

Public Opinion Research –Data analysis (Individual Depth Interviews)

2023

Final report

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For more information on this report, please contact the CFIA at:
cfia.information.acia@inspection.gc.ca

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Canada 

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This report presents the results of research and analysis conducted on behalf of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. This study focuses on several years of qualitative and quantitative data and a new series of individual in-depth interviews conducted in March 2023 with Canadian consumers and regulated food businesses.

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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency

1400 Merivale Road

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0Y9

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Background and objectives

The CFIA has collected a considerable amount of data on the opinions and behavior of consumers and businesses through public opinion research (POR) from 2019 to 2021. This data has been reexamined and we have found additional links and insights that will assist the development of communications, policies, and programs. This data also shows that consumer and business stakeholders differ in how they interpret messages from the Agency about compliance promotion, food safety and other topics.

The overall goal of this project was to analyze business and consumer survey responses about the CFIA and communications and validate what we have learned through a series of in-depth interviews with business operators and consumers. Ultimately, the goal is to help the Agency improve its business and consumer communications strategies.

Agency videos and Instagram posts were used as talking points during these qualitative interviews.

1.2 Summary of methodology used

Analysis of existing data

Most of the data considered in this exercise is from existing POR that was done with both businesses and consumers commissioned by the CFIA between 2019 and 2022. This data is from research on a variety of topics including food safety, the CFIA's reputation, food fraud, African swine fever (ASF), online purchases of regulated products, and elements of compliance promotion. We looked at data from both quantitative and qualitative research projects. Links to the specific reports are referenced in the annex.

Newly acquired data through qualitative public opinion research

Additional qualitative work was conducted in March 2023 with representatives from CFIA-regulated Canadian businesses. This consisted of 5 in-depth interviews and 6 with Canadian consumers of some 60-90 minutes in length. Recruiting was designed to ensure the participation of diverse businesses and Canadians. French (2) and English-speaking (9) participants were recruited and interviewed on Zoom. Consumers were offered an honorarium of \$100 and business representatives were offered \$200.

The contract value for this contract was \$28,035.30, of which approximately \$13,200 was directed towards the in-depth interviews. The remaining budget was for the analysis of secondary (previous) data, provided under separate cover.

1.3 Overview of findings

Businesses

This analysis allows for continued development of the segmentation framework proposed in 2021 to illustrate how communication can affect compliance. This framework is a matter of grouping businesses according to the degree of their interaction with the Agency. This way of dividing accounts for businesses' size, their tenure --- which refers to how long and how well established they are as a business -- - as well as important aspects of their organizational structure and finally the degree of risk their operations pose to the food supply chain. This framework proposes 4 distinct groups or segments.

The first group is composed of businesses that are closely supervised by CFIA and would include many typically larger companies in terms of the number of employees and income. This segment can be referred to as "core" as it describes where the Agency has been focused in the past. The next group is somewhat the opposite of the core group --- it includes companies that have fewer interactions with the Agency because they pose less risk to the food supply chain. This group would include many of the smaller businesses both in the numbers of employees and revenues, and many of that are new. This group is the "peripheral" segment because it often has limited interaction with the Agency. The third group is composed of businesses that fall naturally in between the previous two. These are those that have more Agency contact than the peripheral yet not as much as the core group. This group is the "middle" segment. Finally, a "prospective" group would be comprised of businesses just outside the Agency's current oversight, but who share plans or ambitions that suggest they may eventually fall under supervision. There has been limited research conducted with this group but enough to draw some conclusions.

Each of these groups has distinctive characteristics, behaviors and information needs. The core group benefits quite clearly from having strong and numerous connections to the Agency. The peripheral group is generally satisfied with CFIA communications, although they appear to struggle to find specific kinds of information when the need comes up. The middle group seems in many ways to struggle the most: it is moderately regulated but seems less built up with structures and resources for dealing with the Agency, particularly where issues of interpretation are involved. The prospective group --- which has not so far been the focus of the Agency's POR --- is perhaps particularly challenged to get the answers they want in order to even enter the sector. These findings and their implications are provided in the detailed results further in this report.

Consumers

Consumers are also differentiated and can be divided according to their specific concerns, values and motives. While many participants continue to view safe food as a given --- mostly due to not having heard about any emergencies --- others have specific concerns and expectations. There is a distinctive group of consumers with food allergies and other intolerances. Another group is inclined to be concerned about the food system and how it affects Canadian society, and our environment and sees food safety as a matter of both long and short-term health. We have found that many of these participants have different reactions to CFIA messaging and many signs that messages targeted specifically to these distinct target audiences have the potential to improve the Agency's reputation and foster more informed faith in the safety of Canada's food supply chain. The challenge, first, is for the Agency to capture and segment Canadians accordingly.

