



Alberta Agriculture and Forestry,
Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health
Food Safety



Audit Report Executive Summary

October 2017

Who

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry,
Alberta Health Services and
Alberta Health

What

Follow-up performance audit

When

We conducted our field work
in April and May 2017, and
substantially completed our
audit on June 22, 2017.

Why we did this audit

Food safety is an important human health concern. Ensuring that the food we eat is safe involves regulation, and oversight, at all stages of food production, preparation and sale. Alberta Health Services (AHS), the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry (Agriculture) share responsibility for food safety in the province.

In our October 2006 public report we made 10 recommendations to improve food safety in Alberta. We followed up and reported on the implementation progress of these recommendations in 2009 and 2013. After the most recent follow-up audit, two of the original 2006 recommendations remained outstanding.

What we concluded

We conclude that AHS, the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry have achieved the outcomes described in the audit objective:

- AHS, Health and Agriculture jointly developed an integrated food safety work plan, and senior management from all three entities now work together to improve provincial food safety policies and program delivery through the Food Safety Modernization Committee.
- Both AHS and Agriculture now publicly report food safety facility inspection results on their websites.
- AHS and Agriculture now have similar practices to each other for inspecting businesses that both process and sell meat.

Why this is important to Albertans

Food safety is essential to good public health. To trust that the food they eat is safe, Albertans need to know that effective food safety systems are in place and working at all stages of food production, from meat processing plants to restaurants. To have this assurance, Albertans also need to know that AHS, the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry are co-operating and working together on food safety.



Quick Facts

- Under Alberta's Food regulation, restaurant inspections occur prior to the opening of a new facility, and every four to six months thereafter, or more often if non-compliance with the regulation has been identified.
- The Meat Safety Inspection branch at Alberta Agriculture and Forestry is responsible for regulating 115 red meat and poultry abattoirs, 85 mobile butchers and 33 mobile butcher facilities in Alberta.
- Alberta's Agri-Foods Laboratories (AFL) conducts laboratory testing and provides scientific information and advice to inform decision-making and policy decisions about animal health, food safety and public health.

Learn More

agriculture.alberta.ca

albertahealthservices.ca

health.alberta.ca

What we examined

Our audit objective was to determine if AHS, the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry had:

- integrated their strategies to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to food safety
- improved public reporting on food safety in Alberta
- eliminated inconsistencies in how meat processing facilities were inspected

What we found

- In 2014 Agriculture and Health agreed to collaborate to align their food safety activities through the Food Safety Modernization Initiative (FSMI). One outcome from this initiative was the joint development and implementation of an integrated food safety work plan for Alberta. The FSMI committee has the authority to make decisions and provide direction to various working groups to ensure implementation of the work plan and achieve tangible results.
- A tangible result from the work plan is improved food safety reporting. The accountability and working group developed inspection reporting measures for both AHS and Agriculture and Forestry that are now in use and publicly posted to their websites.
- In 2015, Agriculture and Forestry aligned its meat processing facility inspection practices with AHS's.

What needs to be done

We have no further recommendations related to food safety.

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