series of questions to establish business type, business activities, and business size, among other characteristics. We aimed to include 2 processors/manufacturers, 2 importers and 2 exporters in each group. We also aimed to include one Indigenous person, two women and one new Canadian per group.

Our recruitment partner for this project was Quality Response. Quality Response relied on its own panel, which includes approximately 3,200 businesses and pre-recruits from the quantitative survey to conduct recruitment. Quality Response also drew from an Info Canada list, based on the same NAICS codes included in the quantitative research.

Moderation

Two moderators were used to conduct the focus groups. Our team worked together to moderate the groups, debriefing with the CFIA after the first night of groups on the functionality of the discussion guide; any issues relating to recruitment, turnout, technology and, key findings including noting instances that were unique and that were similar to previous sessions. Together, we discussed the findings on an ongoing basis in order to allow for probing of areas that require further investigation in subsequent groups and before the final results were reported.

A note about interpreting qualitative research results

It is important to note that qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy, and public opinion research. Focus group research is not designed to help a group reach a consensus or to make decisions, but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number.

Glossary of terms

The following is a glossary of terms which explains the generalizations and interpretations of qualitative terms used throughout the report. These phrases are used when groups of participants share a specific point of view and emerging themes can be reported. Unless otherwise stated, it should not be taken to mean that the rest of participants disagreed with the point; rather others either did not comment or did not have a strong opinion on the question.

Table 68: Glossary of Terms

Generalization	Interpretation
Few	Few is used when less than 10% of participants have responded with similar answers.
Several	Several is used when fewer than 20% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Some	Some is used when more than 20% but significantly fewer than 50% of participants respondents with similar answers.

Many	Many is used when nearly 50% of participants responded with similar answers.
Majority/Plurality	Majority or plurality are used when more than 50% but fewer than 75% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Most	Most is used when more than 75% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Vast majority	Vast majority is used when nearly all participants responded with similar answers, but several had differing views.
Unanimous/Almost all	Unanimous or almost all are used when all participants gave similar answers or when the vast majority of participants gave similar answers and the remaining few declined to comment on the issue in question.

Appendix C – Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

Hello/Bonjour [pause... In Quebec Bonjour/Hello], the Government of Canada is conducting a research survey with businesses in Canada. I am hoping to speak with the person in your company who is most responsible for food safety of the food products that your business sells or produces. Please note this is not a sales call, this important research will help the Government understand Industry's views on food safety practices and regulations

This could be the owner of the company or a manager who oversees the sale of food products, food safety manager or quality assurance manager. Are you the right person to speak with? [IF NO: Can you please direct me to the correct person?]

[Repeat from beginning if transferred]

[Once correct person identified]

Would you prefer that I continue in English or French? Préférez-vous continuer en français ou en anglais?

[Note: if at this point the respondent prefers to respond in French then the interviewer must be able to either proceed with the interview in French or read the following statement: "Je vous remercie. Quelqu'un vous rappellera bientôt pour mener le sondage en français."]

My name is _____ calling from _____ the company hired to do the survey.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please note that your participation is voluntary, confidential and anonymous and we can call back at a better time if you prefer. The information you provide will be administered according to the requirements of the Privacy Act.

PERSUADER IF NEEDED: This call may be monitored or recorded for quality control purposes. This survey is registered with the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC). Should you have any questions about the survey, I can give you a contact person within the CFIA.

To begin, I would like to confirm some information about your business...

S1A. **[Record from sample – not asked]** Province/territory

S1B. **[Record from sample – not asked]**

Full 8-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code

S2. Which of the following categories best describes your business? **[Read list-select only 1]**

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Agriculture | 1 |
| Processor or Manufacturer | 2 |
| Wholesaler or distributor | 3 |

Retailer	4
Other (please specify) _____	77

S3. **[If S2=2: Ask]** Does the main product of your business include confectionary items, snack foods, beverages, oils, dried herbs and spices, nuts and seeds, coffee and tea, or processed grain-based foods such as baked goods, cereals and pasta?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	9

S3b. **[IF S2=2: Ask]** Did you know that new food safety requirements for this sector came into force on July 15, 2020? **IF NEEDED/ASKED:** You can learn more at inspection.gc.ca.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	9

S4. Which of the following activities apply to your business **[Read list-select all that apply]**?

Import food products	1 [code as Importer for additional questions]
Export food products	2
Prepare, process, treat, manufacture or preserve food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	3
Grade, label or package food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	4
Grow fruit, vegetables or grains for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	5
Send or convey food products across provincial or territorial borders (wholesaler/ distributors)	6
Sell food products at retail directly to consumers (store front)	7
Produce organic food [interviewer note: includes organic meats, dairy, etc.]	8
Sell food products online	9
None of the above	99999

S5. **[If "None of the above" in S4: ask ""]** What would you say is your company's main business activity? [Open end]

[If business is related to food business recode S4 and continue, otherwise thank and terminate-keep data for quality control]

[Flag as "Retail only" if only selected "7" at S4. Terminate if "Retail only" once we reach n=150 completes with this segment]

S8. Have you seen, read or heard anything about the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	9

S9. **[If S8=1: Ask]** Where did you hear, see or read about the regulations? [Open end]

Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary] 9

S10. As far as you know, do you think the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations apply to your business?