2.0 Detailed results

2.1 Making sense of business diversity through the lens of compliance

Both the existing data we analyzed (which was generated in 11 separate studies the Agency commissioned since 2019) and the feedback from our most recent interviews point to a relatively simple approach to understanding the diversity of reactions among regulated business to CFIA communications about compliance and other matters. This approach loosely divides businesses into four groups --- three of which have been surveyed extensively and have provided clear feedback. We have clear evidence that the intensity of the Agency's oversight also correlates with the relative risk a company's activities pose for the safety of Canada's food supply chain and the number of their connections to the Agency, either through communication tools such as "My CFIA" or with Agency personnel. This relatively linear dimension is simple and straightforward, but it explains much of the underlying reactions to compliance and non-compliance communications from the Agency.

Findings point to four groups:

- The first group is made up of the largest, most established, and most closely monitored of the CFIA's regulated parties. In the simplest sense, this group might be labelled a "core" group because it gathers those businesses that are the focus of the Agency's strongest interest and oversight.
- Another group is at the edges of the Agency's oversight and made up of smaller and often the smallest businesses --- or very new ones --- and who are more less frequently monitored but perhaps not yet fully aware of all regulations. This group might be labelled "peripheral" in that they would normally fall just inside the boundaries of the Agency's oversight --- usually because they pose relatively low risk to food safety, plant or animal health. These would include many plant and animal-related businesses, and many businesses for whom the regulated food-related activity is just one activity among several other activities.
- The third grouping is businesses who are somewhere between the core and the peripheral group, sharing some of the characteristics of both, but not enough to belong in either. As such, those companies that possibly pose possible risk of non-compliance, but are less frequently inspected such as livestock transportation, seed companies and so on.
- Finally, a fourth group comprised of the businesses --- big and small --- who are not yet under regulatory supervision by the CFIA but who harbor ambitions or plans that may eventually have them fall under the Agency's oversight to at least some degree. "Prospective" is an apt label for this group

in that they are potential candidates for regulatory oversight in the future and share a common need for information about food safety regulations.

Characteristics and behavior of the core group

The insight accumulated from all of the research data we looked at suggests that the companies in the core group share some common characteristics. These tend to be companies that are highly regulated because they should be: their operations and output involve well-understood and/or elevated risks. The companies that would belong in the core group would be those that have considerable and grounded confidence in their compliance because they know the regulations, keeping up with changes, and having considerable experience dealing with inspections and inspectors. Their numerous connections to the Agency indicate that they are more likely to have a My CFIA account, and more likely to have developed personal contacts with inspectors or people in offices who have expertise in areas relevant to their operations. This group of companies is more likely to belong to industry associations who play a significant role in lobbying the agency, defending members, and generally ensuring that industry interests are well understood.

This core group is most likely to have adjusted or evolved their organizational structures to help them manage regulatory requirements and compliance. In some cases, they will have whole departments tasked with compliance, or people with defined compliance-related roles, and in other cases, people in Ottawa tasked with maintaining ties to the Agency. In many cases, these people will have acquired extensive knowledge about regulations and considerable experience dealing with the occasional ambiguous interpretations, rulings and so on. These people speak of the Agency in more familiar terms: they have been around long enough to have noticed evolutions in how the Agency operates and have a more informed and often more critical perspective on changes in regulations and the way the Agency operates. They keep up to date with new regulations, new inspectors, etc., better than other groups. Many of these companies rely on their industry associations to keep up with changes in regulations.

Finally, we see in this core group a clearer tendency to view compliance as necessary and good for business generally, and non-compliance as potentially very bad for business. Most of these companies are more focused on prevention than cure, which is a focus that reflects the scale of their operations and output: when issues arise for these companies, a hold on a batch of products or a stop work order can be especially costly in money, time, effort and for their brand equity and/or corporate reputation.

Characteristics and behavior of the peripheral group

Companies in the peripheral group in many respects are the opposite of the core group. They are less likely to have CFIA regulated activities as part of their main business, they have fewer people, are smaller in size and are much more likely to be start-ups, small scale entrepreneurs, or family farmers. Generally, their operations and output pose relatively modest risks for non-compliance.

