

**First Session - Fortieth Legislature**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**Standing Committee**  
**on**  
**Public Accounts**

*Chairperson*  
*Mr. Larry Maguire*  
*Constituency of Arthur-Virden*

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**Fortieth Legislature**

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA  
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

**Tuesday, June 19, 2012**

**TIME – 2 p.m.**

**LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk)**

**ATTENDANCE – 11 QUORUM – 6**

*Members of the Committee present:*

*Hon. Messrs. Gerrard, Struthers*

*Mr. Allum, Ms. Braun, Messrs. Dewar, Helwer, Jha, Maguire, Pedersen, Mrs. Stefanson, Mr. Whitehead*

**APPEARING:**

*Mr. Ian Wishart, MLA for Portage la Prairie*

*Ms. Carol Bellringer, Auditor General*

**WITNESSES:**

*Hon. Ron Kostyshyn, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives*

*Mr. Barry Todd, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives*

*Hon. Theresa Oswald, Minister of Health*

*Mr. Milton Sussman, Deputy Minister of Health*

**MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:**

*Auditor General's Report—Annual Report to the Legislature, dated January 2012:*

*Chapter 4—Food Safety: Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and Department of Health*

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**Mr. Chairperson:** Good afternoon. Will the Standing Committee on Public Accounts please come to order.

And this meeting has been called to consider the Auditor General's Report—Annual Report to the Legislature, dated January 2012, Chapter 4—Food Safety: Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and the Department of Health.

And I just—before we go, I just wonder if there are any suggestions from the committee as to how long we should sit this afternoon, keeping in mind that we have another Public Accounts meeting at 6:30.

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Mr. Chair, my suggestion would be to go until 4 o'clock and review at 4 o'clock whether there's need to extend it.

**Mr. Chairperson:** It's been recommended that we sit 'til 4 o'clock and review it at that time, if we are still sitting at that time. Is that the wish of the committee? *[Agreed]*

\* (14:10)

I want to welcome everyone here this afternoon, and we'll perhaps have some introductions. I know we have the Minister of Agriculture with us, the Minister of Health, and if they could make some introductions as well.

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** It's my privilege to introduce to you Anita Moore and Peter Parys from Public Health division of Manitoba Health and, of course, Deputy Minister Milton Sussman.

**Mr. Chairperson:** And—thank you.

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** I'd like to introduce, and I'm sure they're no strangers to the body here today, is Deputy Minister Barry Todd and Dr. Wayne Lees, who's the chief veterinarian officer for the Province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I thank you for that, for those introductions as well.

And, Madam Auditor General, do you have any introductions that I could have you make before I ask you for your opening statement?

**Ms. Carol Bellringer (Auditor General):** With me today are Sandra Cohen, who is the assistant auditor general of Value-for-Money Audit Services, and Phil Torchia, who's an audit principal in Value-for-Money Audit Services, who's—who were responsible for this audit.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for those introductions, and I would proceed with asking you to make any opening statement you may have.

**Ms. Bellringer:** The audit of food safety, we looked at the Province's regulations of food produced, processed, stored and sold in Manitoba by establishments that are not otherwise regulated by a municipality or the federal government.

The provincial responsibility's divided between the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, MAFRI and the Department of Health. In general, MAFRI is responsible for the safety of food before it is available to consumers while Health is responsible once it's directly available to consumers.

We had three objectives in conducting this audit: first, to examine processes for food safety, strategic planning and performance management; second, to assess systems and practices for developing and enforcing food safety standards; and, third, to look at processes for providing food safety education and promoting food safety programs.

When looking at strategic planning and performance measurement we found that the province's strategic planning for food safety was evolving. MAFRI and Health needed to work together to integrate their separate plans to more fully address risks and to ensure their plans reflected an appropriate mix of preventive and detective measures. Both departments had some performance targets, but needed to add indicators of effectiveness and to analyze results compared to targets. Both also needed to enhance publicly available performance information.

In looking at developing and enforcing food safety standards we found that the Manitoba's food safety standards were generally consistent with those in other jurisdictions except Manitoba did not have mandatory food handler training. Neither department used a risk-based approach to determine the priority and the frequency of inspections nor were they able to meet their informal goal of inspecting every food establishment annually. Inspectors did not always follow up food safety violations, including critical violations, to ensure they were corrected and enforcement actions were not always escalated for repeated serious violations. Annual permits were automatically renewed without first reviewing a food establishment's history and some initial permits were issued before all related requirements were met. The routine dairy inspections had been halted contrary to existing regulation in order to reassign resources to

inspecting food processing establishments. Food safety complaints were handled adequately in most cases.

All of the inspectors had related training and experience. A conflict of interest policy and related processes were in place, although the processes needed enhancing to ensure potential conflicts were assessed annually and dealt with appropriately. Both departments lacked formal policies and procedures to guide inspectors and ensure consistent work and neither conducted quality assurance reviews of inspection files.

Last, in looking at providing food safety education and promotion of food safety programs, we found that both departments provided food establishments and consumers with a variety of educational material on food safety, but the information for food establishments could be better linked to trends in the critical food safety violations found during inspections. As well, the focused on consumer food safety awareness could be increased and better integrated between the two departments. MAFRI promoted the use of preventive food safety programs to food processors, but Health did not similarly provide information on food safety programs to retail and food service establishments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for that opening statement, and I would ask the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives if he has—if he wishes to make an opening statement.

**Mr. Barry Todd (Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

It goes without saying that food safety and good nutrition play an important role in protecting public health. Food safety is a multijurisdictional, multistakeholder responsibility that encompasses federal, provincial and municipal governments. These agencies in health and agriculture work with industry groups and other stakeholders to ensure the safety and security of the food supply.

In Manitoba, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and Manitoba Health work collaboratively along the food chain continuum to oversee and regulate food safety. MAFRI supports on-farm food safety programs and food safety inspection programs in provincially registered processing plants and distribution centres. Our role is

from the farm to what we describe as the backdoor of retail. Manitoba Health is responsible for food safety inspections in grocery stores and restaurants where there's a retail or consumer interface with the food system. MAFRI and Manitoba Health have worked together over the last half dozen years to streamline and rationalize the food safety system in the province. As MAFRI assumes further inspection responsibilities for provincial abattoirs from CFIA, and as Manitoba Health assumes inspection within the city of Winnipeg, these processes will be further enhanced.

