

Annexes to Alberta Foodborne Illness and Risk Investigation Protocol (FIRIP) 2017

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Annex 1. Roles and Responsibilities

Alberta Health

Mandate

Alberta Health is ultimately responsible for the health of Albertans. With respect to food safety, the Ministry is responsible for developing and maintaining legislation, policies and guidelines that support the investigation and reduction of foodborne illness.

Legislation

The *Public Health Act* and regulations provide the legislative authority in Alberta for responding to outbreaks of foodborne illness and to food-related hazards.

Role in Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

The role of Alberta Health may vary depending on the communicable disease, the magnitude of the outbreak and the method of detection or notification. Alberta Health works closely with the regional health authority, Alberta Health Services, to ensure the response is tailored to the outbreak.

The functions of Alberta Health may include:

- Coordinating any outbreak-related legislative actions with other Government of Alberta ministries.
- Providing expert medical, epidemiological and public health advice and/or assistance to partners.
- Monitoring key partner activities pertaining to the outbreak investigation.
- Consulting with national and international public health experts and advisory bodies as required.
- Working in coordination with key partners to develop appropriate intervention strategies.
- Working in coordination with key partners to develop public health messaging.
- Conducting human health risk assessments.
- Leading and coordinating public communications provincially.
- Sharing outbreak-related data and information with provincial and federal partners.

Where appropriate, Alberta Health may provide guidance/direction to Alberta Health Services with respect to certain aspects of the outbreak investigation.

Alberta Health Services

Mandate

Alberta Health Services-Environmental Public Health (AHS-EPH) is staffed by Environmental Health Officers (EHOs), who are designated as Executive Officers in the *Public Health Act*. As it relates to the FIRIP, their mandate is:

- As designates of the AHS Medical Officer of Health (MOH), to identify and investigate reports of reportable diseases and disease outbreaks in accordance with the *Public Health Act* and pursuant regulations to identify and provide an appropriate response.
- To ensure that food is stored, prepared, served, and distributed in a manner consistent with applicable legislation. In general, EHOs routinely inspect retail food premises/establishments or retail areas of food manufacturing/processing plants that have direct sale/supply of food to the public as well as food manufacturing/processing plants that are not under the jurisdiction of other levels of government. The frequency of inspection for each premise is based upon their assessed risk.

Legislation

The legislation under which AHS-EPH carries out its mandate includes the *Public Health Act* Chapter/Regulation: P-37 RSA 2000 and associated regulations:

- Communicable Diseases Regulation Chapter/Regulation: 238/1985
- Food Regulation Chapter/Regulation: 31/2006
- Qualifications of Executive Officers Regulation Chapter/Regulation: 51/1999
- Nuisance and General Sanitation Regulation Chapter/Regulation: 243/2003

Role in Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

AHS-EPH is typically the agency that identifies foodborne illness outbreaks in Alberta, through investigation of reportable diseases and other reports of illness, and will typically assume a leadership role in outbreak investigations (with the exception of federal lands). AHS-EPH also conducts onsite inspections, investigations, sample collection and enforcement activities at food facilities within the AHS-EPH mandate that are implicated during outbreak investigations. When implicated food facilities are under the mandate of another food safety partner, AHS-EPH participates in joint inspections with other partners as needed. When public communications may be required during an outbreak, AHS-EPH liaises with the AHS MOH and AHS Communications personnel and provides content expertise for messaging.

Alberta Health Services - Provincial Laboratory for Public Health Microbiology (ProvLab)

Mandate

To provide public health microbiology testing in protecting the health of Albertans through leadership, partnership, innovation and excellence in surveillance, research, specialized laboratory testing for outbreak and emerging infectious disease responses.

The Provincial Laboratory was created by Order-in-Council as a branch of the Department of Agriculture on December 2, 1907. Communicable disease lab activities initially focused on detection and prevention of typhoid fever, diphtheria and tuberculosis, including vaccine production, outbreak investigation and examination of domestic water and milk supplies. The scope of testing has increased and evolved to the present day to include recreational and drinking water testing, public health and specialized testing for virology, bacteriology, mycology and parasitology using culture, serologic, molecular and genomic approaches.