These companies are considerably less knowledgeable about regulation and although they may indicate a high degree of confidence about compliance, they might be unaware of regulations that they are subject to. The businesses in the peripheral group tend to have developed the fewest connections to the Agency, appear to be less likely to have a My CFIA account, and have fewer personal contacts with Agency personnel. This group of companies is also less likely to belong to industry associations, and generally fend for themselves to advance their interests or contest a compliance issue. Accordingly, their capacity to keep up with regulatory changes would be something managed in-house, or dependent on more haphazard hearsay from other businesses that they deal with.

The peripheral group is also the most likely to be run by people who take on multiple roles and responsibilities in their companies at the same time. Typically, these smaller companies and their operators are focused on securing the viability of their company and because of this, regulations can be seen as an annoyance or even a distraction from far more pressing concerns. Many in this group will not recognize that they are subject to regulations and are much less likely to keep up with changes. Their compliance problems are fewer in number compared to the other groups simply because they are subject to less onerous regulation or fewer activities that fall under CFIA jurisdiction. That said, these companies may confront more basic issues of compliance that other, more informed or aware groups have already managed. This is a group is more reactive as opposed to proactive about compliance. We have also encountered some evidence that when compliance issues do occur, the corrective action required by the Agency can be an eye-opening experience for the business operator.

Characteristics and behavior of the middle group

The “middle” group shares some of the characteristics of the core and peripheral groups and is mostly made up of businesses with a greater variety of activities related to CFIA’s mandate. They are “in the middle” on most of the attributes used here to describe the core and peripheral groups. Not all their activities are regulated, they have fewer deep connections to Agency personnel, and fewer (if any) staff that can focus on compliance. This group often has issues interpreting the rules --- in the texts, about issues that might stem from changes in operations, new technologies, new ingredients, pesticides, and so on. Companies in this group often appear to struggle getting answers, information, and reaching people than their “core” group counterparts. The data collected by the Agency in its POR activities so far provides

only a limited view on the specific issues of this group, but there is some evidence that problems of knowledge transfer are often the issue. For example, front line personnel may not be keeping up with changes that the internal "Guru" might be aware of and may assume that the regulations they have always adhered to also apply to new ventures or products.

Characteristics and behavior of prospective group

Finally, the last prospective group would be made up of companies who are not yet under CFIA oversight but who may be contemplating product launches, innovations, and wholesale changes in business lines and who have specific needs for information from the Agency --- the answer to which can be a critical "make or break" component of a decision to proceed. These companies have relatively few options --- they can attempt to decode the text of the regulations themselves, or they can inquire through the 1000 character-limited contact us form. The CFIA has had less contact through POR with companies in this situation, which is not surprising given the fact that they are not really under its supervision. That said, feedback from and about this group suggests that they have significant problems getting the answers and information they seek. A common view --- again from a limited number of sources --- is that regulations are difficult for lay persons to interpret, and answers can be ambiguous and very long.

Given that these companies represent a group that is inclined to enter or innovate on the food front, the issues they confront may constitute something of a barrier to innovation and the industry's evolution. The few operators we have talked to that belong in this group have occasionally described their difficulties understanding regulations as a pause-inducing if not an outright barrier to getting into the new lines of business they are considering.

2.2 Communications across these four groups

From the existing data, and recent conversations with business operators and feedback about a very few videos and ads, the following things stand out as significant regarding the Agency's communications with businesses. Again, the group structure outlined above provides a useful lens:

Communications with the core group

There is considerable evidence that suggests that communications with and from the Agency are the most adequate with the core group. Although they are not without problems, these companies are clearly the most well positioned and equipped to deal with them. Their deeper and more numerous ties to the Agency are a big help, and their compliance-focused personnel are well-equipped to deal with issues when they arise and can often pre-empt or even prevent issues from becoming serious. Companies in this group are not only more up to date about regulatory changes, but they also have relatively stronger capacity to influence the evolution of regulations via their meta-industry associations.

The core group illustrates how compliance and communication go "hand in hand", and how communication with the Agency is an organizing influence: companies become more structured around complying with regulations, and as they do that, they become more compliant, providing they have enough people and resources to do so.

Communications with the middle group

Companies in the middle group may be inspected, but less frequently and see CFIA staff less often- for example in the case of an occasional animal transporter, or a greenhouse operator initiating a once-yearly import or export of exotic plants. Generally, companies in this group have been subject to regulations long enough to have some sense of how they work, but have less dedicated personnel, extensive understanding of regulations or lengthy experience dealing with the Agency. These conditions contribute to significant compliance challenges, often but not exclusively tied to failures to keep abreast of regulatory changes. When they occur, these issues can be particularly troublesome for the company --- for reasons of timing (shipments may be time-sensitive), logistics, expense or because their efficient resolution might require understanding of Agency process, or guidance that doesn't always happen or is not always found.