Yes 1
 No 2
 Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary] 9

S10A As far you know do you think the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations apply to on-line sales of food products?

Yes 1
 No 2
 Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary] 9

S14. Would you classify your company as Indigenous owned or operated?

Yes 1
 No 2
 Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary] 9

S15. Are at least 25% of the food products that you produce, sell, manufacture, import, or export considered "ethnic foods"? These would be specialty food products that are specifically, but not exclusively, targeted to specific communities (for example Italian, Chinese, Polish, German, Caribbean).

Yes 1
 No 2
 Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary] 9

S15A. Do you import any food products either yourself or through a broker?

Yes we import directly 1
 Yes we import through a broker 2
 Yes we use a broker sometimes and import directly ourselves 3
 No we do not import any food products 4
 Rather not say 9

S15B. Would it be helpful to have information about food safety regulations in a language other than French or English?

No, not needed 1
 Yes [Ask which one] 2

1. Arabic
2. Chinese
3. German
4. Hindi

- 5. Portuguese
- 6. Punjabi
- 7. Spanish
- 8. Thai
- 9. Turkish
- 10. Other (specify)

S16. Can you provide an approximate percentage of individuals with a senior management role that identify as women?

Minimum: 0, Maximum: 100

Women _____ %
Don't know

[Persuader if asked, The Government of Canada has a policy that is designed to ensure that the diverse population of Canada is equally supported and in order to better understand the composition of leadership at Canadian food businesses we are asking about gender and other demographic characteristics of the leadership group. An estimate is fine for this question and if you do not know that is fine as well.]

S17. Can you provide an approximate percentages of individuals with a senior management role (including owners) who might identify as a visible minority?

Minimum: 0, Maximum: 100

Visible minority _____ %
Don't know

[Persuader if asked, The Government of Canada has a policy that is designed to ensure that the diverse population of Canada is equally supported and in order to better understand the composition of leadership at Canadian food businesses we are asking about race and other demographic characteristics of the leadership group. An estimate is fine for this question and if you do not know that is fine as well.]

Food safety activities

A1. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means "not at all clearly" and 7 means "very clearly", how well do you feel that you understand the food safety regulations that apply to your business?

[Repeat scale as needed]

Not at all clearly	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very clearly	7

Don't know **[Do not read]** 9

A2. Which of the following activities, if any, applies at your company? **[Read list-select all that apply] – [Randomize]**

Has written/documented standard operating procedures on food safety.	1
Has preventive controls in place, but not written or documented in a plan	2
Has preventive controls in place, which are outlined in a written plan such as a HACCP based plan, QMP or other program [If asked: HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points and QMP = Quality Management Program]	3
Has a traceability program established [If needed: written records that trace all food one step back and one step forward, as applicable]	4
Has a Safe Food for Canadians licence	5
None of the above	9

Private certification scheme

Z1. Do you use a food safety or quality control certification system such as GFSI, ISO or QMP **[If asked: GFSI = Global Food Safety Initiative; ISO = International Organization for Standardization and QMP = Quality Management Program]**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	9

A3. Whether or not you participate in a private certification scheme, do you support their role in achieving compliance with food safety regulations?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	9

Z2. **[For importers only]** Were you aware a Safe Food for Canadian licence is required to import food products into Canada?

Yes, clearly aware	1
Yes, somewhat or vaguely aware	2
No, not aware	3
Don't know / Not Sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	9

Awareness of the CFIA and the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations

B3. **[Skip if retail-only]** From your perspective which of the following 3 key food safety elements of the SFCR is your biggest challenge? Would it be...

[Randomize 1-3] [Read 1-3]

Licensing	1
Written preventive controls	2
Traceability of food products	3
None of the above	9

B4. If your business was subject to a CFIA inspection today, how confident are you that you would meet food safety regulations and requirements? Please rate your view on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means not at all confident and 7 means very confident. **[Repeat scale as needed]**

Not at all confident	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very confident	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9

B6. As you may know the CFIA assesses risk to help determine inspection frequencies for each type of company. This is often referred to as Establishment-based Risk Assessment. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means nothing at all and 7 means a great deal, how much have you read or heard about Establishment-based Risk Analysis? **Repeat scale as needed**

Nothing at all	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
A great deal	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9

C6. In thinking of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way your business operates currently, which of the following most closely describes how your business has been affected? Would you say... **[Read list]**

You had to make large changes to how you conduct your business operations	1
You had to make moderate changes	2
You made minimal to no changes to how you conduct your business operations	3
Don't know / Not Sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	9

C7. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "do not agree at all" and 7 means "strongly agree", how would you rate the following statements? **[Rotate Statements]**
[Repeat scale as needed]

- a) The CFIA has been flexible in the enforcement of food safety regulations to allow businesses to adapt to the challenges of COVID-19.
- b) The CFIA has provided clear guidance on how it is approaching compliance and enforcement of food rules and regulations during COVID-19.

