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2009 USP Annual Scientific Meeting

Food Directorate

Samuel Godefroy

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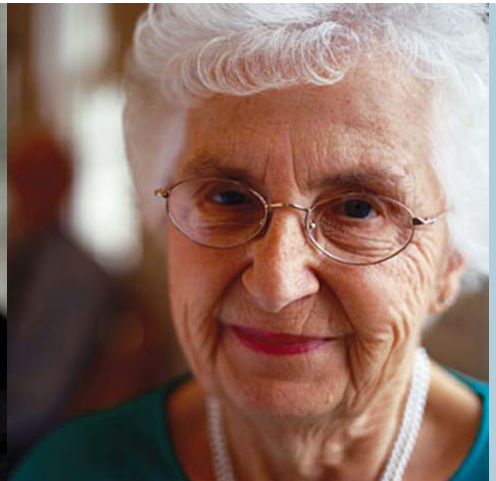
USP Annual Scientific Meeting

Canadian Food And Drug Regulation Session
September 23, 2009 – Toronto

Standards without Borders: Protecting the Public Health in the Modern World

Health Products and Food Branch (HPFB)
Food Directorate (FD)
Samuel Godefroy, Ph.D.
Director General



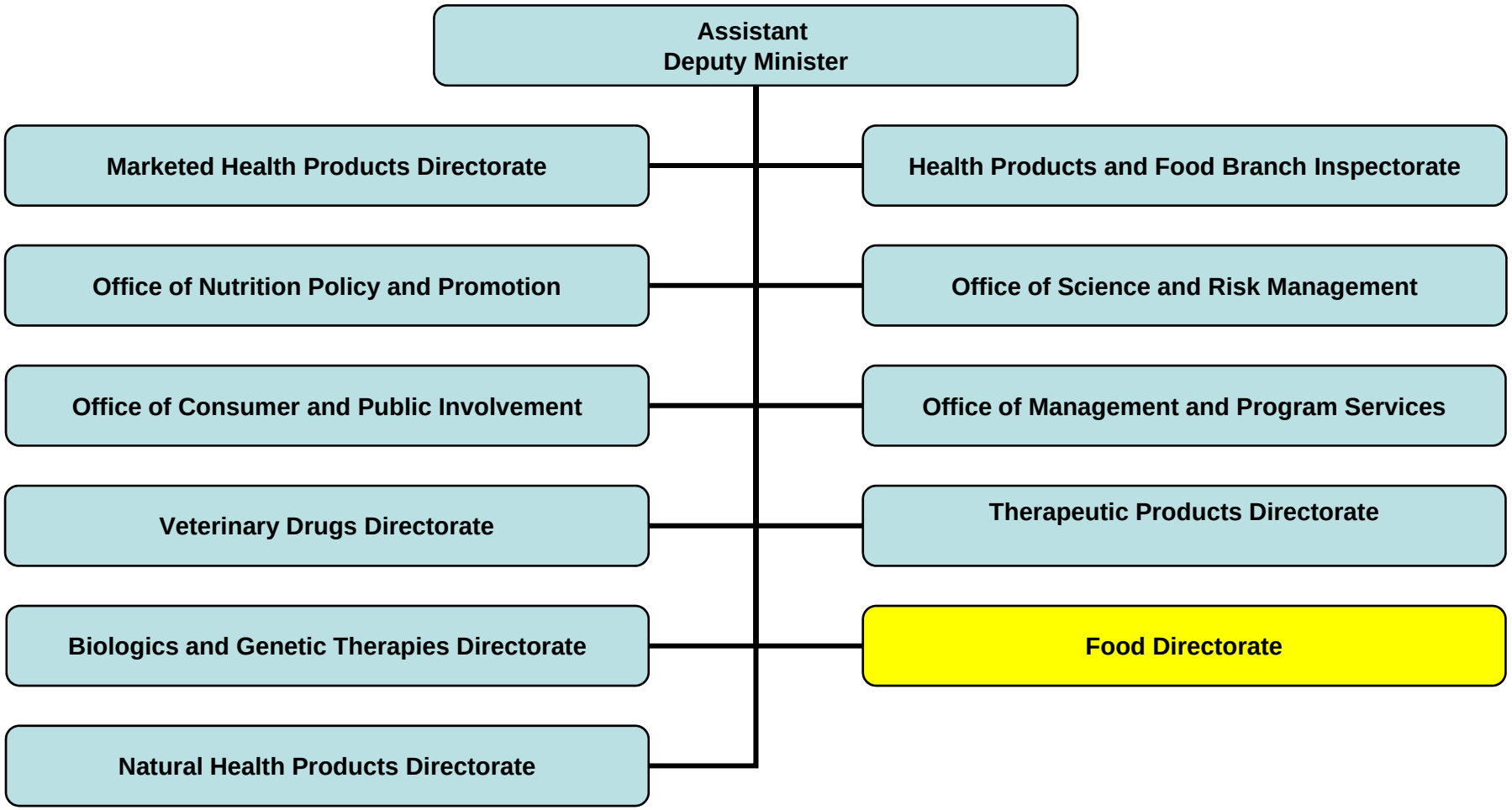


Canada

Overview

- Food Directorate Structure
- Priorities
- International Food Safety Activity
- Food Directorate Cooperation with USP
- Recent Issues
- Resources, Tools & Contact Information

Food Directorate in the Health Products and Food Branch



Food Directorate: Key Canadian Food Standard Setting Body

Health Canada (HC)

Health Products and Food Branch (HPFB)

Food Directorate (FD)

WHO Collaborating Centre for Food Contamination Monitoring

World Health Organization

Bureau of Microbial Hazards (BMH)	Bureau of Chemical Safety (BCS)	Bureau of Nutritional Sciences (BNS)
Pathogens : traditional and emerging, viruses in foods and BSE issues	*Food additives, contaminants, and food contact chemicals: packaging materials, incidental additives*	*Nutrients, infant formula formulations, fats and oils, vitamins*
Burnaby, BC	**Winnipeg, MB**	**Scarborough, ON**	**Ottawa, ON**	**Longueuil, QC**

Our Foundations

Vision:

To be the most trusted Canadian authority providing policies, standards, advice and information on the safety and nutritional value of food.

Mission:

In support of Health Canada's mission to help Canadians maintain and improve their health, the Food Directorate is the federal health authority responsible for establishing policies, setting standards and providing advice and information on the safety and nutritional value of food.

Outcomes:

A safe and nutritious food supply and information to support healthful food choices to help Canadians maintain good health and prevent chronic and acute food related illness and disease

Food Directorate Authority

Our responsibilities are carried out under the authority of the ***Food and Drugs Act and Regulations*** and the ***Department of Health Act***.

