



(Pamela Riemenschneider)

After six years in development, Canada’s Safe Food for Canadians food safety law becomes effective in January.

The final regulations (<http://bit.ly/2LONkbu>) were released by the government of Canada in mid-June, and Jeff Hall, food safety specialist with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, said federal officials did a good job of consulting with industry and the public throughout the process.

Compliance dates (<http://bit.ly/2M5Et5h>) for the largest growers and produce operations who market their produce throughout Canada begin in 2020.

The Canadian food safety law is outcome based, Hall said, allowing industry flexibility in how they devise food safety plans.

“Why would you put a particular procedure in place?” he said, “Well, here’s the outcome we expect from it,” he said.

He said produce operations can design their food safety programs the way they need to, as long as they still have that same public health result at the end.

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On the grower level, Hall said the regulation will put great emphasis on compliance with Canada GAP Global Food Safety Initiative standard.

“In layman’s terms, it means if you’re doing Canada GAP, it means you’re already 99% of the way there when it comes to the Safe Food for Canadians regulations,” Hall said.

When the government does its risk-based evaluations, compliance with the Canada GAP GFSI audit is one factor it will consider.

The food safety law in Canada will mesh well with the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act, according to the government of Canada.

Hall said that as long as a Canadian producer is in compliance with the Canadian law or American producer is in compliance with the U.S., the governments recognize each other’s system as giving the same public health outcome.

Traceability provisions in the Safe Food for Canadians regulations will generally require most businesses to keep records that:

- Identify the food product;
- Trace the food one step back to the supplier;
- Trace the food one step forward to whom the product was sold; and
- If applicable, identify and trace back the ingredients used to make the food.

Hall said the Canadian regulations allow companies to use food safety methods that have been recognized by other governments, called “incorporation by reference,” rather than having to change the regulations to include new methods.

“The CFIA has a streamlined process that can more easily and more quickly add things like that into the regulations,” Hall said.

In addition to the food safety requirements, the regulations states that Canadians who buy, sell or negotiate the sale or purchase of fruits and vegetables inter-provincially, intra-provincially and

internationally will be required to be a member in good standing of the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation, unless excepted from the regulations.

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