Role in Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

- Conducts provincial surveillance for enteric diseases.
- Provides laboratory testing expertise, consultation and leadership.
- Captures all outbreaks using a web based Exposure Investigation system where data can be disseminated in real time.
- Performs tests on submitted clinical and food samples to identify the pathogens.
- Assists with co-ordination of samples to be tested at other sites such as AAF and CFIA.
- Uses molecular subtyping to further determine the relatedness of the pathogens.
- Analyzes and interprets laboratory data.
- Connects with PulseNet Canada and other Canadian provinces.
- Reports all outbreak data to AH and AHS.

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

Mandate

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AAF) has legislative responsibilities for food safety, animal and plant health, and animal welfare. The Food Safety Branch (FSB) has the mandate to oversee provincially licensed meat facilities and dairies, through inspection, enforcement, and extension. The Inspection and Investigation Section (IIS) contributes to the security and safety of the animal and food systems by providing effective and efficient inspection, licensing, investigation, audit assurance, and enforcement activities pursuant to various Acts and Regulations.

Legislation

AAF is responsible for administering and providing support to food safety legislation, as well as for maintaining and enhancing public confidence in Alberta-inspected food of animal origin by ensuring consistency and coordination of investigation and enforcement activities as required. Legislation pertaining to food safety includes:

Meat Inspection Act (R.S.A. 2000, M-9) and Meat Inspection Regulation (A.R. 43/2003);

Dairy Industry Act (R.S.A. 2000, D-2) and Dairy Industry Regulation (A.R. 139/1999); and

Livestock and Livestock Products Act (R.S.A. 2000, L-18) and the following regulations:

- Purchase and Sale of Eggs and Processed Egg Regulation (A.R. 23/2004),
- Hatchery Supply Flock Regulation (A.R. 183/1997), and
- Honey Grading Regulation (A.R. 104/1997)

Role in Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

If an AAF-licensed facility is implicated in a foodborne illness outbreak, FSB will lead the investigation within that facility. Egg-related issues are managed through the IIS. For those outbreak investigations involving other jurisdictions, AAF has a supporting role which varies from provision of testing or delivery of extension services to jointly responding at facilities with implicated product.

The Agri-Food Laboratories Section has laboratory testing capabilities under ISO 17025 accreditation and coordinates with the CFIA and ProvLab during outbreaks to ensure samples are processed in a timely manner.

Food Safety and Meat Facility Extension Specialists within FSB provide information and knowledge to Alberta's food producing and processing sector. Staff work with industry to help develop good production and processing practices, assess and identify hazards and implement safe food systems based upon good manufacturing and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Mandate

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is dedicated to safeguard Canada's food, animals and plants, which, in turn, enhances the health and well-being of our people, environment and economy.

Legislation

The Agency administers and/or enforces 13 federal Acts and their respective regulations. Five of 13 Acts pertain to food. The five Acts include the *Meat Inspection Act*, *Canada Agriculture Products Act*, *Fish Inspection Act*, *Food and Drugs Act* (as it relates to food), and *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act* (as it relates to food). In addition, the *Safe Food for Canadians Act* was passed in 2012 and regulations are being developed. The proposed Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) would replace the current regulations made under the *Canada Agricultural Products Act*, *Fish Inspection Act*, *Meat Inspection Act*, and the food-related provisions of the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Regulations.

Role in Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

The CFIA delivers all federal inspection and enforcement services related to food on behalf of the federal government. The CFIA's role in foodborne outbreaks includes its food safety investigation, testing and recall activities including advising the public of recalls, monitoring the effectiveness of recalls, participating in Alberta Foodborne Illness and Risk Investigation Coordinating Committee (CC) as well as its regulatory compliance and enforcement activities.

When a potentially contaminated food that could pose a risk to the public has been identified in Canada, the CFIA launches a food safety investigation to determine the nature, extent and cause of the problem, confirm whether a health hazard exists and identify the appropriate risk management options.

The food safety investigation includes tracing foods from the retail level through distribution to production or processing facilities to pinpoint a suspected source of the problem. Information obtained throughout the food safety investigation provides the basis for the assessment of risk and the development of appropriate risk management strategies to control affected products.

The food industry carries out most recalls voluntarily. However, if a company is not available or willing to conduct the recall voluntarily, the Minister of Health (food) or the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (animal, plant) can, under the *Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act*, order a company to recall a product where the Minister believes that it poses a risk to public, animal, or plant health. In the case of voluntary recalls, the CFIA officials will verify that the recalling firm has recalled the product effectively.