Food and Drugs Act:

http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/ShowTdm/cs/f-27///en

Food and Drug Regulations:

http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showtdm/cr/C.R.C.-c.870

Our Food Safety Program

More than 400 employees across Canada are engaged in ensuring a safe and nutritious food supply for Canadians

Key Activities:

- Development of standards, policies and guidelines
- Evaluation of premarket submissions
- Contributing to “Post Market”/“Real Time” risk management of issues
- Applied research and surveillance to support evaluation and risk management
- Collaboration with government partners within Canada and internationally

Principal Areas of Focus:

- Microbiological contaminants
- Nutritional safety and nutritional value of foods
- Safety of food additives, food processing agents and other chemical safety issues
- Safety of novel foods

Priorities Identified by the Convergence of:

Priorities identified by Environmental Scans
(Drivers of change, Stakeholder consultations, Study group reports / discussions)

Priorities defined by the Government of Canada (Speech from the Throne), Government /Branch priorities

Some Priorities: Regulatory Modernization

- While Canada continues to have a strong food safety system, with many positive attributes, the current food regulatory system must modernize to keep pace with changes in science and technology, including food product innovation and new food technology applications.

- Updating the Regulations that govern the sale and safety of all food sold in Canada will ensure that our food regulatory system is flexible, based on risks, and provides timely responses to current and emerging food safety and nutrition issues.

- In 2008, Health Canada published its Regulatory Modernization Strategy for Food and Nutrition http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/pubs/rm_strat_mr-eng.php#a1. The strategy confirms Health Canada's commitment to strengthening prevention and risk based regulation, working with partners to enhance the safety and nutritional quality of the food supply, and providing consumers with information for informed decision making.