Just to provide a bit of context, on average, food establishments outside of the federal inspection system provide about 70 per cent of the food consumed by Canadians. The exception is meat and dairy products, most of which come from federally registered establishments. Manitoba's 53 federally registered commercial food plants include three dairy, two egg, seven vegetable, 21 meat, one honey processor and 10 food warehouses. In comparison, MAFRI inspects and permits approximately 500 food processing establishments, which include 85 meat processors, 28 abattoirs, 54 bakeries and 61 bottling plants.

Since 2009 MAFRI has refined its focus to promote food safety and improve regulatory delivery. Under the Growing Forward federal-provincial programming, food safety staff work closely with the processing industry to advance training and the adoption of written food safety programs. Our former dairy inspectors have been trained to perform food safety inspections, and two new positions were added in the recent budget, bringing us up to six inspection staff.

A Food Safety Act has been enacted and will be proclaimed once regulations are finalized in the near future, and as I've mentioned earlier, on January 1st, 2014, MAFRI will be assuming responsibility for the inspection of the 28 provincial abattoirs who are currently inspected under contract by CFIA staff. An agreement with CFIA is being negotiated to ensure that there will be a smooth and effective transition.

MAFRI is working very closely with Manitoba Health to ensure the inspection system is seamless, joint training of inspectors has taken place, joint policies have been developed and a joint inspection database is operational. When food safety inspections take place, both departments collaborate. As we move to incorporate principles of risk-managed and outcome-based inspection, each

department recognizes they are contributing to a common strategic goal.

In January of 2012, the report that we're considering today was released, containing 23 recommendations for improving provincial food safety inspection system, and MAFRI and Manitoba Health have been working collaboratively to address all of the joint recommendations. Three of the four recommendations that were specifically directed to MAFRI have been completed; the fourth is in process of being completed. And I'd like to just very briefly touch on those.

Strategic planning and performance measures: Manitoba Health and MAFRI established a food safety audit oversight committee. Subcommittees with members from the two departments are working closely to address all joint recommendations. An interdepartmental co-ordinator was contracted to work with the departments in developing action plans. A draft joint strategic plan has been completed, and we've been focusing on a holistic, one-world-one-health framework with other departments to ensure identified issues and audit recommendations are proactively acted upon.

\*(14:20)

In developing and enforcing standards, the secondary of recommendations, MAFRI is modernizing the food processing plant inspection system and developing comprehensive regulations under The Food Safety Act, which will be completed over the course of approximately the next year. These regulations include a general food safety regulation for all food processing plants, a meat inspection regulation, and a new dairy regulation. Joint policies and procedures have been developed by the two departments to ensure operational consistency and provide guidance to field-level inspector actions.

In the third area of providing food safety education, in 2009, the Farmers' Markets Association of Manitoba, Manitoba Health and MAFRI released the farmers' market guidelines and introduced the market safe farm market food handlers' course to assist vendors in meeting regulatory requirements. And MAFRI has completed a scan of food safety information available to producers, processors, and consumers to identify gaps and areas of duplication in food safety education. MAFRI staff have delivered, again, in our partnership with the federal government under our Growing Forward arrangements, food safety training to food processors

and industry stakeholders, with over 2,000 people now trained from 134 facilities. In promotion of food safety programs, MAFRI has promoted preventative food safety programs to food processors through the programming that I've identified earlier under Growing Forward, and appropriate resource materials have been developed to assist processors with basic food safety and providing information and templates. A second component of Growing Forward has provided direct financial support for processors to implement preventative food safety programs. Over 11 per cent of food processors have taken advantage of this funding.

And just to close off with some inspection statistics, in the 2011-12 fiscal year, MAFRI conducted 260 food processing plant inspections. Of these, 201 were for routine inspections, 44 were reinspections, four were complaint-initiated inspections, and 11 were inspections by request. MAFRI has issued two written warnings, three offence notices, and closed one food processing plant for food safety violations as a result of those inspection activities. And while, in 2009, inspection resources focused on food processing plants, and, as a result, MAFRI's dairy farm inspection program was limited to just high-risk premises. Dairy farm inspection results captured in the Hedgehog database, which is the common database that our two departments utilize to ensure consistency in the data and to ensure seamless recording of information, the results from that database, since 2008, indicate the department conducted 132 dairy farm inspections in 2011-12. Of these, 115 were routine inspections, 14 were reinspections, two were initiated by complaint, and one was an inspection upon request. MAFRI issued two warnings for operating substandard dairy farms and classed two farms as substandard for sanitary reasons.

In closing, the results of the audit have been very useful for MAFRI as its programming has evolved. The food safety area is a relatively new area of activity in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, and at the time of the audit, we were really just embarking on a number of the processes and procedures that needed to be put in place. And so, the advice from the audit report has been very helpful in advancing our work on outcome-based inspection processes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you for your report, Mr. Todd.

And I would also ask, then, if the Deputy Minister of Health would wish to make an opening statement as well.

**Mr. Milton Sussman (Deputy Minister of Health):** The results of this audit will assist Manitoba Health and MAFRI to further build and formalize and enhance our existing processes and interrelationships to improve Manitoba's food safety program. As the deputy mentioned, Manitoba Health and MAFRI are actively collaborating in developing action plans to address all 23 of the audit's recommendations, and, again, as the deputy mentioned, a co-ordinator was contracted in '11-12 to work with the two departments and develop the action plan to address the audit recommendations. We have a joint strategic plan. We also have an audit work plan that's been developed to support that strategic plan, and it's been updated and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Of the 23 recommendations 13 recommendations have been completed and substantial progress has been made on the remaining 10.

In addition, Manitoba Health has made the following service improvements to improve overall food safety in Manitoba and to support the audit recommendations: Since the public health inspection program was transferred to Manitoba Health in 2007 from the Department of Conservation, six additional public health inspectors have been added to this program. That represents a 24 per cent staffing increase. Furthermore, Manitoba Health has submitted a request through the 200-2012-2013 Estimates process to incrementally increase the number of public health inspectors over a four-year period. Four additional public health inspector positions have recently been authorized.