Groups within the CFIA that play key roles in the food safety response to food-borne illness outbreak situations include:

- Regional inspection staff and Regional Recall Coordinators (RRCs), are actively involved in food safety investigation. The RRCs are also the usual first point of contact within the CFIA for provincial and territorial governments.

- The Office of Food Safety and Recall (OFSR) is responsible for the coordination and consistency of decision-making on food safety issues and recalls. The OFSR is the first point of contact for national and international food safety related issues. OFSR requests Health Risk Assessment from Health Canada and/or Liaison with Public Health Agency of Canada.
- The above mentioned two groups may seek input from other internal stakeholders on as needed basis.

Health Canada

Mandate

Health Canada (HC) is the federal department responsible for helping Canadians maintain and improve their health, while respecting individual choices and circumstances.

Legislation

The *Food and Drugs Act* and Food and Drug Regulations are administered by Health Canada.

HC is the federal department responsible for setting the regulations and standards for the safety and nutritional quality of food sold in Canada. Its food safety responsibilities include:

- Establishing policies, regulations and standards related to the safety and nutritional quality of all food sold in Canada - Food Directorate.
- Regulating pesticides - Pest Management Regulatory Agency.
- Evaluating the safety of veterinary drugs used in food-producing animals - Veterinary Drugs Directorate.
- Food safety in First Nations communities south of 60 degrees parallel - First Nations Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB).

Role in Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

Health Canada may be involved or assist with investigations of foodborne illness outbreaks.

The Food Directorate focuses on issues relating to microbial pathogens, chemical contaminants, marine bio toxins, undeclared food allergens or other potential health hazards in foods.

Specifically, the Food Directorate provides:

- Health risk assessments (HRA) on food-related hazards to the CFIA or other stakeholders (e.g., P/T governments).
- Scientific advice and analytical surge capacity for analyzing microbiological contaminants, chemical contaminants, non-permitted food additives, chemicals associated with the use of food packaging materials, processing aids, and incidental additives, and undeclared food allergens in food and clinical samples.
- National reference services for foodborne botulism, listeriosis, as well as *Vibrio*, viruses and parasites.
- Risk management advice, including public communication.

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency provides, upon request, HRAs on pesticide residues exceeding the legal limits to the CFIA or other stakeholders. It also contributes to investigations involving incidences of pesticide residues above the legal limits. The Veterinary Drugs Directorate is responsible for setting maximum residue limits for veterinary drugs in foods.

Health Canada's First Nations Inuit Health Branch

Mandate

Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch - Alberta Region (FNIHB-AB) works collaboratively with First Nations and Inuit, indigenous organizations, the federal health portfolio, other federal government departments, and provincial and territorial governments to improve health outcomes among First Nations and Inuit; to ensure the availability of, and access to, quality health services; and to support greater control of the health system by First Nations and Inuit.

Legislation

FNIHB-AB has Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) who, like provincial MOHs, have been delegated authority, powers and responsibilities under the Alberta *Public Health Act* with respect to communicable disease control and public health emergencies. During an outbreak, the FNIHB-AB MOH is responsible for carrying out the legislated roles of the MOH under the Alberta *Public Health Act* and the associated *Communicable Diseases Regulation* (AR 238/85).

Role in Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

With respect to foodborne illness outbreaks, FNIHB-AB:

- Coordinates the investigation of foodborne outbreaks that occur in First Nations communities in Alberta.
- Reports all on reserve outbreaks to Alberta Health.
- Coordinates case and contact investigations on reserve, in collaboration with public health staff in the community.
- Assists with the collection of clinical and/or environmental samples on reserve, as appropriate, and the submission of samples to the appropriate laboratory for analysis.
- Analyzes and interprets outbreak investigation data.
- Conducts food safety investigations of any implicated facilities located on reserve.
- Provides information and guidance to First Nations community leadership, physicians and public health staff working on reserve in community health centres/nursing stations, and operators of facilities on reserve that are experiencing an outbreak.
- Provides public health messaging as well as public education sessions, as needed, in affected First Nations communities.

Public Health Agency of Canada

Mandate

The mission of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is to promote and protect the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation, and action in public health. The mandate of PHAC is to promote health; prevent and control chronic diseases and injuries; prevent and control infectious diseases; prepare for and respond to public health emergencies; serve as a central point for sharing Canada's expertise with the rest of the world; apply international research and development to Canada's public health programs; and strengthen intergovernmental collaboration on public health and facilitate national approaches to public health policy and planning.