Do not agree at all	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Strongly agree	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9

Z3 [If 2-9 at Z2 and tagged MFS]

A Safe Food for Canadians licence is required to import food products into Canada. Due to the COVID pandemic, the CFIA has not prioritized licence verification at the border for the Manufactured Food Sector. The CFIA is in the early stages of developing a plan to engage the manufactured food sector on the resumption of regular compliance and enforcement activities.

Thinking about SFCR and the requirements for licensing, written preventive control plans and traceability, how confident are you that your business is ready to fully comply with all requirements of SFCR? Use a scale of 1-7 where 1 is not ready at all and 7 is completely ready.

Not ready at all	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Completely ready	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9

Z4. [If not 6 or 7 at Z3] How much time do you think is required before regular CFIA compliance and enforcement activities begin?

Less than 3 months	1
3 months to less than 6 months	2
6 months to less than 9 months	3
We need more than 9 months to become fully ready	4
Don't know	9

Z5. Can you provide some thoughts on how CFIA could better assist businesses who may not be familiar with CFIA and the SFCR? **[Open end]**

Z99. In your opinion, how transparent do you think the CFIA is when it comes to assessing non-compliance of regulations? Please answer on a scale of 1-7 with 1 being not at all transparent, and 7 being very transparent.

Not at all transparent	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very transparent	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9

Z100. How transparent do you think the CFIA is when it comes to reporting (publishing) non-compliance? Please answer on a scale of 1-7 with 1 being not at all transparent, and 7 being very transparent.

Not at all transparent	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very transparent	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9

Z101. CFIA has several enforcement actions that it can use when cases of non-compliance are found. One is an Administrative Monetary Penalty (AMP) and CFIA publishes a summary list of AMPS on its website. There are some people who would like CFIA to list the fines and names of companies that receive AMPS. Other people feel this is an invasion of privacy. Which of the following statements is closest to your view.

Publishing the names of companies that receive AMPS will help the whole industry improve by highlighting quality	1
AMPS are a minor fine and can happen to good companies, publishing their names doesn't help	2
Neither of these statements represents my view	3

My CFIA

E1. Have you ever heard, seen or read anything about CFIA's online portal called "My CFIA?"

Yes, I used it [Prompt for use if yes]	1
Yes, but never used it	2
No	3
Don't know/Refused [Do not read]	9

[If E1="Yes, I used it" ask E2 to E3]

E2. Have you ever used the portal for a... **[Read list-select all that apply READ LIST – select all that apply]**

New licence request	1
Licence renewal	2
Permit	3
Export certificate	4
Registration	5
You used the portal for other purposes – please specify: _____	77
You've only enrolled and have not used it for anything in particular	98
Don't know/ Can't remember / Refused [Do not read]	99

E3. Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with "My CFIA" on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied. **[Repeat scale as needed]**

Not at all satisfied	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very satisfied	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9
	99

E7. In your opinion, what is the **biggest** challenge in **finding information** on CFIA food safety regulations or requirements? **[Probe for how they get information-the type of information is asked next at E8 and where they get their information is asked at E9] [Do not read list, select only one]**

Website is not user-friendly / difficult to navigate	1
Lack of clear information / difficult to understand	2
Lack of notifications / updates	3
Too much information / high volume of information	4
Lack of contact with customer service / not responsive	5
Research / finding information is too time-consuming	6
Having somebody to call	7
Other (please specify): _____	77
None / No challenges	98
Don't know / Refused [Do not read]	99

E9. Where do you look when looking for regulatory information? **[Do not read list, select all that apply]**

CFIA website	1
Government of Canada website	2
Other website – obtain specific website: _____	76
Seminars	3
Word of mouth	4
Other (please specify): _____	77
Don't know / Can't remember / Refused	99

E10 [If E9 = 1,] While using the CFIA website to look for regulatory information, did you use the chatbot or virtual assistant?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Not sure [Do not read, prompt if necessary]	9

E11 [If E10 = yes] How useful was the chatbot or virtual assistant in providing you an answer? Please answer on a scale of 1-7, where 1 is not at all useful, and 7 is very useful.

Not at all useful	1
	2
	3

	4
	5
	6
Very useful	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9

E8. Thinking about CFIA resources, what topics, if any, was it difficult to get clear information on? [**Open end**]

Nothing in particular	98
Don't know/Refused	99

D5. If the CFIA was holding webinars, what topics are you most likely to make time to attend? [OPEN END, PRE-CODED LIST, DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]

How to use MY CFIA to apply for licences and other permissions (such as export certificates, permit to import and certificate of free sale)	1
Preventive control plans	2
Traceability	3
Import requirements	4
Labelling	5
Other _____	8
Don't know/Prefer not to say [DO NOT READ]	9

Ask CFIA

F1. Are you aware of a service offered by the CFIA called "Ask CFIA"?