Among other improvements, staffing increases will assist in building a more robust risk-based food inspection system, better follow-up on routine inspections, and a quicker complaint response.

The seamless transfer of the public health inspection program from the City to the Province is now complete. The service realignment has removed one more layer of shared responsibility and will ensure that there's better consistency of service to Manitobans and food service operators, and eliminate some of the jurisdictional confusion that may have been taking place. Staff are now located in decentralized offices throughout the city and, as a result of that realignment, now Manitoba is response—Manitoba Health is responsible for routine inspections of 6,500 food service establishments,

2,000 retail food stores, 400 temporary food establishments and over 350 mobile food establishments. We issue over 6,200 food handler training certificates annually, and the 49 public health inspectors are responsible for food safety, recreational, water, housing, daycares, personal care homes, recreational camps, health hazard assessments, complaint response and other public health inspection activities throughout rural and urban Manitoba.

A risk-based inspection framework to determine the establishment of frequency of inspections has been developed and agreed on with MAFRI. The framework is based on the work of the federal-provincial-territorial Food Safety Subcommittee and considers factors such as types of foods, food preparations and processing and 'enquiment' to determine the inspection priority and frequency.

Manitoba Health is currently using a risk-based system in the city of Winnipeg with that occurred with the transfer to this to the Province. The goal is to have a comprehensive model at the end of the period for the entire province for over the next five years. The establishment of after-hours public health information or public health inspector emergency response program to respond to restaurant fires, floods and disruption of utilities, communicable disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies that may take place outside of regular working hours. To enhance publicly available information, Manitoba Health has successfully transferred the City of Winnipeg's Diner's Digest website to the win-Manitoba Health website. Furthermore, the type of information provided on this website has been expanded. The Health Protection Report provides Manitobans with information on those food service establishments throughout the entire province that have been closed or convicted for food safety infractions.

The website also provides the same type of information for recreational water facilities and body modification establishments. MAFRI will use the same database to post non-compliance for food processing establishments. Manitoba Health and MAFRI are current-are presently exploring the possibility of having an-additional performance information included in their departmental annual reports, such as the number of inspections that have been completed, the number of food service complaints, the percentage of establishments complying with standards. Best practices from other

Canadian jurisdictions on enhancing public information are also being explored.

\* (14:30)

The expansion of food safety education to the food industry through joint food safety initiatives is also well under way. A unique food safety training session was-has already been jointly delivered by Manitoba-by MAFRI and Manitoba Health at Red River community College on May 7th and 8th to Folklorama volunteers, and that was-there were 82 registered participants and 43 pavilions participated. Each pavilion was asked to register their food operator and volunteer co-ordinator.

The sessions had a hands-on format of training to alleviate concerns with language barriers. The training was developed by MAFRI and Manitoba Health employees who saw a need to proactively ensure that the consumers' health is protected as they enjoy one of Manitoba's great cultural events. The plan is to expand this hands-on teaching style to other temporary food events across the province.

To ensure consistent food safety standards with other Canadian jurisdictions, Manitoba Health participates on a number of FPT food safety committees, including the FPT retail food services establishment subcommittee. Manitoba Health is directly involved with reviewing the FPT model food code. And Manitoba Health intends to review the food and food handling establishment regulation this fall, and updated food-the model food code will serve as the basis for that review. Manitoba Health also participates on an FPT committee that is reviewing food handler training requirements and plans to integrate this standard once the review is complete.

MAFRI obtained funding in 2008 to develop a provincial-wide electronic food inspection database. Manitoba Health and MAFRI are jointly utilizing the Hedgehog Inspection System throughout the entire province. This is an inspection system and database that facilitates the complete integration and access of inspection data and uniformity of inspection approaches between the two departments. And one-it facilitates better overall data management, joint planning, and operational consistency. Thirteen policies and procedures have been developed to ensure operational consistency and better guide to field-to better guide field level inspector actions. Examples of protocols and policies developed to date include inspection documentation, timing of

inspections, level of enforcement and conflict of interest.

A planning subcommittee has been established to examine the food safety surveillance. It's focusing on salmonella as a model and looking at available information gaps, information sharing and enhancements to the surveillance system. This—the system will be built generically so that it can be used for tracking other enteric illness diseases, and it will form the basis of an operational template to apply to other diseases and conditions.

Manitoba Health and MAFRI will continue to work towards meeting and exceeding all of the audit's recommendations. Food safety, as everyone is aware, is critical to protecting the health of Manitobans and the economic well-being of the food system. As food safety risks change and evolve, Manitoba will continue to proactively respond to these risks and continually strive to improve overall food safety in Manitoba. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Mr. Sussman, for those opening—for your opening comments.

And before we get into questions, I just have my usual small announcement that I'd like to make. And that is that our questions today, as agreed by the committee, are to be of an administrative nature to the deputies, not policy questions to the minister. Those can be used in another forum.

However, the ministers, if they so wish to answer a question that they feel may need some remarks of that nature, we would welcome those and consider them at that time. So the floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** I have some questions related to your informal goal of annual inspections. As was pointed out by the auditor, the MAFRI have achieved 35 per cent of their target health, 39 per cent of your target. Obviously, it was proven to be rather an ambitious goal.

My question to the deputy minister is: Are you still committed to view—inspecting these establishments at least once a year?

**Mr. Todd:** Yes, we're certainly committed to inspecting establishments at least once a year. In MAFRI's case, we've estimated that each inspector can handle approximately 100 establishments a year. In order to achieve that, we've increased our inspectors from the previous four to six, which should give us the necessary capacity. This number

will be evaluated as we go forward to make sure we have the right level of resourcing, because as we move to risk-based inspections, we'll have to determine whether that increases the workload further and adjust appropriately at that time.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Yes, follow-up, Mr. Dewar?

**Mr. Dewar:** So the—as I mentioned earlier, the target's—it was an informal goal, informal target—not quite achieved. So, in your opinion, what impact has this had upon public safety?

**Mr. Todd:** In the case of the establishments that MAFRI is responsible for inspecting, the public safety has been well protected by the system in place to date. And so although it hasn't been a formal risk-based system, our efforts have focused on the riskier enterprises, such as meat abattoirs and meat—or meat processing.

As we encompass the broader range of enterprises, some which were considered relatively low risk, such as grain handling enterprises and so on, we may not see a significant reduction in impact on food safety. They're a lower risk establishment.