Although we showed only a few Agency messages to operators who would fit in this group, it was quite clear that neither an ad nor a pre-packaged video message would meet their needs. The communication they want is usually of a very pointed or

context-specific nature, and because of this, the information can be very hard to find. It might exist in guidance but more often it requires extensive communication with Agency personnel. This is the sort of interaction with the Agency that many are finding less frequently available.

Communications with the peripheral group

Companies and personnel in this group have been a focus of CFIA research over the years, and they seem to want a specific kind of interaction with the Agency. This is because the regulatory burden and oversight for them is relatively light. Companies in this group might have questions about specific concepts such as the use of pesticides, the presence of inspectors on site, general rules having to do with safe storage or silage practices, how to import genetic material and so on. They report finding this kind of information can also be difficult.

A key need for this group appears to center on awareness building and keeping up to date with regulatory changes, particularly in cases where practices and substances once deemed acceptable are no longer permitted. Given that companies in this group are often small, often tightly focused on making a living and dealing with compliance more occasionally, they want timely communications about the very specific thing that matters to them. Email lists and even text messages are good tools for this group, as long as they are not too frequent and on topic. These tools are however of little use for those business operators that don't understand the requirements in the first place.

These people found particular value in video messages – whether they are about the roles and responsibilities of the CFIA, such as “We Are the CFIA”, or guidance about how to comply with regulations, such as “Creating a Preventative Control Plan” - because they impart information efficiently. For those who are unaware of their obligations, “onboarding” programs to make new business operators more aware of the materials available early on in the relationship are worth considering.

Communications with the prospective group

Although CFIA has had relatively less direct feedback from businesses of this type, it is possible, if not probable that the prospective group will soon belong in the peripheral group --- as they begin to increase operations in their regulated capacities. Here too, onboarding programs, and specific training about regulations as they apply to specific industries are good options.

Diversity among consumers regarding food, food safety and the CFIA

Our analysis of public opinion data gathered by the CFIA since 2019 points to differences among Canadians which, in the ways they view food safety and the various regulatory regimes that help ensure it. These views reflect the diversity in Canadians' beliefs, values, and motives with respect to food and our food system:

- Many Canadians conceive of food safety as primarily a matter of preventing the presence of pathogens such as E-coli, salmonella, listeria, etc. This is clearly a common, if not dominant, view reinforced by messages many get from the news media, from CFIA messaging and interpersonal sources. Interestingly, these Canadians tend to associate risks to food safety equally across growers, distributors, retailers and/or consumers themselves. Most participants who have this mindset simply presume that the “government” takes care of these issues and are not particularly interested in the specifics even if they do understand food safety is important and view recalls as part of a working system.
- Many other Canadians are even less concerned about food safety because in contrast to the above group, food simply isn't all that important. These people also tend to have more faith that some “government” and/or other players in the food safety system will take care of problems. The relative infrequency of recalls, the lack of talk about food safety generally are things that work to keep related concerns out of their mind. However, these people can become more concerned than the above group when issues occur, as they have relatively little understanding of how the food safety system works.
- A smaller group of Canadians who live with significant restrictions to their diet that result from food intolerances, allergies and other medical conditions tend to view food safety as important and not only as a matter of being safe from pathogens, but also as a matter of transparency in labelling, about ingredients and manufacturing processes. Their primary concern is with the risk of cross-contamination. Most Canadians with these types of concerns look primarily to food manufacturers to follow the rules and to the Government to issue strict regulations and make sure companies follow them.
- Another very distinctive group of consumers has broader and longer-term concerns about the entire “food system”. Here, safe food isn't simply a matter short-term threats but also longer-term ones to human health, the health of our environment and for Canadian society. These Canadians worry about things like genetically modified organisms, monoculture agricultural practices, the use of pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, and other chemicals other things they associate with industrial-scale food production. This group also worries about the increasing concentration of food production among a few major corporations and barriers to small-scale and local producers who they often see as critical to combatting global warming and even income

disparity. While the CFIA is yet in possession of data on the size and potential growth of these views, we have encountered some evidence to suggest that this view is growing.

Finally, two important but complicating factors in this diversity of views about food safety are decreasing trust in government and increasing food inflation.

2.3 CFIA message assessment with consumers

Three Instagram and four different CFIA video ads were shown (in rotation) to five business operators and six consumers during one-on-one in-depth interviews conducted in early March 2023. The three Instagram ads explain the differences between “best before” and “expiry” dates. The videos shown present an overview of the Agency (“We are the CFIA”), and the Agency’s efforts to combat food fraud. Links to the messages shown are provided below.