Yes, I used it [Prompt for use if yes]	1
Yes, but never used it	2
No	3
Don't know/Refused [Do not read]	9

F2. [**If F1=1, ask**] Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with "Ask CFIA" on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all satisfied and 7 means very satisfied. [**Repeat scale as needed**]

Not at all satisfied	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
Very satisfied	7
Don't know [Do not read]	9

F4. [If F1=1, ask] Why did you decide to use the Ask CFIA service? [Do not read list, select all that apply]

Couldn't find information I needed after searching on the CFIA website	1
After hearing about the service from another source	2
Information I found wasn't clear	3
My question was complicated / complex	4
Didn't know was using the service (just completed the contact us/feedback form)	5
Other (please specify): _____	77
Don't know / Refused	99

Social Media

G1. I just have a few final questions related to social media. Do you follow CFIA on any of the following social media platforms? [Read list – select all that apply]

Facebook	1
Twitter	2
Instagram	3
LinkedIn	4
None of the above	9

G2. What kind of information would you like to obtain or would like to see more of on CFIA's social media channels? [Do not read list – accept all that apply – ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY] [Open end]

Would never follow CFIA on social media	97
Don't use social media	98
Don't know/Refused	99

Follow-up qualitative research

We may conduct follow-up research on the views of Canadian food businesses about food safety and food regulations. This would take the form of:

[FOR MICRO, SMALL, MEDIUM BUSINESSES] an online discussion group with a few other individuals. The focus groups would be approximately 90 minutes in length and participants would receive an honorarium of \$350 as a thank-you for their time.

[FOR LARGE BUSINESSES] an in-depth interview, conducted either by phone or via video conference. The interview would last no longer than 45 minutes and participants would receive an honorarium of \$300 as a thank-you for their time.

Participating in the next phase of research is completely voluntary. If you are interested, you will be required to provide your first name, last name and a contact telephone number to be screened for the research. Please note that this information will not be used for any analysis of your responses and will only be used if you are selected to be among those invited to participate in a subsequent qualitative phase of research.

1. Would you be interested in participating?

Yes

No [SKIP Q2]

2. [IF YES] Thank you for your interest. Please provide the following contact information

[FIRST NAME]

[LAST NAME]

[CONTACT NUMBER]

PRE-TEST ONLY ADD QUESTIONS A THRU J]

- A. Did you find any aspect of this survey difficult to understand? Y/N
- B. [IF A=YES] Please describe what you found difficult to understand.
- C. Did you find the way of the any of the questions in this survey were asked made it difficult for you to provide your answer? Y/N
- D. [IF C=YES] Please describe the problem with how the question was asked.
- E. Did you experience any difficulties with the language? Y/N
- F. [IF E=YES] Please describe what difficulties you had with the language.
- G. Did you find any terms confusing? Y/N
- H. [IF G=YES] Please describe what terms you found confusing.
- I. Did you encounter any other issues during the course of this survey that you would like us to be aware of? Y/N
- J. [IF I=YES] What are they?

[PRÉ-TEST SEULEMENT, AJOUTER LES QUESTIONS A À J].

- A. Avez-vous trouvé un ou des aspects de ce sondage difficile(s) à comprendre O/N
- B. [SI A=OUI] Veuillez décrire les aspects qui vous ont semblé difficiles à comprendre.
- C. Avez-vous trouvé que la façon dont l'une ou l'autre des questions de ce sondage a été posée vous a empêché de donner une réponse satisfaisante? O/N
- D. [SI C=OU] Veuillez décrire le problème lié à la façon dont la question a été posée.
- E. Avez-vous éprouvé des difficultés avec le langage utilisé? O/N
- F. [SI E=OUI] Veuillez décrire les difficultés éprouvées avec le langage utilisé.
- G. Y avait-il des termes qui ne vous ont pas semblé clairs? O/N
- H. [SI G=OUI] Veuillez indiquer les termes qui ne vous ont pas semblé clairs.
- I. Avez-vous éprouvé d'autres types de problèmes durant le sondage dont vous aimeriez nous faire part? O/N
- J. [SI I=OUI] Quels sont ces problèmes?

Appendix D : Recruitment screener

Focus Group Summary

- Recruit 6 participants for 5-6 to show.
- Groups are 90 minutes in length.
- 4 groups in total. One focus group in each of: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario and Western Canada.
- All participants are employees responsible for regulatory compliance from micro, small and medium-sized food businesses
- Aim for 2 processors/manufacturers, 2 importers and 2 exporters per group (categories can overlap).
- Four participants across all groups should be from Northern Canada.
- Aim for one Indigenous person, two women and one new Canadian per group.

