

CHC AGM 2017 Resolution Submission Template



Resolution Title: Avoiding Unreasonable, Unscientific Food Safety Requirements by Canadian Retailers

Sponsor: BC Fruit Growers' Association

Suggested Committee Allocation: _____

Resolution text:

WHEREAS the public expects a safe food system with protection from food-borne illnesses; and

WHEREAS Canada's scientific approach to a national food safety system (CanadaGAP) ensures Canada's food supply is one of the safest in the world; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has reviewed the CanadaGAP programs, that can be and often are favourably benchmarked against other international food safety programs; and

WHEREAS there is a new trend to add retailer-specific food safety rules that are not based on science or reviewed by CFIA; and

WHEREAS the concentration of retailers in the marketplace is leading to unequal market power in which retailers can abuse their dominant market position and impose unreasonable requirements on growers and their packers; and

WHEREAS Great Britain and Australia have implemented a "Retailer Code of Practice" that could control the unreasonable imposition of retailer-specific requirements for food safety,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CHC urgently request that the federal Department of Justice and AAFC seek to have Canadian retailers recognize the CanadaGAP program (or a recognized equivalent) as the sole food safety program that is required in Canada; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CHC advocate for legislation to implement a broad-based retailer code of practice to avoid further abuse of the dominant market position of highly concentrated retailers.

Background information & rationale:

1. Costco and Walmart are introducing additional specific requirements that are not science and evidence-based.
2. Requirements can be costly (e.g. water testing for water that is supplied by monitored municipal systems).
3. Unreasonable retailer requirements are impossible for individual packers to refuse, due to the concentrated market power of consolidated retailers.
4. A novel solution in the UK and Australia is a “retailer code of practice” which can be voluntary or required, and which provides ethical practices and guidance for retailers.
5. The UK and Australia codes of practice may be viewed at

<https://www.accc.gov.au/business/industry-codes/food-and-grocery-code-of-conduct> and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groceries-supply-code-of-practice/groceries-supply-code-of-practice>),