But I do believe that it prevents—it, first of all, it improves the confidence of the general public to know that all of our enterprises are being inspected and it ensures that we will proactively address issues that are seen in the inspection reports rather than being reactive when an issue is—actually occurs. So we believe it will strengthen the overall food safety system by expanding the range of inspections that we're doing.

**Mr. Dewar:** I'd be interested in hearing what Deputy Minister Sussman had to say about these questions.

**Mr. Sussman:** I would agree with Barry's assessment. I think it was an ambitious target for Manitoba Health. I think we—I think we have been able to increase resources. I think we've recognized that—I think we need additional resources to meet that target and we have a phased-in approach to address that over the next several years.

And I think with the transfer of the health inspectors from the City of Winnipeg, we took an approach where we weren't going to reinvent processes. They had been using a risk-based system. We've adopted that for the city of Winnipeg. I think there always was an informal system, but there wasn't the kind of rigour and diligence that I think that the audit pointed out. I think we recognize that that's an important thing to put in place, though



certainly if there were concerns, we went to those facilities and we went back if there were concerns that it wasn't going to be followed up on.

So I don't think Manitobans were at heightened risk, but I think what this does identify is the need to improve and a path towards doing it.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Rather unusual circumstance where we have two deputy ministers and rather lengthy opening statements which covered a lot of ground, so if some of the questions we ask have already been covered, I just couldn't scribble fast enough to keep up to you.

\* (14:40)

So with that, just for—on point of clarification, I ask Mr. Sussman, then, does the Health Department—has it taken over entirely the City of Winnipeg's inspection services?

**Mr. Sussman:** Yes.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So is there overlap, then, of—does MAFRI do any of the food processing in the city of Winnipeg, or does Health do—what is the, sort of, the boundaries, and where is the overlap in terms of MAFRI and Health Department within the—and does it include the entire city of Winnipeg, then?

**Mr. Sussman:** There is a process that's been developed between the two departments that actually determines whether this is a Manitoba Health inspection or a MAFRI inspection. So that determination is made at the beginning, and the appropriate inspector would go out.

**Mr. Pedersen:** How would a—either a food processor or a food retailer or a restaurant, commercial operation—how would they know who is responsible, which inspector they are to contact, or who are they dealing with on an ongoing basis?

**Mr. Sussman:** Typically, it would be the other way around. Manitoba Health—the inspectors would make the initial contact with the facility and establish the working relationship and would establish the points of contact rather than—and so those would be established at the onset, and so the establishment would know their point of contact.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, I'm just trying to figure out the process, then. How would—is this the City—you need a business licence. Is that who would then contact the owner, or the owner would be told through the City of Winnipeg—through the business licence—who

they would be—have to get their safety certificate from.

**Mr. Sussman:** So, the process would be that an establishment would apply for a licence through the City of Winnipeg, and as that licence is being issued, the City would then contact either one of—either MAFRI or Manitoba Health for the appropriate inspections.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So, at—then—to Mr. Todd, then, what happens in rural Manitoba? And the instance I have, in particular, is a food processor who also does food retailing, and is—what is the process for that particular establishment? How do they know who to apply to for the—for a—I'm calling it a safety licence, or whatever you want to call it, but what is the process there?

**Mr. Todd:** In cases where the enterprise is a mixture of processing and retail, as you've described, they could contact either MAFRI or Health, and we would deal with their situation. But in the database, that enterprise is assigned to one department, and they'll be provided that contact information for their go-forward process. So, there's no wrong door for them to get in touch with the food inspection service, and it's very clear in the database which department is responsible for the ongoing inspection.

And that'll be based a little bit on how large the two components are in that operation. So if it's predominantly processing, it's likely to be a MAFRI—assigned to MAFRI. If it's primarily retail with a bit of processing, odds are Manitoba Health would take responsibility.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And these public health inspectors then that would be doing it, whether it be MAFRI, whether it be Health, depending on the size and scope of the operation, they're both qualified to do the same work then?

**Mr. Sussman:** Yes, they're both qualified and one inspector or either from MAFRI or Manitoba Health would do the entire inspection. So they, I think the Hedgehog database has all of the requirements so, and both departments are well aware of all of those. So they would just—the inspector that was assigned that particular establishment would take responsibility for doing the entire inspection.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And is that Hedgehog system then, is it up and working? I understand it's up and working, but is one of the Auditor General's recommendations was that there was not always all the pertinent information being entered into that system. Is—has

that shortfall, if I may call it that, been rectified now within the system?

**Mr. Todd:** Yes, the system's been set up so that the file cannot be closed unless all the pertinent information is entered into the database. So that inspection can't be closed as completed. So that area has been rectified.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So, and again, I hope I'm not too repetitious, but just to make sure, the public health inspectors, then, they are all certified to the same level, whether they be MAFRI staff or whether they be Health Department staff?

**Mr. Sussman:** So Public Health inspectors are certified public health inspectors. But—so they would do the necessary inspections that they require. But the areas of overlap are such that both types of inspectors are qualified to do those areas where there might be overlap in between the two departments.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So are there are instances where both Health inspectors and MAFRI inspection staff are on the same premises?

**Mr. Sussman:** No.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Okay. Then I'm going to go on to The Food Safety Act and recognizing the Auditor General's report is—was basically calendar year 2009 operations, and we're already in 2012, you've mentioned in your remarks that The Food Safety Act is still under review and has not been proclaimed yet. What are the—what still has to be completed in order to get The Food Safety Act proclaimed?

**Mr. Todd:** The process is that we will have to have all of the regulations developed for proclamation of the act. We have existing regulations. When the new act comes into force, it will come into force with new, modernized regulations. And it's that regulation development that requires some additional time before we'll be in a position to do the proclamation.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Todd—or pardon me, Mr. Pedersen.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It—so what—there was a long list of regulations that need to be done, because there was some acts that needed to be changed: The Dairy Act, the livestock diversification act, The Livestock and Livestock Products Act. Have those—those particular regulations still need to be written?

