



## The United States and Canada announce the mutual formal recognition of their food safety systems

May 11, 2016

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada have [announced](#) the U.S. and Canada's mutual recognition of their food safety systems as "comparable" to each other. By formally recognizing each other's food safety systems, the U.S. and Canada have established a framework for regulatory cooperation in a variety of areas that range from scientific collaboration to outbreak response.

Systems recognition involves reviewing a foreign country's domestic food safety regulatory system to determine if it has legal authorities and regulatory tools that together provide comparable public health outcomes in each country (ranging from relevant laws and regulations, inspection programs, response to food-related illness and outbreaks, compliance and enforcement and laboratory support). Systems recognition can help food safety authorities take a risk-based approach to inspection activities, including foreign facility inspections, import field exams, and import sampling, so that these activities can be focused on imports from countries that are not recognized as having comparable systems.

Systems recognition is not required in order for a country to export foods to the U.S. However, some existing legislation in Canada (such as the [Meat Inspection Act](#) and the [Fish Inspection Act](#)) require recognition of systems as a pre-requisite for importation into Canada. Additionally, under the proposed Safe Food for Canadians Regulations, the CFIA is proposing to allow importers who do not have a fixed place of business in Canada to obtain a CFIA importer license if they have an address in a country that Canada has officially recognized as having a food safety system that provides a similar level of protection as the proposed Safe Food for Canadians Regulations.

More information about the Canadian Foreign Food Safety Systems Recognition Framework is available from the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#), which has published an [FAQ about the program](#); the text of the current recognition arrangement is available [here](#). Background information about the Canadian arrangements with the FDA are also available through the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#).

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