The reader is cautioned that the findings presented in this section come from a small number and are not a definitive assessment of the messages or their effectiveness. However, these findings show that the Agency’s audience is divided and that there are some challenges that come as a result of this diversity.

Instagram messages:

The Instagram posts generated mixed reactions, but no strong criticism from either businesspeople or consumers:

- For some participants in both consumer and business groups, clarifying the differences between “best before” and “expiry dates” is appropriate and useful. Some participants believe that messages of this kind may help reduce the quantities of food that are wasted by people who throw it away prematurely.
- For some, the posts do not resonate and will likely be ignored as the subject matter was not sufficiently interesting for those individuals.
- Others thought people should already know about these issues and didn’t think it should be necessary to inform them.

Video messages

The videos --- which were between 60 and 90 seconds --- generated stronger reactions and were generally seen as being more substantial:

“We are the CFIA”

- Participants who were unaware of the CFIA found this one very informative about the depth and breadth of the Government’s efforts to protect the food supply chain.
- Participants who thought there was likely an organization like the CFIA --- without necessarily being able to name it --- found this ad consistent with their beliefs about how Canada’s food supply chain is protected. In this sense, the video was reassuring for them.
- Some participants found this example overly produced with a message that suggests a self-serving public relations or promotional objective to make the Agency look good.

It is important to note that this ad generates different reactions among participants depending on their perspectives. For those unaware of the Agency, the video is informative, particularly about the number of people who work for the Agency or the scope of its responsibilities. The profiles and testimonials from actual CFIA employees were notable and appreciated. These seem to provide the Agency with more human, credible and compelling qualities.

“Tackling food fraud” and “putting fish to the test”

We showed two different videos on food fraud to participants (in rotation), and they generated similar reactions, despite their difference in terms of what they emphasize. Participants were both reassured by some messaging and worried by other messages.

- Both were viewed as informative about the prevalence of food fraud problems: a topic that was not recognized or well understood by most participants.
- The information that food fraud affects “about 10% of all commercially sold food” caught the attention of most participants and worried several. That said, some found the CFIA’s transparency about the scale of this problem reassuring. Others were included to question the extent of oversight and their trust (or “blind faith”) in the system. Pointing out that

“90% of food sold in Canada is free of fraud” may provoke less concern but would need to be tested.

- Some understood “10% of all commercially sold food” to mean *generically true* of all food types.

2.4 Summary – consumers

Only a few points should be retained from this limited qualitative exercise:

- The diversity of Canadian consumers’ perspectives has a significant impact on how the Agency’s messages are interpreted. In effect, “Canadian consumers” are not one audience, but many. Agency messaging should account for this diversity - otherwise the CFIA will lose sight of important shifts and differences in public opinion.
- The Instagram ads show both the potential and limits of social media as a channel for the CFIA to reach consumers: the messages are well suited to short, simple, and relatively straightforward messages about very specific and pointed matters. However, in isolation, participants get the impression that the Agency focuses on a limited number of what seems like low priority issues.
- These findings suggest that messages that give Canadians insights into the activities, priorities and dedication of rank-and-file Agency people have the potential to both humanize and better explain the Agency.

APPENDICES: Screener and Discussion Guide

Project: CFIA Compliance Messaging

Recruiting instrument for industry association and businesses

(11 IDI's)

2665 Sainte-Cunégonde, suite 201
Montréal (Qc.)
H3J 2X3
Tel.: (514)943-1645

Preliminary version
February 2023

Your business and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

DATES/TIMES: Tentatively scheduled for March 7-10: 7-11 In-depth Interviews
CLIENT: Government of Canada – CFIA regulatory compliance related communications
TOPIC: Industry experience with food regulations and the CFIA
INCENTIVE: \$200
CITIES: National, by Internet Interface (Zoom)

RECRUITING BY EXECUTIVE RECRUITER WITH PRE-SCREENED CANDIDATE

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR EACH BUSINESS/RECRUTEE (established in advance)

Focus on the following kinds of companies: Meat processors (make charcuterie, any kind of ground meat, prepared), animal transportation companies, organic food producers of any kind, exotic flower/plant growers, exotic animal importers or exporters

Musts:

The business is regulated by the CFIA



RECRUIT 1 for 1 to show each IDI

Hello/Bonjour:

My name is _____ and I work for Patterson, Langlois Consultants, a research company working on behalf of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The purpose of this call is to see if you would participate in some research with food businesses we are doing on behalf of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The purpose of this research is to evaluate CFIA communications about compliance with food safety regulations. Can you help me? I need to speak to the right person in your organization for this research. This would be the person in your shop that has the best understanding of the regulations you comply with and who can speak with knowledge and authority on the subject for your organization. Is that you? If not, can you direct me to that person?