Group #	Region	Language	Time
Wednesday March 2, 2022			
1	Atlantic Canada	English	4:00 pm EST / 5:00 pm AST / 5:30 pm NST
2	Ontario & Nunavut	English	6:00 pm EST
Thursday March 3, 2022			
3	Quebec	French	5:00 pm EST
4	Western Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, NWT, Yukon)	English	8:00 pm EST / 7:00 pm CST / 6:00 pm MST / 5:00pm PST

Respondent's name: _____ Interviewer: _____
 Respondent's phone number: (work) _____ Date: _____
 Respondent's phone number: (cell) _____ Validated: _____
 Respondent's email: _____ Quality _____
 Sample source: panel random client referral Central: _____
 On list: _____
 On quotas: _____

Hello/Bonjour, this is _____ calling on behalf of Earncliffe, a national public opinion research firm. We are organizing a series of discussion groups on issues of importance on behalf of the Government of Canada. We are looking for people who would be willing to participate in a 90-minute online discussion group. Up to 6 participants will be taking part and for their time, participants will receive an honorarium of \$350. May I continue?

Yes CONTINUE
 No THANK AND TERMINATE

Participation is voluntary. We are interested in hearing your opinions; no attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format is a 'round table' discussion led by a research professional. All opinions expressed will remain anonymous and views will be grouped together to ensure no particular individual can be identified. I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you or someone in your company qualify to participate. This will take about five minutes. May I continue?

Yes CONTINUE
No THANK AND TERMINATE

Monitoring text:

READ TO ALL: "This call may be monitored or audio recorded for quality control and evaluation purposes.
ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION IF NEEDED:
To ensure that I (the interviewer) am reading the questions correctly and collecting your answers accurately;
To assess my (the interviewer) work for performance evaluation;
To ensure that the questionnaire is accurate/correct (i.e. evaluation of CATI programming and methodology – we're asking the right questions to meet our clients' research requirements – kind of like pre-testing)
If the call is audio recorded, it is only for the purposes of playback to the interviewer for a performance evaluation immediately after the interview is conducted or it can be used by the Project Manager/client to evaluate the questionnaire if they are unavailable at the time of the interview – all audio tapes are destroyed after the evaluation.

1. Can you please provide me with your job title? [RECORD]

2. Are you the owner or manager or this company?

Yes 1
No 2

3. Do you have primary responsibility for the food safety of the food products that your business produces or sells?

Yes 1 CONTINUE
No 2 THANK AND TERMINATE

4. In which province or territory do you live?

Newfoundland and Labrador 1
Nova Scotia 2
New Brunswick 3

Prince Edward Island	4
Quebec	5
Ontario	6
Manitoba	7
Saskatchewan	8
Alberta	9
British-Columbia	10
Nunavut	11
Northwest Territories	12
Yukon	13

ENSURE GOOD MIX OF PROVINCES WITHIN EACH REGION, AIM FOR FOUR PARTICIPANTS FROM THE NORTH ACROSS ALL GROUPS.

5. Which of the following categories best describes your business? [READ LIST, ENSURE GOOD MIX] [MINIMUM OF 2 PROCESSORS/MANUFACTURERS PER GROUP]

Agriculture	1	
Processor or manufacturer	2	
Wholesaler or distributor	3	
Retailer	4	
Other (please specify)	5	TERMINATE IF UNRELATED TO 1 THROUGH 4

6. Please specify the predominant food category(ies) your business specializes in. [RECORD]

7. Which of the following activities apply to your business? [READ LIST, NOTE ALL THAT APPLY] ENSURE GOOD MIX WITH THE FOLLOWING QUOTAS:

MINIMUM OF 2 IMPORTERS AND 2 EXPORTERS PER GROUP.

NO MORE THAN ONE RETAIL-ONLY PER GROUP.

Import food products	1
Export food products or prepare food for export	2
Prepare, process, treat, manufacture or preserve food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	3
Grade, label or package food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	4
Grow fruit, vegetables or grains for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders	5
Send or convey food products across provincial or territorial borders (wholesaler/ distributors)	6
Sell food products at retail directly to consumers	7
Produce organic food [interviewer note: includes organic meats, dairy, etc.]	8
None of the above	9

IF “NONE OF THE ABOVE”, THANK AND TERMINATE.