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Todd:** There's three regulations that are under development: the general food safety regulation, which will apply to all of the processing plants; the meat inspection regulation; and the dairy regulation. Those three regulations, as they're developed, as you've suggested, may require some amendments or changes to other acts, but it's—we're not at the point where we've identified all of the changes required to other acts yet. That'll be the second step after the regulation is drafted.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And is the meat inspection act—or regulation, I should say—has it—is it under substantial change now because CFIA and the Province are in the process of changing inspection—MAFRI will become responsible for inspection in provincial plans where CFIA was before? Is this causing you some delay there?

**Mr. Todd:** The change to provincial inspection of the abattoirs is one of the reasons why the meat regulation needs to be modernized. There is regulatory capacity in the province that this work could be done under, but at the present time it's being done through a federal-provincial agreement with CFIA carrying out the work, as you'd mentioned. So that is one of the pieces that needs to be put into place as we make the transition.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So what are the—who are you consulting with in terms of doing these regulations? Obviously, you're dealing with the, in terms of meat inspection, with the provincial abattoirs. And you mentioned general food safety, the dairy industry, who are you consulting with and what is the process of those consultations?

**Mr. Todd:** We've been in consultation with the abattoirs with respect to the meat regulation, with the dairy farmers of Manitoba with respect to the dairy regulation and with the Manitoba Food Processors Association primarily with respect to the broader range of facilities. As we move forward on the continued development of these, those consultations will continue. There isn't a prescribed process at this point in time in terms of timing for the consultations with those groups, but those are the groups that we've had an ongoing discussion with on these three regs.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And I think it was Mr. Sussman mentioned that MAFRI is actually paying the entire cost of the Hedgehog system which—the computer system is one thing, but it's the maintenance, the inputting the data. Is MAFRI responsible for all of the costs of inputting data, or what is the breakdown

of costs in terms of—you can do all these inspections and that's great, but there is a cost to inputting this information?

**Mr. Todd:** MAFRI was responsible for the initial costs of developing and implementing the database, but the ongoing operating costs are shared by the two departments.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And you mentioned that you have an—you've increased your—and I'm talking about MAFRI right now—have increased your food safety inspectors to six, and where are those six located? And I may as well ask right now, is there any vacancies?

**Mr. Todd:** Currently, as I mentioned, we added two positions this year. Those have not—one of those is filled, so we have five positions of the six available: two as staff at the present time, two are based in Brandon, three are in Winnipeg, and we're evaluating the location for the sixth individual.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So earlier there was—in December 2010, and, again, I guess it relates back in terms of CFIA and provincial meat inspection, there was the goal of improving interprovincial trade in meat. Are any of the Manitoba meat processors currently participating in this, and is this part of the negotiations with CFIA in order to have uniform meat inspection?

**Mr. Todd:** The pilot project looking at potential for interprovincial movement of meat is a separate agreement from the CFIA inspection of provincial abattoirs. So that project, that pilot project, is moving forward in parallel. We have one meat processor involved in that pilot, which I believe involves about 13 plants across the country.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Are any of those plants located in Manitoba?

**Mr. Todd:** One of the—one of those plants is based here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Pedersen:** If I can ask Mr. Sussman, also, I was asking about terms of how many—I was asking—MAFRI about numbers of inspectors, how many public health inspectors does the Health Department have in the city of Winnipeg right now?

**Mr. Sussman:** We—there are 49 public health inspectors in the province; approximately 27 are in the city of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Is there any vacancies? Are they all filled right now?

**Mr. Sussman:** All of the city positions are filled. There is a couple of vacancies outside of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And where would these vacancies be located?

**Mr. Sussman:** One is in Steinbach and one is in Brandon.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you. And in the Auditor General's report—my loose-leaf pages, the—it's about following up on violations. And one of the recommendations, recommendation 13, we recommend that MAFRI and Health ensure all violations are promptly followed up and corrected with a focus on critical violations. Now, you say you have your Hedgehog system up and running, which was another one of the recommendations from the Auditor General, so what is the process now? How have you improved this since the Auditor General's report?

**Mr. Sussman:** We have a policy in place that indicates to our inspectors of following up on violations and any critical violations, it gives a schedule of when they would have to follow up on those critical violations.

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Pedersen:** So, and I would assume, then, through the training of your health—food safety inspectors and MAFRI, there is some sort of scale to determine which is critical and which is minor. And is there—how are these treated? Obviously, critical needs to be treated urgently and minor—is there a sliding scale, or what do you do? Is this part of the training that inspectors have in order to determine a follow-up, the time frame for the follow-up, and whether, indeed, it is—how soon it's corrected?

**Mr. Sussman:** In the policies, there are protocols that speak to how—what the criteria are for determining if something is critical and what the follow-up procedures would be, based on it being deemed a critical occurrence.

In relation to the training, public health inspectors have the equivalent of four years post-secondary education, and a major focus of that is on food safety.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And I guess everyone's definition of critical would certainly vary, especially between owners and the inspectors. And is there any sort of appeal mechanism if—and we're getting into personalities; sometimes the food inspector won't necessarily be on the same wavelength as the owner

of an establishment. What is there any sort of appeal, or is this as the food inspection dictates, or what is the protocol there?

**Mr. Sussman:** I think the process—there isn't a formal appeal process per se. There is an escalation process. So if there is a concern that, as you described, a personality issue or a dispute, all of the establishments are really invited to, in the case of Manitoba Health, to escalate it to a supervisor, and if that's not satisfactory, to a manager and potentially to the director. And in MAFRI's case, I'm told that it would be escalated to a manager.

**Mr. Pedersen:** One of the recommendations from the Auditor General was that we recommend MAFRI and Health enhance inspector independence by requiring inspectors to submit signed conflict-of-interest declaration forms annually. Is this in place now with both MAFRI and Health Department inspections?

**Mr. Sussman:** Both MAFRI and Manitoba Health use the standard civil service policy, and I—as I understand, both departments have protocols to ensure that they're followed up annually.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Mr. Ian. Mr. Wishart.

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** I answer to a lot of things.

Questions regarding HACCP. Do all of our food processors currently have an up-to-date HACCP process in place in the province?

**Mr. Todd:** No, not all processors at the present time have HACCP plans in place. We're certainly—that's one of our program objectives is to move all of our processors to having a HACCP or a good manufacturing practices program in place in their facilities.

**Mr. Wishart:** So, if they don't all have it in place, do they all have some form of tracking to make sure if there is a food-borne illness outbreak that we have a method in place to do that?