LEAVE YOUR CONTACT INFO IF NECESSARY AND REPEAT INTRO AS NECESSARY FOR THE NEW PERSON ONCE CONTACT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. Please be mindful of the fact that you are in effect working on behalf of the government.

INDICATE: Male 1 Female 2 → **A good mix**

REPEAT INTRODUCTION IF NECESSARY

Q.1 I got your name (from _____) because you indicated that you were willing to be interviewed on this topic in a survey that you answered. Can I just verify: We are looking for someone in your organization that can speak with knowledge and authority about the regulations you are expected to follow and your organization's experience with the CFIA?

Yes 1
No 2 → **Would it be possible to speak with that person?
(Re-engage or set up a call-back)**

Q.2 Would you be willing to be interviewed on this topic and speak on behalf of your organization?
These interviews will be conducted on Zoom during business hours and take roughly 90 minutes with up to 5 other colleagues in your industry from around the country (if necessary, reassure: You will not be asked anything of a confidential or competitive nature)

Yes 1
No 2 → **THANK AND END**

Q.3 Can you tell me: How long has your company been in operation?

Less than 1 year 1
Between 2 and 5 years 2
5 years or longer 3 **GOOD MIX:**
Don't know / won't answer 9 **THANK AND TERMINATE.**

Q.4A Roughly how many employees work for this organization? (in normal times)

Less than 10 1
Between 10 and 50 2
Between 50-200 3 **max 2**
Over 200 4 **Max 2**
DK/NA 9 **THANK AND TERMINATE**

Q4.B To your knowledge has your company ever experienced been asked to make any kind of change to your methods or operations by the CFIA?

Yes 1
No 2 **THANK AND TERMINATE**
DK/NA 9 **THANK AND TERMINATE**

Q.5 Have you ever participated in CFIA related research before?

Yes 1 → Determine topic and recentness of participation in last 5 years. Exclude anyone who has done CFIA sponsored groups or who has attended five or more studies in the last 5 years, or within the last month.

No 2

Q.6 The topic of discussion will be the communications that CFIA sends to you about regulations. This research is being done on behalf of the CFIA. There is no intention to sell you a product or to change your views about anything, but rather to gather opinions from the industry to help the CFIA perform its functions better. Participation is strictly on a voluntary basis and the information provided will be administered in strict accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act. Because we recognize that this is going to take some of your valuable time, we will offer you \$200 as compensation at the end of the discussion. Could we count on you?

Yes 1 → **CONTINUE**

No 2 → **THANK AND END**

Q.7 *Would you be available to talk to our research on _____ at _____?*

SKIP TO CONTACT DETAILS

Q.8 Great! The interview will be on Zoom with a professional moderator from the research firm (Patterson, Langlois Consultants) whose role is to solicit your opinions.

Determine that the person is comfortable with Zoom or is willing to use it.

The topic of discussion will be about food regulations and how the CFIA and how it can work more effectively with your company. This research is being done on behalf of the CFIA. There is no intention to sell you a product or to change your views about anything, but rather to gather opinions from the industry to help the CFIA perform its functions better. Participation is strictly on a voluntary basis and the information provided will be administered in strict accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Act*. To thank you for your participation, we will give you \$200 compensation at the end of the interview. Could we count on you?

Yes 1 → **CONTINUE**

No 2 → **THANK AND END**

CONTACT DETAILS

The discussion will be held on Zoom. Are you comfortable with that?

The discussion will about (1 hour for In-depth interview) (90 minutes for the focus group). Please, be ready 15 minutes prior to the start of your interview. Most importantly, if for any reason you are unable to attend, please call or email us as soon as possible so that we can reschedule or replace you if need be. Although we can accommodate a replacement for you if that's necessary, please inform us beforehand because we cannot do this without screening that person first. PROVIDE NAME, PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL.

Can I confirm your contact details so we can send you the Zoom link and a reminder?

Name: _____

EMAIL: _____

May I please have a phone number where I can reach you ?

House: (____)-____-_____

Work: (____)-____-_____

THANK YOU!

Your co-operation is greatly appreciated!