8. Are you... [AIM FOR MINIMUM TWO NON-MALE PER GROUP]

Male	1
Female	2
Other	3

9. Were you born in Canada?

Yes	1
No	2

10. Have you lived in Canada for five years or less?

Yes	1	[QUALIFIES AS NEWCOMER]
No	2	

AIM FOR ONE NEWCOMER IN EACH GROUP

11. Are you an Indigenous person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)? [AIM FOR ONE INDIGENOUS PERSON PER GROUP]

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	9

12. Are you...? [SELECT UP TO THREE] [ENSURE GOOD MIX]

White	1
South Asian (for example, East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)	2
Chinese	3
Black	4
Filipino	5
Latin American	6
Arab	7
Southeast Asian (for example, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)	8
West Asian (for example, Iranian, Afghan, etc.)	9
Korean	10
Japanese	11
Other [SPECIFY]	98
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	99

13. Which of the following best represents the number of people, including yourself, your company employs in Canada? If you are a franchisee, please only consider your location. [READ LIST] [ENSURE GOOD MIX IN EACH GROUP]

1-4 (Micro)	1	
5-99 (Small)	2	
100-499 (Medium)	3	
500+ (Large)	3	THANK AND TERMINATE
DK/NR	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

14. And which of the following reflects the approximate size of your business by gross annual revenue for your Canadian operations? Again, if you are a franchisee, please only consider your location. [ENSURE GOOD MIX IN EACH GROUP]

\$30,000 or less per year	1	
Between \$30,000 and less than \$100,000 per year	2	
Between \$100,000 and less than \$500,000 per year	3	
Between \$500,000 and less than \$1 million per year	4	
Between \$1 million and less than \$5 million per year	5	
\$5 million or more per year	6	
DK/NR	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

15. Have you participated in a discussion or focus group before? A discussion group brings together a few people in order to know their opinion about a given subject.

Yes	1	MAX 2 PER GROUP, ASK 16, 17, 18
No	2	SKIP TO 19
DK / NR	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

16. When was the last time you attended a discussion or focus group?

If within the last 6 months	1	THANK AND TERMINATE
If not within the last 6 months	2	CONTINUE
DK / NR	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

17. How many of these sessions have you attended in the last five years?

If 4 or less	1	CONTINUE
If 5 or more	2	THANK AND TERMINATE
DK / NR	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

18. And what was/were the main topic(s) of discussion in those groups?

IF RELATED TO FOOD SAFETY REGULATION, THANK AND TERMINATE

This research will require participating in a video call online.

19. Do you have access to a computer, smartphone or tablet with high-speed internet which will allow you to participate in an online discussion group?

Yes CONTINUE
No THANK AND TERMINATE

20. Does your computer/smartphone/tablet have a camera that will allow you to be visible to the moderator and other participants as part of an online discussion group?

Yes CONTINUE
No THANK AND TERMINATE

21. Do you have a personal email address that is currently active and available to you?

Yes CONTINUE, PLEASE RECORD EMAIL
No THANK AND TERMINATE

INVITATION

22. Participants in discussion groups are asked to voice their opinions and thoughts. How comfortable are you in voicing your opinions in front of others? Are you...? (READ LIST)

Very comfortable	1	MINIMUM 4 PER GROUP
Fairly comfortable	2	CONTINUE
Comfortable	3	CONTINUE
Not very comfortable	4	THANK AND TERMINATE
Not at all comfortable	5	THANK AND TERMINATE
DK/NR	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

23. Sometimes participants are asked to read text, review images, or type out answers during the discussion. Is there any reason why you could not participate?

Yes	1	ASK 24
No	2	SKIP TO 26
DK/NR	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

24. Is there anything we could do to ensure that you can participate?

Yes	1	ASK 25
No	2	THANK AND TERMINATE
DK/NR	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

25. What specifically? [OPEN END]

INTERVIEWER TO NOTE FOR POTENTIAL ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW

26. Based on your responses, it looks like you have the profile we are looking for. I would like to invite you to participate in a small group discussion, called an online focus group, we are conducting at [TIME], on [DATE]

As you may know, focus groups are used to gather information on a particular subject matter. The discussion will consist of up to 6 people and will be very informal.

It will last up to 90 minutes and you will receive \$350.00 as a thank you for your time. Would you be willing to attend?

Yes	1	RECRUIT
No	2	THANK AND TERMINATE
Don't know/Prefer not to say	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

PRIVACY QUESTIONS

Now I have a few questions that relate to privacy, your personal information and the research process. We will need your consent on a few issues that enable us to conduct our research. As I run through these questions, please feel free to ask me any questions you would like clarified.

P1) First, we will be providing a list of respondents' first names and profiles (screener responses) to the moderator so that they can sign you into the group. Do we have your permission to do this? I assure you it will be kept strictly confidential.

Yes	1	GO TO P2
No	2	GO TO P1A

We need to provide the first names and background of the people attending the focus group because only the individuals invited are allowed in the session and this information is necessary for verification purposes. Please be assured that this information will be kept strictly confidential.
GO TO P1A

P1a) Now that I've explained this, do I have your permission to provide your first name and profile?

Yes	1	GO TO P2
No	2	THANK & TERMINATE

P2. A recording of the group session will be produced for research purposes. The recordings will be used by the research professional to assist in preparing a report on the research findings and may be used by the Government of Canada for internal reporting purposes.

Do you agree to be recorded for research and reporting purposes only?

Yes	1	[THANK & GO TO P3]
No	2	[READ RESPONDENT INFO BELOW & GO TO P2A]

It is necessary for the research process for us to record the session as the researchers need this material to complete the report.