Some Priorities: Regulatory Modernization (cont'd)

- Clarify interface between Food and Natural Health Products (NHPs) (NHPs in food format)
- Modernize review and approval process for health claims
- Develop a regulatory framework for discretionary food fortification
- Modernize legislative & regulatory framework to enable substances added to/present in food: food additives, nutrients (vitamins, minerals, amino-acids), contaminants

Some Priorities: Chemical Safety

- Allergens
  - Improved declaration of allergens, glutens, sulphites in pre-packaged food
- Mycotoxins:
  - Reduce dietary exposure to selected mycotoxins: patulin, deoxynivalenol, ochratoxin A and ergot alkaloids in foods
- Chemical Contaminants
  - Minimize exposure to key foodborne contaminants environmental, process induced, packaging etc.

Some Priorities: Microbial Safety

- Reduce exposure to foodborne pathogens
  - E.g. *Listeria E .coli* O157, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*
- On-going research on emerging pathogens and prion diseases
  - E.g. Norovirus, *E. sakazakii*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Cyclospora* , *Giardia, TSE*
- Novel foods/processes and innovation
  - Development of guidelines for the safety assessment of novel foods, and update policy on cloned animals

Some Priorities: Nutritional Safety

- Sodium:
  - High sodium intakes linked to preventable high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease
  - A strategy to reduce sodium intake by Canadians is being developed

- Trans fats
  - High trans fat intakes linked to increased risk of cardiovascular disease
  - A 2-year voluntary reduction program for industry to reduce trans fat content of foods to the levels recommended by the Canadian Trans Fat Task Force ended in June 2009.
  - Health Canada is closely tracking industry progress and will regulate if deemed necessary.

Four Key Areas of International Food Safety Activity…

- Development of international food safety standards, through the Codex Alimentarius Commission and complementary international organizations (e.g., WHO/FAO, Expert bodies such as the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives, Joint Expert Meetings on Microbial Risk Assessment)
- Information exchange, collaboration and work sharing with other food safety regulators
- Capacity building and technical assistance to developing countries (e.g. APEC Food Safety Cooperation Forum and its Partnership Training Institute Network)
- Negotiation and implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and technical barrier to trade (TBT) provisions of international agreements (e.g., WTO, NAFTA)

Food directorate Cooperation with USP

Present:

- Membership on Expert Committees and participation in collaborative studies
- Providing input to monographs and general chapters
- As per the Food & Drugs regulations, food additives have to satisfy to the monographs set in the Food Chemical Codex maintained by USP

Future:

- Possible candidates for other Expert Committees with the call for nominees expected in the fall

Recent Issues

- Melamine: In the fall of 2008, there were concerns about the possible contamination of a variety of food products with the chemical melamine. The Food Directorate conducted a risk assessment and set interim standards to differentiate between normal background levels of melamine and intentional contamination in products containing milk and milk-derived ingredients, including infant formula. Health Canada's Food Directorate is leading the Codex electronic working group to develop standards for melamine in food and feed.

- Bisphenol A (BPA): The Food Directorate's reviews of BPA assessed whether dietary exposure to this chemical could pose a health risk to consumers. They led to a Government announcement of proposed risk management strategies aimed particularly at newborns and infants. Health Canada's Food Directorate is fostering international coordination of risk assessment and management pertaining to the use of BPA in food packaging applications.

Recent Issues (cont'd)

- Listeriosis Outbreak in 2008:

➢ A listeriosis outbreak was identified following three weeks of higher than expected case reports of listeriosis in Ontario.

➢ The source of listeria was linked to a food industry Establishment (Maple Leaf Foods Canada) producing ready to eat meat products.

➢ Eventually seven provinces were implicated in the outbreak with 57 confirmed cases and 21 deaths where listeriosis was the underlying or contributing cause of death.

➢ A lesson learnt exercise was conducted and changes are underway to better prepare for and prevent similar incidents.

Resources, Tools & Contact Information

- For more information on the Food Directorate visit:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/branch-dirgen/hpfb-dgpsa/fd-da/index-eng.php

- E-mail address:

food-aliment@hc-sc.gc.ca

Contact Information

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