**Mr. Todd:** The basic level for food safety is ensuring that we have robust inspection processes in place.

In—with respect to the traceability aspect, that certainly is the goal of moving and assisting processors to put in place HACCP or HACCP-like programs, but, at this point in time, not all facilities have that and, as such, not all would be able to implement a traceability for a callback.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I recognize it's the ultimate goal to move towards that, but with today's modern food standards, how long do you think it will take our remaining processors to move in that direction? And what programs do you have to encourage them to do it?

**Mr. Todd:** With respect to the second part of the question, in terms of what programs are available, there is an incentive program available through our food safety program for processors to receive support for developing and implementing HACCP plans.

The other aspect that relates to traceability, though, is that in many cases, the traceability is an aspect of their ability to conduct business with the folks that are purchasing their products. So many of the distributors and others are requiring that those plants have traceability implemented, and one of the areas that we discuss with plants is ensuring that we're not imposing multiple systems on them.

I realize that doesn't necessarily give a hundred per cent traceability on the whole food system, but we have about 11 per cent of the facilities that have gone through our HACCP programming, and I don't have an estimate on how many others would be conducting those types of programs as required by the industry that they sell to.

**Mr. Wishart:** And I guess that number is the one that I was really concerned about. The 11 per cent seems to me—given the quality of most of the food processors and the fact that they—many of them are very long-standing—seems to be quite a low number.

What increased uptake have we had through any programs that have been offered? And do we need to spend more focus in that particular area?

**Mr. Todd:** I think on this continuum, there's really three levels of activity that plants are looking at. The first level is the basic food safety programming, and all of these plants are carrying that out. A number of them have good manufacturing practice processes in place, which is sort of the mid-level.

\* (15:10)

And the HACCP standard is the much higher level standard, and we have the smaller number that I mentioned that have reached that level. It is a significant expense and that's why governments have assisted these facilities in implementing these plans. Your question about, do we need to continue that work? We absolutely do. Five years ago when Growing Forward first initiated this program, we had

very few individuals that had HACCP plans in place, and so there has been significant progress made over that period of time, but much more work needs to be done in this area.

**Mr. Wishart:** When we initiated Growing Forward, it seems to me they had some targets in place for some of these programs. Do you recall what the HACCP level was in terms of targets, and have we achieved that?

**Mr. Todd:** You're right. There was an outcome target set, but I can't recall what it was.

**Mr. Wishart:** It was substantially higher than 11 per cent. You know, I can't give you the definitive number, but I remember at the time thinking we would be quite fortunate had we got anywhere near that goal.

And I think one of the problems is the grants for these types of program—really only \$20,000, and the process of going through HACCP for many, even a mid-size plant, vastly exceeds that. Do you feel that any follow-up programs would require substantially more funding to be effective?

**Mr. Todd:** The cost for implementing a HACCP program is in that 25 to 50 thousand dollar range. Our programming provides 90 per cent support to approximately \$30,000. There is a—certainly, HACCP is a market-driven process. Facilities are making decisions as to whether having a HACCP program in place will allow them to be in a better position with respect to customer sales, and they make business decisions based on that assessment for their individual enterprise.

**Mr. Wishart:** Just for clarity, did you say up to \$30,000? Processor grants for HACCP program were up to 30? Because the book here suggests it's only 20.

**Mr. Todd:** I think it's close to \$30,000, so it may be either 90 per cent of the \$30,000, which would be \$27,000, but in that neighbourhood. I think there's a base amount and they can add additional components on that brings the eligible amount higher.

**Mr. Wishart:** Okay, moving on from that, and numbers we have do not come to that, so we'll have to follow that one up later.

Training—you mentioned that you—and you have done substantial training both of your own staff to increase their ability to do processing and the food inspectors to do—be able to do a little crossover,

should the need be. Who is providing that training for your—both departments?

**Mr. Todd:** First of all, to clarify the HACCP amount of money, my staff tell me we were kind of on each side of that one and that it's actually \$25,000 that they're eligible for.

The—with respect to the training, our—the staff in our food safety group do the training of our inspectors for the most part. In addition, they participate in training that's arranged by the Manitoba Food Processors Association where it's relevant to the types of activities that they're carrying out.

**Mr. Wishart:** So you are working with food processors on training of the inspectors?

**Mr. Todd:** The Food Processors Association don't have a formal training program for inspectors, but where they're putting on courses that are clearly applicable to inspection activities, we would register our staff for those courses.

**Mr. Wishart:** So you do have a comprehensive training plan to make sure that all staff have had all aspects to be able to be equipped to do the crossover that is potentially there?

**Mr. Todd:** In the area of food safety, yes.

**Mr. Wishart:** In the area of food handlers, and you made reference to the special case that had been done for the summer festival in the city here—*[interjection]* Folklorama, thank you—special case that had been done for training on that, and that's very good because there was an incident in food safety there last year and we certainly don't want any repetition. But the demand for training on food handling is year-round and it does certainly go through substantial increases in the summer months. Do you have other courses in place to deal with periodic changeover that occurs in this area?

**Mr. Sussman:** With the city of Winnipeg we provide—we do 6,200 food handler licences and associated training. With—in Winnipeg there's mandatory food handler training. Outside of Winnipeg there's a voluntary program that we provide the training for and we also put on other small courses to provide training year-round.

**Mr. Wishart:** So the frequency of these would be monthly or?

**Mr. Sussman:** In the city of Winnipeg, there's a scheduled round of training that's posted and people

are made aware of. Outside of Winnipeg, the food inspector or the public health inspectors work with the regional health authorities to establish the training programs and so it would occur based on work with the regional health authorities.

**Mr. Wishart:** One of the ideas that had been put forward by the Auditor General was to follow up on BC's example of having online training facilities available. Has any work been done in that area?

**Mr. Sussman:** There's been some initial analysis of that, and we are looking at the BC model and trying to look at how we could roll that out in Manitoba. There is also work on—because it's mandatory in the city of Winnipeg we are looking at the applicability of mandatory kinds of requirements outside of Winnipeg as well.

\* (15:20)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** First of all, the 11 per cent which have been trained on or have met HACCP requirements, just to clarify, is that—has that been fully implemented in the 11 per cent, or are they just some stage of being implemented?