P2A Now that I've explained this, do I have your permission for recording?

Yes 1 [THANK & GO TO P3]
 No 2 [THANK & TERMINATE]

P3) Employees from the Government of Canada may also be online to observe the groups.

Do you agree to be observed by Government of Canada employees?

Yes 1 THANK & GO TO INVITATION
 No 2 GO TO P3A

P3a) It is standard qualitative procedure to invite clients, in this case, Government of Canada employees, to observe the groups online. They will be there simply to hear your opinions firsthand although they may take their own notes and confer with the moderator on occasion to discuss whether there are any additional questions to ask the group.

Do you agree to be observed by Government of Canada employees?

Yes 1 THANK & GO TO INVITATION
 No 2 THANK & TERMINATE

INVITATION:

Wonderful, you qualify to participate in one of our discussion sessions. As I mentioned earlier, the group discussion will take place on [DATE] at [TIME] for up to 90 minutes.

Group #	Region	Language	Time
Wednesday March 2, 2022			
1	Atlantic Canada	English	4:00 pm EST / 5:00 pm AST / 5:30 pm NST
2	Ontario & Nunavut	English	6:00 pm EST
Thursday March 3, 2022			
3	Quebec	French	5:00 pm EST
4	Western Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, NWT, Yukon)	English	8:00 pm EST / 7:00 pm CST / 6:00 pm MST / 5:00pm PST

Can I confirm your email address so that we can send you the link to the online discussion group?

We ask that you login a few minutes early to be sure you are able to connect and to test your sound (speaker and microphone). If you require glasses for reading, please make sure you have them handy as well.

As we are only inviting a small number of people, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please call us so that we may get someone to replace you. You can reach us at [INSERT PHONE NUMBER] at our office. Please ask for [NAME]. Someone will call you in the days leading up to the discussion to remind you.

So that we can call you to remind you about the discussion group or contact you should there be any changes, can you please confirm your name and contact information for me?

First name

Last Name

email

Daytime phone number

Evening phone number

If the respondent refuses to give his/her first or last name, email or phone number please assure them that this information will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the privacy law and that it is used strictly to contact them to confirm their attendance and to inform them of any changes to the discussion group. If they still refuse THANK & TERMINATE.

Appendix E : Discussion Guide

Introduction

10 min 10 min

Moderator introduces herself/himself and her/his role: role of moderator is to ask questions, make sure everyone has a chance to express themselves, keep track of the time, be objective/no special interest.

- The name of the firm the moderator works for, and the type of firm that employs them (i.e., an independent marketing research firm).
- Role of participants: speak openly and frankly about opinions, remember that there are no right or wrong answers and no need to agree with each other.
- Results are confidential and reported all together/individuals are not identified/participation is voluntary.
- The presence and purpose of any recording being made of the session. Short portions of the recordings may be used internally by the client research team to support their internal communication of the research results.
- The presence of any observers, their role and purpose, and the means of observation (observers viewing and listening in remotely).
- The length of the session (1.5 hours).
- Confirm participants are comfortable with the platform and some of the specific settings such as: how to mute and unmute themselves; where the hand raise button is; and, the chat box.

- As mentioned when we invited you to participate in this discussion group, we're conducting research on behalf of the Government of Canada, more specifically the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, commonly referred to as the CFIA. We are exploring your awareness and use of the CFIA's products and services and whether these products and services meet your needs.

Moderator will go around the table and ask participants to introduce themselves.

- **Introduction of participants:** To get started, please tell us a bit about who you are and the type of business you manage.

Awareness

20 min 30 min

To start off, I would like to understand your level of awareness of and interaction with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, or CFIA.

- What do you know about the CFIA?
- How much interaction have you had with the CFIA?

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HAD INTERACTIONS WITH THE CFIA:

- What were your overall impressions of your dealings with the CFIA?
- Were they professional? Responsive? Thorough? Why or why not?

- [HANDS UP] Has anyone read, heard or seen anything about the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations, or SFCR, which came into effect on January 15, 2019?
- To the best of your knowledge, what is the aim of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations?
- How do these regulations impact your business? Why do you say that?

IF SOME PARTICIPANTS UNAWARE OF REGULATIONS: [Post definition on screen]

So that we are all on the same page, the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations outline the rules that many food businesses in Canada need to follow. They aim to make the Canadian food system safer by focusing on prevention and allowing for faster removal of unsafe food from the marketplace. The regulations also require imported food to be prepared with the same level of food safety controls as food prepared in Canada.

- Based on this description, what is your overall impression of these regulations? Why do you say that?
- How do these regulations effect you as a food business? Probe for:
 - Like?
 - Dislike?
 - Why?

The Safe Food for Canadians Regulations have three key elements for food businesses. They are: 1. Traceability; 2. Preventive Control Plans; and, 3. Licensing.

