



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments



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Statement on *E. coli* O157:H7 Investigation

September 27, 2012, Ottawa : The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) priority is maintaining the safety of the food supply. CFIA actions were and continue to be guided by science-based evidence and a commitment to protect public health. To this end, the CFIA has taken and is continuing to take comprehensive action to respond to the *E. coli* issue.

The Agency's response started on September 4, 2012 when it first detected *E. coli* O157:H7 in products produced from an Alberta facility supplied by XL Foods Inc. That same day, the CFIA was notified by the United States Department of Agriculture of a positive *E. coli* O157:H7 sample in beef trimmings from XL Foods Inc. The CFIA quickly verified that no affected product was in the marketplace and immediately launched an investigation of XL Foods Inc. to determine the source of the contamination.

This led to some products produced on August 24, 27, 28, 29 and September 5 being recalled to protect Canadian consumers.

While the CFIA's investigation did not identify one single factor that would lead to *E. coli* O157:H7 contamination, the combination of several deficiencies played a role. By themselves, each of these findings would not typically signal an immediate concern during the course of normal inspection activities.

The detection of *E. coli* in slaughter facilities is not uncommon, and plants are expected to have adequate measures in place to monitor higher than normal detection rates and modify control measures accordingly. This trend analysis was not always conducted consistently at the facility.

In addition, CFIA noted deviations from the company's documented *E. coli* O157:H7 control measures and sampling and testing procedures. The company was unable to demonstrate through its documentation that it was consistently and effectively implementing its agreed upon control program.

During this period, the CFIA enhanced its onsite inspection activities, including additional oversight of testing for *E. coli*.

The company took initial steps to ensure the safety of food being produced and at the time committed to additional steps to deal with all issues and prevent recurrence. However, based on information provided by XL Foods, Inc. on September 26, as well as through CFIA inspector oversight, the CFIA has determined that these deficiencies have not been completely corrected. To date, the company has not adequately implemented agreed upon corrective actions and has not presented acceptable plans to address longer-term issues.

Therefore, effective immediately, the CFIA has temporarily suspended the licence to operate Establishment 38 - XL Foods, Inc. All products currently at this plant are under CFIA detention and control. These products will only be released after being tested for *E. coli* O157:H7. The company has also expanded its voluntary recall of raw meat produced on August 24, 27, 28, 29 and September 5. The CFIA will continue to immediately alert consumers as additional products are identified. This will lead to a series of recall announcements over the next few days as implicated products are identified and traced.

XL Foods Inc. will not resume operations until they have demonstrated that they have fully implemented CFIA's required corrective actions.

CFIA actions will continue to be guided by science-based evidence and a commitment to protect consumers.

Additional Information

- [E. coli O157:H7 in Various Ground Beef Products](#)
- [XL Foods – List of Recalled Products](#)
- [E. coli O157:H7 Food Safety Facts](#)

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