RECRUITED BY: _____ **CONFIRMED BY:** _____

SCREENER/DISCUSSION GUIDE OUTLINE

Dates: Commencing Week 2 March, Dates and Times TBD

Client: Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

Locations: National: In-depth interviews with Food, Plant and Animal Organization Professionals and consumers on ZOOM

In order to understand feelings and opinions about the CFIA, qualitative research is required with businesses and consumers to help identify and achieve better communications. Qualitative data will be collected through virtual individual in-depth interviews that reflect the diversity of our targeted populations.

Research Objectives:

- Gather data on the compliance experiences of regulated businesses, including data on contextual and communication conditions that contributed to issues.
- Gather data from Canadian consumers about their ways of conceptualizing food safety, food safety regulators and involved businesses
- Explore and assess communications opportunities inherent in CFIA messaging and activities
- Assess preferred methods of communication for each distinct stakeholder segments

Introduction (15 min.)

1. **Introduction of moderator, name and type of research firm:** (i.e. John representing the marketing research firm Patterson Langlois)
2. **Subject for interviews (businesses):** We're here to talk about you, your business, the federal food safety regulator, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The purpose of these

discussions is to help the CFIA better understand your experiences as a regulated company and our perspectives about regulations. Your input is important and very much appreciated.

Subject for interviews (consumers): We're here to talk about you, how you buy food, how you view food safety and the different organizations involved in producing and regulating food. The purpose of these discussions is to help the CFIA better understand your experiences as a consumer. Your input is important and very much appreciated.

3. **Explanation of the interview process:**

- **Conversation recorded:** This conversation will be recorded, but will be used in accordance with the *Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act*.
- **Voluntary participation:** You are free to leave or refuse to participate at any time.
- **Anonymity:** Although we mean to listen to and reference your opinions here, you have a strict guarantee of anonymity. The fact that you participated in this process or what you personally say will not be made public.
- **Disclaimer of observers:** Observers may be on this zoom session and hidden from view. Their presence is to directly hear what you have to say but mostly to ensure that I ask the right questions, cover all of the bases, etc.
- **Role of moderator and participants:** I am here as a professional researcher. I am not a Government employee and I am here precisely because I am neutral and objective. I have no vested interest in how you respond to my questions. I am here to ask questions, not provide answers. You are here to speak for yourselves (and your organization.)
- **Expression of opinions:** there are no wrong or right answers, no expectation that you agree.
- **Length:** we will be here about 60 minutes – more if you think it necessary.
- **Assess familiarity with Zoom.** *Explain the limitations of Zoom and what to do if the connection is lost.*

4. **Introductions:**

- Please start by introducing yourself. Tell us a little about yourself personally...

Business Probes:

- Nature of your business, how big, how well established?
- Length of time in role
- Other jobs or roles played elsewhere or in the food/plant/animal industry

- How would you describe your business's culture around regulations?

Consumer Probes:

- Can you tell me a little bit about food in your household?
- Guiding principles in what gets bought and where
- Importance of price, food quality, environmental considerations, etc.
- Is there anyone in your family that has a food related allergy or health concern?

BUSINESS INTERVIEWS: Challenges For Your Industry / Organization (App. 20 min)

Although I have certain topics I need to make sure we cover, what we talk about in this discussion is mostly up to you. Let's start with a simple question: What are the biggest challenges facing your industry? Just so you know, I'm going to keep track of the regulatory things so we can take them all up a little later.

The CFIA as a Regulator (app 10 minutes)

What are your thoughts on the CFIA – whether it be about the organization as a whole or the people from that organization that you deal with?

ADDITIONAL TOPICS TO BE PROBED IF NOT MENTIONED

- **The focus:** Is the CFIA concerned about the right thing? How well do you feel they balance the needs of Canadians and those of your industry?
- **Do you trust the CFIA as a regulator?** [Expand on this question, what attributes go into trust... etc.]
- **Tell me about how the CFIA communicates:**
 - How would you describe typical interactions with CFIA employees (probe specifically for interactions with inspectors, politeness, professional, helpful?)
- **Guidance?** How do you find the guidance provided by the CFIA (check on where or how they get guidance?)

Compliance Challenges (app. 15-20 minutes)

I think when we recruited you we asked if you had been asked to formally asked to change something in the way you operate by the CFIA. Can you tell me about that?

Probes:

- Is this something everyone in your business faces? Is it your sense that every business like yours faces this problem? What if you are bigger/smaller, in a different corner of the business, in a different province, etc.
- What did this issue tell you about the way you do business?
- What did this issue tell you about the way the CFIA does business?
- What would need to change to avoid this problem?
- What could be done better on your part?
- What could be done better on the CFIA's part?