- How familiar are you with these elements? [if unfamiliar ask how they interpret these elements]
- Do you feel these regulations apply to you? Why or why not?
[MODERATOR TO NOTE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VARIOUS DEMOGRAPHICS OR FIRMOGRAPHICS, I.E. FEMALE OWNED BUSINESSES, THOSE THAT COULD BE CATEGORIZED AS ETHNIC BUINESSES, ETC. AND PROBE FOR SPECIFICS OF HOW THE REGULATIONS MAY AFFECT CERTAIN BUSINESSDES DIFFERENTLY.]
- Which elements are the most challenging to you as a food business? Why?
- What else would you see as significant challenges to implementing food safety controls? Why?
- Which of the following would you consider to be the major challenge to implementing food safety controls?
 - Cost
 - Finding information on regulatory requirements
 - Understanding the regulations
 - Access to training materials/courses
 - Other challenges to complying with the regulations

Online sales

10 min 40 min

- [HANDS UP] Do you sell items online? Probe: if they use third party websites vs. their own ecommerce site

- Explore if they are beginners or experienced and how advanced systems and processes are?
- What platforms do you use? (Amazon, proprietary sites, combination)
- How well do you understand your compliance requirement(s) under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations when selling to customers online?
- Do you understand what information consumers need in the product description?
- Probe: Are there elements of food safety you think need to be emphasized when selling online? What about potential allergens?
- How do you feel the regulations address the reality of selling online? Why do you say that?
- Do you feel they were created with online sales in mind? Why or why not?
- Have you encountered any specific complications that come from complying with the regulations while selling products online? Please explain.

Private certification systems

10 min 50 min

- [HANDS UP] Does anyone use private certification systems? (use examples given below)
[IF YES]
 - Which ones? Probe: GFSI - Global Food Safety Initiative; ISO - International Organization for Standardization; QMP - Quality Management Program
 - Why do you use them? What are the benefits?
- Whether or not you use a private certification system, do you support their use? Why or why not?
- To the best of your knowledge, how do they compare to the regulations by the CFIA?
 - More or less stringent?
 - Clearer or less clear?

Enforcement and transparency

15 min 65 min

When a company is not compliant with the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations there is a continuum of enforcement activities available to the CFIA.

- What do you think happens to companies that do not follow the regulations? Why do you think that?
 - Do you feel this treatment is appropriate or not? Why or why not?
 - Probe: too lenient? too harsh?
- Do you think the names of companies that do not follow the rules should be published on a public website? Why or why not?
- Do you think the CFIA is transparent in how they currently enforce regulations and carry out compliance activities? Why or why not?
- What action would you take if you became aware that your business, or a company in your supply chain (including buyers) was conducting unsafe or fraudulent activities related to the SFCR?
 - If mention: discuss directly with company, what happens if the behavior doesn't change after discussion.

- Follow-up probes [ensure all are covered]
 - If reporting to another regulator, probe on why not CFIA?
 - Would you report to the CFIA?
 - How would you report it?
 - Would you be more likely to report unsafe or fraudulent activity to the CFIA if it could be done anonymously?

Effectiveness of SFCR communications & website

20 min 85 min

I would like to turn our attention to communications from the CFIA. What type of communications do you get from the CFIA? [Create list for follow-ups]

- How would you describe the communications you receive from the CFIA?
 - More specifically, how would you describe the communications you received from the CFIA regarding the SFCR? Why? Have there been memorable ones?
 - Is there something you feel they did really well? What did you like about it?
 - What do you think they should have done differently? Why?
- Moving forward, how can communication from the CFIA be improved to address your needs and help your business comply with the regulations? Why?
 - Should the CFIA be using certain outreach strategies more than they are today to make sure you have the information you need to satisfy your company's compliance requirements?
 - What should they be doing/using to better reach you? Why? What other types of communications would be helpful from the CFIA?
- Besides French or English, would be beneficial to have resources in other languages?
 - Probe: Would any of your employees or possibly suppliers benefit from having regulatory information in another language? [Create list of languages]
- If the CFIA were to have an online information session for food businesses, what topics would you want it to cover? Any specific information you hope it included?
- Would you make time for a session like this?
 - How long should it be?
- Do you visit the CFIA's website? Why or why not?
 - If you don't visit their website, how do you get information on what rules to follow for your food business?
 - Have you heard the Inspect and Protect podcast?
- Are you aware of any chatbots or virtual assistant features available on the CFIA website?
 - Have any of you used the virtual assistant on the website to search for information?
 - What were your expectations compared to your experience?
 - Anyone use chatbots or virtual assistants on other websites?
 - Anyone use chatbots or virtual assistants on other government websites?

Conclusion

5 min 90 min

[MODERATOR TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ARE SENT VIA THE CHAT BOX DIRECTLY TO THE MODERATOR AND PROBE ON ANY ADDITIONAL AREAS OF INTEREST]

This concludes what we needed to cover today/tonight.

- Does anybody have any final thoughts or comments they would like to pass along?

We really appreciate you taking the time to share your views. Your input is very important.