Legislation

PHAC was established in September 2004 and was confirmed as a legal entity in December 2006 by the *Public Health Agency of Canada Act* (Bill C-5). To address concerns about human pathogens and toxins, Parliament passed the *Human Pathogens and Toxins Act* (HPTA) in 2009. PHAC is charged with enforcing the HPTA and developing a program and regulatory framework.

At the federal level, PHAC, HC, and CFIA have legislated responsibilities for responding to food-borne illness related events. In 2008, a trilateral MOU between PHAC, HC, and CFIA was finalized. The trilateral MOU specifies the roles and responsibilities of the CFIA, HC, and PHAC as they relate to the common issues that directly or indirectly have an impact on human health including food safety and nutrition, infectious disease outbreak management, and emerging zoonotic diseases. These MOUs and corresponding Roles and Responsibilities Frameworks reference the FIORP (Foodborne Illness Outbreak Response Protocol) as a key guidance document. FIORP was collectively developed by PHAC, HC, and CFIA, in consultation with P/T stakeholders to enhance the collaboration and overall effectiveness of response during multi-jurisdictional food-borne illness outbreaks.

Role in Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

PHAC responds to multi-jurisdictional infectious disease outbreaks and acts as the Canadian International Health Regulation focal point, which represents the national centre designated to communicate with the World Health Organization (WHO).

Within the Government of Canada, the usual first point of contact for notification of issues related to actual or potential food-borne illness outbreaks and requests for content expertise/support for food-borne outbreak investigation is the Centre for Food-borne, Environmental and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (CFEZID), within the Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Branch of PHAC. CFEZID is responsible for the following:

- Conducts national surveillance for enteric illnesses.
- Provides consultation, content expertise, coordination, and leadership in outbreak investigations.
- Coordinates multi-jurisdictional outbreaks involving more than one P/T or country where appropriate.

- Interprets and comments on the strength of evidence collected during the epidemiological investigation of food-borne illness outbreaks.
- Provides training in outbreak response/investigation methods.
- Coordinates and collaborates with international surveillance.
- Manages Enteric Public Health Alerts.

The National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) provides reference services for strain identification and characterization, national laboratory-based surveillance, and dissemination of information through PulseNet Canada and the National Enteric Surveillance Program (NESP). The NML, through PulseNet Canada, is the usual first point of contact for P/Ts sharing strain identification data and the detection of clusters of strains that are occurring in more than one P/T or country, indicating the potential for multi-jurisdictional food-borne outbreaks.

PHAC has public health capacity and resources that can be mobilized to assist in the investigation of food-borne illness outbreaks. Programs include:

- The Canadian Field Epidemiology Program, in the Office for Public Health Practice, which provides specialized training for health professionals in the practice of applied epidemiology. Field epidemiologists are deployed to assist in field investigations of food-borne illness outbreaks within the jurisdiction of their placement and are mobilized to local and P/T public health authorities. Field epidemiologists may also assist in international outbreak investigations.
- The Canadian Public Health Service (CPHS) is a program to recruit and deploy qualified staff in consultation with interested health jurisdictions, and to provide these staff with ongoing field experience and training in order to build public health capacity across the country. The CPHS provides public health support to provincial, territorial, or local health jurisdictions and to public-health-oriented NGOs and may be involved in enhancing routine surveillance and epidemiological work. The CPHS is also prepared to deal with broader public health issues as well as outbreak or pandemic duties as these needs emerge.

Annex 2. FIRIP Coordinating Committee Contact List

The FIRIP Coordinating Committee (CC) Contact List will be maintained by CAPIFS. Names and contact information of FIRIP CC Initial Contacts who are involved in the multi-jurisdictional coordination of foodborne illness outbreak/risk investigation response activities are provided. Upon notification through initial contacts, the CC Initial Contact will be responsible for notifying and providing regular updates to their senior officials. The FIRIP CC Initial Contact ensures the appropriate representation from their respective organizations on the FIRIP CC.

The FIRIP Contact List is updated regularly to ensure that it is accurate and current, and distributed electronically to CAPIFS membership and also to the CC Contact List representatives involved with FIRIP activities. In addition to regular reviews, any changes to the contact names provided to the working group will be made immediately and a new FIRIP Contact List will be distributed to those named on the list.