

CanadaGAP Training Note

TO: CanadaGAP Auditors, Certification Bodies and Program Participants

DATE: UPDATED FOR 2026

SUBJECT: Additional Guidance for Section 23.8 – Food Safety Culture

This note provides clarification regarding the intent of the “food safety culture” requirements found in Section 23.8: Food Safety Culture of the CanadaGAP manual(s).

Please note the following key points:

- The CanadaGAP Program has always intended for every operation to develop and maintain a strong food safety culture.
- The glossary definition for “food safety culture” within the CanadaGAP manual(s) is:

Food Safety Culture: Shared values, beliefs and norms that affect mindset and behaviour toward food safety in, across and throughout an organization.

- The Introduction of the Manual(s) states:

Senior Management Commitment to Food Safety Management System.
Completion and implementation of the Food Safety Manual constitutes a commitment on the part of the person(s) responsible and the company’s senior management to the development, management and continuous improvement of their food safety system. *This includes creating, managing and maintaining a food safety culture within the organization.*

CanadaGAP manual(s) Food Safety Culture Requirements:

Section 23: Deviations and Crisis Management, sub-section 23.8 Food Safety Culture, of the CanadaGAP manuals states:

- Responsibility for food safety culture belongs to senior management
- The person responsible creates, assesses, implements and maintains food safety culture by:
 - Communicating food safety policies and responsibilities frequently and effectively
 - Engaging and involving all employees

- Training and reinforcing food safety
 - Measuring and assessing performance regularly
 - Ensuring feedback on food safety related issues is received from all employees
 - Making a long-term commitment to sustaining and improving food safety, including providing sufficient resources
 - Ensuring consumer focus
- The person responsible performs an annual review of the operation's food safety culture and makes changes or improvements as necessary

General Guidance:

1. Section 23.8 must be completed by **ALL** operations, **EXCEPT** for operations enrolled in certification options A1 and A2.
2. The person responsible must read the section carefully and check off each box. The procedures should be implemented and completed to align with the operation's processes and practices. A commitment to food safety culture should be made throughout the entire operation.
3. Auditors will be looking for completion of the entire section (i.e., bullets checked off) and are NOT expecting to review additional documentation.
4. During the audit, the person responsible should be able to explain that they promote and maintain food safety culture within the operation.
5. The auditor will verify the information from the person responsible with the auditor's own observations, as well as through employee interviews. If the auditor notices issues with an overall lack of appropriate food safety culture within the operation, points may be removed from Section T. Deviations and Crisis Management, Question T6.

T6) Food safety culture is created, assessed, implemented, maintained and reviewed annually?	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>	INC <input type="checkbox"/>	
N/A <input type="checkbox"/> (Option A1/A2)				

6. The auditor will provide comments as to why points were removed so that it is clear to the operation where deficiencies were identified.