

AAFC – Industry-Government COVID-19 monitoring call

June 22, 2020

Noon – 1:00 PM EST

There were approximately 251 participants on the call (148 bilingual, 96 English and 7 French).

Opening Remarks (Frédéric Seppey - AAFC)

- AAFC noted that on Friday, June 19, it sent the weekly email update regarding COVID-19 topics of interest. The email update included information on the following topics:
 - The launch of the Surplus Food Rescue Program
 - Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA's) Notice – Information regarding certain labelling and packaging requirements for pre-packaged meat products during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Guidance for Re-opening
 - The expanded Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) program
 - The extension of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)
- AAFC asked stakeholders to check the AAFC website as new and updated information will be posted as it becomes available.

Export of food and food products to China (Dr. Parthi Muthukumarasamy – CFIA)

- Many Industry members and associations have reported that importers or trade associations in China are asking for attestation from exporters of all countries that products are not contaminated with COVID and facilities follow guidance on management of COVID 19.
- Some groups have already sent the attestations while others are considering them or have concerns and have not submitted them.
- CFIA noted that these are industry to industry requests, therefore the completion of these attestation forms is left to the discretion of exporters/Canadian stakeholders.
- There is no information on how these attestations will be used by China.
- On June 20th China requested Canada provide a list of manufacturers/processors that export frozen blueberries, frozen cranberries, frozen potatoes, frozen sweet corn and live aquatic animals to China. The deadline for providing this information is end of day June 23rd.
- Given the urgency, CFIA will work internally to review their databases to compile the list. Individual companies or associations may be contacted to validate the information on an urgent basis.
- CFIA noted that some countries have been asked to immediately organize a video audit of select establishments for China to verify COVID measures at food processing facilities. China has not requested CFIA for an audit at this time.
- CFIA continues to work with their counterparts in China as well as engage internationally to share information and discuss approaches to managing trade issues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Next Call

- AAFC asked to keep them informed through the RoundTable email account of any situation or preoccupation, which is monitored hourly (aafc.roundtable-tabletonde.aac@canada.ca).
- Next stakeholder call will take place on Thursday, June 25th at noon EST.