

# Food safety and traceability



## **Background**

In order to reassure buyers and maintain a high level of consumer confidence, the CHC and its industry members have spent years proactively developing and implementing the CanadaGAP™ (On-Farm Food Safety Program) for fresh fruit and vegetable growers and packers.

The CanadaGAP™ certification program offers a set of templates for producers to follow in order to document food safety procedures on the farm. CanadaGAP™ is a “made-in-Canada” program that has been reviewed by government for technical soundness. It is the first Canadian food safety program to achieve international recognition by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

In addition, the CHC has been proactive in the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI), a U.S.-led project which maximizes the effectiveness of current produce traceback procedures, while developing a standardized industry approach to enhance the speed and efficiency of traceability systems for the future. This means that in the event of a food safety outbreak, the affected product can immediately be identified, right down to the very field it was harvested from.

## **Opportunity**

Fresh fruit and vegetable growers and packers in Canada have made food safety a priority but with that comes increasing operational costs. Implementing and maintaining an on-farm food safety program can be expensive for producers. However, they must meet the requirements of a growing number of buyers who expect farms to be certified under a food safety program.

These food safety programs not only meet the demands of consumers but are also required to compete in the global marketplace. Costs associated to these programs should be shared accordingly.

## **Action**

Continued federal funding will be critical to implement and maintain on-farm food safety certification systems. Ongoing support for the CanadaGAP™ program will ensure Canada continues to be a world leader in food safety. Commitment from the federal government in terms of program recognition and financial support will enable CHC to sustain the ongoing work of maintaining and delivering the program to industry.

Branding and ‘Buy Canadian’ programs in which food safety is a component will also be of benefit to producers in helping to drive customer demand and recognition of products produced under national on-farm food safety standards.