

Fast Track

News from Canada's National Food Traceability Standards Initiative

Message from the Chair

After visiting six cities across Canada for the Can-Trace National Food Traceability Sessions, it is clear that Canadian industry's interest in food traceability is high.

As a participant at one of these sessions, I can report first-hand that this was an invaluable opportunity for Can-Trace to meet face-to-face with stakeholders representing all points along the food supply chain. Discussions were lively, and several important issues were raised, which is beneficial as we move this initiative forward.

More information on issues brought forward at the sessions are included in this issue. A summary report can also be accessed on the Can-Trace website at www.can-trace.org.

On behalf of the Can-Trace Steering Committee, I'd like to thank all the participants involved in the sessions for sharing their knowledge and providing valuable feedback that will help shape the direction of food traceability. It is an exciting time as the Steering Committee re-groups and maps out a future direction for Can-Trace.



Jane Proctor, Chair

Key Can-Trace Documents Available Online

Can-Trace has produced key documents, all of which are available online, that provide information related to food traceability in Canada:

Can-Trace at a Glance is a quick reference document on traceability and Can-Trace. Intended for those who are considering implementing a traceability system and are new to traceability or traceability systems, this document provides readers with information on what is involved in implementing such a system.

The Can-Trace Roadmap: A Progress Report and A Look Ahead gives a summary of Can-Trace's strategic objectives and the actions taken to support those objectives. In addition, it assesses next steps for activities and programs tailored to an industry's needs.

Report on Can-Trace National Food Traceability Consultation Sessions synthesizes the comments and discussions from the six consultation sessions that recently took place.

Outcomes from Can-Trace Consultation Sessions

In June 2005, Can-Trace hosted a series of National Food Traceability Consultation Sessions in six cities across Canada — Montréal, Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver/Burnaby — to provide an overview of the Canadian Food Traceability Data Standard version 1.0 (published in December 2004), an update on Can-Trace, and to solicit input from stakeholders on the future direction of the Can-Trace initiative.

The consultation sessions began with two presentations. The first was an overview on traceability from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada titled *Traceability in Canada in the 21st Century*.

The second was a review of progress over the past year, and plans for the coming year, presented by Can-Trace and titled *The Can-Trace Roadmap: A Progress Report and A Look Ahead*.

A number of themes relating to traceability emerged from the consultation sessions, including:

- import and export data elements
- global and domestic competition
- multi-ingredient foods
- integration with food safety and other systems
- challenges for small and medium-sized enterprises
- technology and data sharing
- liability and risk
- communication and education
- sector-specific comments, and
- comments relating to Can-Trace

A report on the Can-Trace National Food Traceability Consultation Sessions is available online at www.can-trace.org.





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Integration Guidelines Working Group Underway

Can-Trace has identified a need to provide information to enable the seamless integration of the Can-Trace data elements into the traceability requirements of existing on and off-farm programs. This includes the development of a set of integration guidelines to assist organizations, sectors, and value chains interested in adopting the Canadian Food Traceability Data Standard (CFTDS) and integrating the mandatory Can-Trace data standards into existing and developing programs containing traceability elements.

As a result, Can-Trace formed an Integration Guidelines Working Group (IWG) in May 2005. The group's mandate is to produce a report that will identify information gaps between the CFTDS mandatory data elements and traceability requirements in other pre-and-post-farm programs. The resulting report will provide useful information to organizations interested in harmonizing their programs with the Can-Trace data elements.

Recently, Montreal-based Merit-trax was awarded a contract to produce a report in support of the IWG's efforts.

Technology Working Group Report Nears Completion

The Technology Working Group (TWG) is nearing completion of a report that will address possible technological approaches to capturing and exchanging the Can-Trace data elements between supply chain partners.

It will compare different product data capture and document exchange technologies, including a paper-based system, and the benefits to be gained from these different technologies. The report is expected to be available in September 2005.

For more information or to participate in the TWG, contact Norm Cheesman, Director, Can-Trace at norm.cheesman@gs1ca.org.

Multi-Ingredient Working Group Formed

Can-Trace has formed a Multi-Ingredient Working Group to develop a White Paper that will explore the issues and challenges surrounding the application of the Can-Trace Canadian Food Traceability Data Standard (CFTDS) to multi-ingredient products. The White Paper will examine current practices and operational challenges for multi-ingredient product traceability, and address the following questions:

- How is multi-ingredient tracing done today and where are the successful models?
- How does multi-ingredient product traceability differ from tracing of single-ingredient products?
- What are the key components of a successful solution to multi-ingredient traceability?
- Without pilot testing, is the CFTDS sufficient for multi-ingredient traceability or are revisions to the data elements necessary?

The working group is looking for additional industry participation, particularly from food processors. Individuals interested in participating or contributing to this working group are asked to contact Norm Cheesman at norm.cheesman@gs1ca.org.

Upcoming Events

Can-Trace travels nationally to present and share its work.

November 1-2, 2005 — Food Traceability Summit in Toronto, ON

November 15-17, 2005 — National Seafood Sector Council's 2nd HR conference in Moncton, NB

February 1-2, 2006 — Food & Livestock Traceability 2006 in Dallas, Texas

For more information on Can-Trace, visit www.can-trace.org or contact info@can-trace.org.