ADDITIONAL TOPICS TO BE PROBED IF NOT MENTIONED

- Coming up to speed: Was any of this problem due to things you learned or didn't learn about the regulations?
- Are you satisfied or not with the way these requirements were made known to you? Why? Why not?
- If it were up to you and you had the authority, what would you change in the way the CFIA regulates your business and/or deals with compliance issues.

CONSUMER INTERVIEWS:

Food Safety (App. 20 min)

Let's start with a simple question: How do you see food safety in your household?

Probes:

- Is this something you think about at all? What do you do, if anything, to ensure that your food is safe?
- When you think about the ways that food might make you or your family sick, what comes to mind? Is it...
 - Mostly about contaminants?
 - Do you ever think/worry about things like pesticides? Antibiotics? GMOs? Why?
 - Do you ever think/worry about where your food comes from? Who makes it? How it's made?
- What do you think or imagine is done to keep your food safe? Probe:
 - Who's responsibility is this? How is that responsibility shared?
 - What is the role of government? Retailers? Food producers?
- To your way of thinking, is enough being done to ensure that food is safe in Canada?

Communications (App. 20 min)

I'd like to show you some (videos, web page profiles, etc.) about food safety so you can tell me about how you understand and process this stuff... [Present Stimuli As Appropriate for the Individual]

Probes:

Ok, tell me what you took away from this...

- What's the message?
- Did you learn anything ?
- On the whole, what does this tell you about this Agency?
- Did it change anything of your feelings or intuitions about food safety and the organizations involved?

Repeat with additional stimuli as time allows....

END OF INTERVIEW:

Before we end this, allow me to remind you that this is Government research, and that you are entitled to both protection under the *Privacy Act*, and access to this research once the process has run its course. A report will be available under the *Access to Information Act* or from Library and Archives Canada. Most of all, please accept my thanks for your time and good will.

TERMINATE

List of Referenced POR Projects

2022

[POR 041-21 - Public opinion research with Canadians on food fraud: 2021-2022 : final report](#)

[POR 041-21 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des Canadiens sur la fraude alimentaire : 2021-2022 : rapport final](#)

[POR 042-21 - Public opinion research with food businesses to support compliance with food safety regulations : 2021-2022 : research report](#)

[POR 042-21 - 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 : rapport de recherche](#)

[POR 043-21 - Public opinion research with businesses and consumers for the CFIA annual reputation survey, 2021-2022: final report](#)

[POR 043-21 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des entreprises et des consommateurs aux fins du sondage annuel sur la réputation de l'ACIA, 2021-2022: rapport final](#)

2021

[POR 066-20 - Consumer behaviour around online purchasing of Agency-regulated products](#)

[POR 066-20 - Comportement des consommateurs à l'égard de l'achat en ligne de produits réglementés par l'Agence](#)

[POR 069-20 - Public opinion research with small-scale producers to support communications on African swine fever : final report](#)

[POR 069-20 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès de petits producteurs pour appuyer les communications sur la peste porcine africaine : rapport final](#)

[POR 077-20 - Public opinion research with businesses and consumers for the CFIA annual reputation survey, 2020-2021 : final report](#)

[POR 077-20 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des entreprises et des consommateurs aux fins du sondage annuel sur la réputation de l'ACIA 2020-2021 : rapport définitif](#)

[POR 086-20 - Public opinion research with food businesses to support compliance with food safety regulations : 2020-2021](#)

[POR 086-20 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des entreprises alimentaires à l'appui de la conformité à la réglementation sur la salubrité des aliments : 2020-2021](#)

[POR 088-20 - Public opinion research to identify segments of industry reachable through compliance promotion campaigns : final report](#)

[POR 088-20 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique pour déterminer les segments de l'industrie qu'on peut atteindre au moyen de campagnes de promotion de la conformité : rapport définitif](#)

2020

[POR 059-19 - Public opinion research with food businesses to support compliance with food safety regulations : final report](#)

[POR 059-19 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des entreprises du secteur alimentaire pour appuyer la conformité au Règlement sur la salubrité des aliments au Canada : rapport définitif](#)

[POR 066-19 - Public opinion research with Canadians on food safety and food fraud : 2019-2020](#)

[POR 066-19 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des canadiens sur la salubrité des aliments et la fraude alimentaire : 2019-2020](#)

2019

[POR 029-18 - Public opinion research with food businesses to support compliance with Food Safety Regulations : 2018-2019](#)

[POR 029-18 - Recherche sur l'opinion publique auprès des entreprises du secteur alimentaire pour appuyer la conformité au Règlement sur la salubrité des aliments au Canada : 2018-2019](#)