**Mr. Todd:** They're in process, so not all 11 per cent are fully implemented yet.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Can you tell us what per cent is actually fully implemented?

**Mr. Todd:** The—I don't have a specific percentage for you. I would estimate that it is relatively low, because it is a long process to both do the design work and then to implement all of the steps that are required by the HACCP plan. I wouldn't want to hazard a guess, but it's a relatively low percentage that would be fully operationalized HACCP plans in place.

**Mr. Gerrard:** So less than 5 per cent, is that what you're indicating?

**Mr. Todd:** I—I'm hesitant to guess at a figure. I don't know whether it's 5 per cent plus or minus, so I'd rather not hazard a guess on that.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes. Now, there are approximately 11 million cases of 'foon'-borne illness annually in Canada, which would mean about 300,000 per year in Manitoba. And, of that, what's being reported is about 340. So, maybe, you know, one in a thousand of the illnesses is either being reported or is severe enough to be reported. Is there any indication that the number of—total number of food-borne illnesses is going up, going down, staying the same?

**Mr. Todd:** We don't have an indication of whether it's going up. I think there is better reporting. I think the—it's important to know that the 11 million is really based on a projection; it's not based on actual reporting of 11 million cases. It's—so it's an extrapolation of a study.

We do think there is better reporting now, but—so I think it is easier for us to understand when there is one and try and address it. But I don't have the data the—we can check and see if it is available.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes. I presume one of the goals of the food safety program would be to have decreased food-borne illness and, that being the case, I would presume that there would be some way of assessing, in a—some sort standardized fashion, whether the number is going up or down or remaining the same. So it—I'm just trying to understand your process of trying to, you know, see what your goal is and how you're achieving it.

**Mr. Sussman:** We do have data on the numbers that are reported in Manitoba and—but I don't think it's a long enough trend to really base any assumptions that it's going up or going down. I think the increased surveillance and the better reporting does allow jurisdictions across the country to better respond to them and to try and get a better understanding of what the nature of the illness is, but our data shows that in 2010, there were 255 that were acquired in Manitoba and 63 that were acquired outside of Manitoba.

In 2011, that dropped to 179 in Manitoba and 55 outside of Manitoba, and to date in 2012 to May 31, there were 20 that were acquired in Manitoba and 14 outside. But again, I think it's too short of a timeframe to be able to draw any real conclusions. So I would not want to speculate that it's going down in any way. I think we need to watch this over a longer period.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, one of the things on page 143—sorry, 162, there's some statistics there related to the number of inspections and inspection targets. It's a little bit, you know, disturbing that for Dauphin there was only six of 110 inspections completed. Can you provide an explanation for what happened?

**Mr. Todd:** I think that at the time the audit was done, we were in transition into our food inspection programming in MAFRI, and I believe that as we were in that transition period, we did not have the extent of inspections that we were—that we hoped to achieve as we fully implement our inspection

processes. So, yes, that's not a satisfactory number in our view, but it also doesn't reflect the ongoing performance outcomes that we're looking for in the department. The staffing situation in terms of individuals' situations, availability of inspector in that area also had some impact at that time.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, I note that when you compare the number of health inspections with, I think, what were listed in 2010 as 24 health inspectors and that they were able to do 2,691 inspections, say, about 100 inspections per inspector, and for MAFRI, there were four inspectors able to do 176 inspections, which is about 50 inspections per inspector. You know, that would essentially work out to be about, for Health, one inspection completed in about two working days, and for MAFRI, about one inspection in about four working days. Can you just take us through a little bit of an understanding why it's four working days to complete an inspection?

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Todd:** In terms of the differences between the work process for the two groups that you've mentioned, the MAFRI inspectors, by nature of the work, often have a significant amount of travel time to the plants that they're dealing with. They're also dealing with processing plants which can be significantly more complex than the inspection at, for example, a restaurant. So you have a combination of both distance factors and complexity of inspection that contributes to what would be a longer inspection time for a typical MAFRI inspection.

Having said that, the figures that you've quoted are not where we intend to be with respect to our amount of time required for an inspection. Our goal is to have each inspector able to handle 100 to 150 inspections in the component that MAFRI's responsible for.

**Mr. Gerrard:** From a health perspective, one of the things that has come up this last year, I think, that there was mention of inspection related to lakes. Were there any concerns related to the flood last year, which related to health inspections at all?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Just before the minister answers, I'll remind the committee that we're dealing with this report. And it is related to food safety, that's for sure, but—oh, Mr. Sussman.

**Mr. Sussman:** From what I understand, there were very few food establishments that were affected by the flood. Though, we do have protocols that are in place if there is a food establishment that is affected

by a flood to go in and really determine what remediation would need to be put in place to bring it back to proper standards.

**Mr. Gerrard:** A different way of looking at the food-borne illnesses, and the incidents and the problems of, you know, whether—how well we're doing, would be to look at some of the common causes of 'foon'-borne illnesses: salmonella, you know, might be giardia, cryptococcus, concerning enteropathogenic E. coli and so on. Is it—do you—is there a comparison made in terms of what the—you know, the numbers of such reportable illnesses might be in Manitoba and what's happening in terms of food inspections and food-borne illnesses?

**Mr. Sussman:** There is certain types of food-handling processes that certainly lend themselves, and we have targeted those in inspections, to certain types of food-borne illnesses, and we deem those as critical and follow up. As I mentioned in my opening statement, we are trying to develop a planning subgroup that's really looking at food safety surveillance. And we're starting—they're focusing on salmonella to begin with; the idea being that we would focus in that one area and base any future work on lessons learned from trying to track that.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Just thank you.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Kind of going back to Mr. Wishart's line of questioning there, I do tend to frequent farmers' markets and get out to a number of them around the area, and they've gone through quite the process in the last few years with the changes that have been made. And obviously, there's processes that have been handed down through generations to ensure food safety as we've learned historically, but the last couple of years they've had to go through a great deal of training in creating a commercial kitchen for the food products and such. And some of them have changed, some of them accommodated that and some of them have stopped production of their particular food item. And when you talk to them, obviously, there's some people that are just moving along with them, others that are not so happy. They really question if there was a problem, and obviously you felt there was. But is there a level of incidence that was a threshold or a target for this type of process, specifically with the farmers' market type of environment?

