Canadian Food Inspection Agency    Agence canadienne d'inspection des aliments

# Frequently Asked Questions on the *Guide to Food Safety*

## Q1.  What is the *Guide to Food Safety*?

The *Guide to Food Safety* is a publication that provides guidance to the Canadian food industry. This guidance is voluntary.

The Guide specifically discusses how to design, develop and implement effective and preventive food safety control systems. This will help to enhance food safety. It will also help to prevent foodborne illness, foodborne injury and food spoilage.

The Guide is based upon the *Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene*. This code was adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) in 2003. The Guide is consistent with Codex's recommendations to enhance food safety by using a systematic preventive approach.

The Guide complements the CFIA's *Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising,* which provides information on food labelling and advertising requirements.

## Q2.  Why was the *Guide to Food Safety* developed?

The *Guide to Food Safety* was written in support of the Government of Canada's commitments under the Food and Consumer Safety Action Plan (announced in December 2007). It supports these commitments by providing guidance to the food industry to help operators to develop preventive food safety control systems.

## Q3.  How was the *Guide to Food Safety* developed?

The *Guide to Food Safety* was drafted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in consultation with other federal and provincial/territorial governments and industry associations.

## Q4.  Who is the *Guide to Food Safety* intended for?

The *Guide to Food Safety* may be used by all food operators including importers, manufacturers, packers, distributors, retailers, food services and institutions.

It will be of particular value to operators of small or medium sized food operations, and those who are new to food production or handling, who may not have implemented a preventive food safety control system.

## Q5.  What if I already have a preventive food safety control system in place?

The *Guide to Food Safety* is general in nature. It provides basic guidance on how to develop a preventive food safety control system.

If you already have a preventive food safety control system in place that meets or exceeds the safety and labelling requirements for food in Canada, you may still find the Guide useful as a reference tool, with supporting information, and for training new employees.

**Q6.  Is it mandatory to follow the guidance provided in the *Guide to Food Safety*?**

No, the *Guide to Food Safety* is a voluntary tool.

It will help Canadian food operators to build preventive food safety control systems that meet their operational needs. This in turn will help them to import and manufacture safe foods.

**Q7.  If I follow the guidance provided in the *Guide to Food Safety*, will I have satisfied the requirements of all applicable Canadian legislation?**

The *Guide to Food Safety* provides guidance on designing a preventive food safety control system. It is your responsibility as the operator to evaluate every part of your operation to ensure that you meet all applicable regulatory requirements.

**Q8.  Does the *Guide to Food Safety* specify a particular approach to implement a preventive food safety control system?**

The *Guide to Food Safety* is flexible enough for food operators to apply various approaches, all of which are designed to help produce safe food. These include the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) approach and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards.

You may choose whichever approach is the most appropriate for your operation, as long as the program chosen leads to the production of foods and/or food ingredients that meet the requirements of applicable Canadian food legislation.

**Q9.  Does the *Guide to Food Safety* affect other federal government programs, such as the Food Safety Enhancement Program (FSEP) or the Quality Management Program (QMP)?**

The *Guide to Food Safety* is aligned with other CFIA food safety approaches such as FSEP and QMP, but it is not intended to replace any of these programs.

Operators who have already implemented the FSEP or the QMP will not be affected because these programs already apply the recommendations in the Guide.