

FACT SHEET: 'PRODUCT OF CANADA' LABELLING REGULATIONS

Background

- Does 'Product of Canada' mean the contents were actually grown, harvested and processed right here at home? Hardly! Under current regulations, the 'Product of Canada' label can be used as long as 51% of the production costs are borne in Canada.
- For example, a fruit juice concentrate can be imported into Canada, mixed with water at a Canadian bottling plant, and then stamped with the 'Product of Canada' label.
- Furthermore, the use of Canada No. 1 is a grade designation and not an indication of country of origin. This also is misleading.

Recent Activity

- Consumers are sounding the alarm on misleading labelling as it relates to the 'Product of Canada' designation.
- Concerns have increased following recent health scares related to products imported from China. Today, for example, Canada imports fruit and other agricultural products from China, which can be re-packaged or further processed, and then affixed with a 'Product of Canada' label.
- In June the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food released its report on "Canada's New Agriculture and Agri-food Policy" in which they acknowledge that the present regulations around 'Product of Canada' designation may mislead consumers. The committee recommended that the government immediately review its labelling legislation and regulations with the goal of implementing a minimum 51% domestic agri-food content rule that would provide better protection for the integrity of the 'Product of Canada' designation.

Canadian Horticultural Council Position

- Canada's horticultural producers believe in fairness, both for producers and consumers.
- The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) maintains that the 'Product of Canada' label should actually reflect what's inside.
- Canada has a reputation for food safety and quality that is second to none in the world. Both Canadian industry and consumers deserve assurances that the government will proactively address the lack of clarity around the 'Product of Canada' designation.
- Consumer demand for local product continues to increase, but they are unable to make knowledgeable food choices under the present 'Product of Canada' designation.
- Canadian horticultural producers are proudly working to compete in this global market, and the present state of the 'Product of Canada' designation gives the advantage to our international competitors not our own Canadian producers.

Ask of the Federal Government

- The CHC, on behalf of horticultural producers across the country, seeks action on the part of the federal government to immediately initiate regulatory changes that would ensure that only domestically-grown, harvested, and processed food can bear the 'Product of Canada' label.
- The CHC, on behalf of horticultural producers across the country, asks that the government also proactively increase awareness amongst Canadian consumers on the definition of the 'Product of Canada' designation.
- The CHC, on behalf of horticultural producers across the country, further asks that the government to implement a requirement that a product bearing a Canada No. 1 grade designation must be followed or preceded by a statement related to the country of origin.