**Mr. Todd:** Yes, there have been changes with the farmers' markets, and they're a very popular location for getting lots of good Manitoba food products every year. The nature of the products at farmers'

markets has been evolving over time, though, and I think that that evolution has led to more products at farmers' markets that do have a higher risk of being a food safety concern: more prepared food products, more products that may have ingredients that are a higher risk, with respect to having a food issue with them if they're not properly stored in a farmers' market setting. So there was a need to undertake greater training with individuals that were participating in farmers' markets.

Initially, yes, there was significant concerns. It was a significant change for people from sort of the traditional way of going to the farmers' market. But the departments have worked very closely with farmers' markets, both with support through programs like Growing Forward and ongoing interaction and consultation and training to help them through that process.

We think it's made a positive contribution to safe-food safety for people that are frequenting farmers' markets, and we're endeavouring to do it in a way that minimizes the impact on those that are selling at farmers' markets. We really want them to be there and having that opportunity to sell their products to Manitobans. So we're committed to continuing to work with them through that process, and we hope that we can minimize the frustration so we don't have too many drop out.

**Mr. Helwer:** So the—some of those commercial kitchens or developments people have made their own kitchen in—to meet the standards or something of that nature or are they using another one—who would inspect those types of commercial kitchens? Which department is responsible for that and how often would they be inspected?

**Mr. Sussman:** Public health inspectors would typically do those. I think public health—from Manitoba—or from Manitoba Health, or—I think the target, as was mentioned earlier, was that each establishment would be dealt with once a year. We haven't reached that, but I think we are adopting the risk-based model, and if there are problems identified with one of those commercial kitchens, we would be following up with them to make sure that that was remediated.

**Ms. Braun:** Yes, my area of interest is the food handlers as well, and I know most of my questions have been answered, but I'm just curious in terms of the food handler training, and who conducts that and where does that occur?

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Sussman:** So right now there are public health inspectors that provide the training and there are also a certain number of contract people that we have checked their credentials and ensured that they have the necessary training to provide that kind of training.

In the city of Winnipeg, though, all food handlers have to pass a written exam that is administered by the City before they can work.

**Ms. Braun:** I'm just curious. What would their credentials as trainers be?

**Mr. Sussman:** So the public health inspectors would be the four-year course that I alluded to earlier. The contract people would really focus on what part of the course they were training or teaching, and it would be linked to the exam that the City provides for them and trying to ensure that they have the necessary skills to teach that portion of the training program.

And I should make it clear that not all people who pass the exam have to have completed the training program. They can challenge the exam and, if they are successful, they can get a licence.

**Ms. Braun:** Mr. Chair, how often is the food handler's certificate renewed? Or is it over a period of time that it's valid?

**Mr. Sussman:** Every five years.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Under the AG report, the Growing Forward initiative, the federal government gave Manitoba \$12.5 million for food safety initiatives: 60 per cent of this was for on-farm programs; 40 per cent was for post-farm programs.

Will this money, this \$12.5 million, be used in entirety by March 2013?

**Mr. Todd:** Our projections are that it'll be fully utilized by the end of this fiscal year.

**Mr. Pedersen:** I expected so, because I think it had to be returned if it wasn't. So I was—

Also, in this entire report, there's a lot of—it's a very extensive review. There was a lot of recommendations done, and because it was based on the year 2009, we're already in 2012, food safety



always was important, but it's become even more important now.

What are they recommendations that you're still working on, and what are the targets that you have for the coming years? Sort of based on the AG report, but also on this 'emerging' issue of more food safety, and I ask both departments sort of what their targets are, both in terms of meeting the AG's report and in future requirements?

**Mr. Sussman:** So there are 10 recommendations that we're still working through. I don't think that we have hard targets at this point. I think some of this is evolving from bringing the City in, and I think the other changes, I think—and some of the recommendations are, frankly, stuff that we have to continue to do on an ongoing basis. But I think we have made significant progress, and we are committed to addressing all of these in a timely way, because Manitobans, frankly, need those.

**Mr. Todd:** The—with respect to the areas that MAFRI's engaged in, certainly the—as Milton has mentioned, there's a number of these activities that are ongoing, both within MAFRI, and jointly, and that work will continue in terms of policies, procedures and communications activities.

Specifically in our area, the legislation, including the development of the regulations that I mentioned, is a priority for us. We're targeting mid-2013 to have all of those regulations in place. And we've also touched on the transfer of responsibility for meat inspection to the Province. That has an agreed upon transfer date of January 1, 2014, so our goal is to be ready and operational well before that handover date, so that the transition is smooth and doesn't create any problems for our industry in the process.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Just a question to the Auditor General then. There will be a follow-up report coming out of this, as I understand. And what—when will that follow-up report be done, and do you—can you give, just sort of, an overview of what the follow-up report will actually do?

**Ms. Bellringer:** We're now following up one year after issuance, so you'll get that not this year but next year. We take each of the recommendations and ask the—in this case, both departments what the current status is. If it's implemented, we'll look at something to see that that's the case. And if it's in process, we'll just state where it's at. Sometimes a recommendation

may not be accepted, if you will, by the department. Once they've started to look into it, they realize it can't be implemented and, if so, will indicate that at the time.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So what would be the time frame of the—when you're in your—looking at the recommendations, whether they're being followed? Is it—would it be 2012 or '11 or what year would—because, obviously, this is 2009, and a lot of things have happened since then, and in order to try and—we're trying to catch up here a bit on this.

**Ms. Bellringer:** The—it—we're looking at it a year after issuance, so we'll be looking, even though the time frame that when we looked at the evidence, when we did the audit was during 2009. We won't be looking at it until the status as at June 2013. So, you know, in a way, what it's doing is lining up with our—the goal we've had for many years, which is to give the department about three years to have implemented everything in our original report. So it's not going to be too far off from that three-year period. So we would expect that the majority of the recommendations would be implemented by the time we do the update next year.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, based on that, then, unless other committee members have questions, I think we're probably prepared to pass this report based on—given that it's 2009, there's been a—we realize there's been a lot of recommendations, a lot of work been done in here, and we thank the two departments for doing that. But we also realize that this can't be left; it has to be—come back and reviewed, and we'll look for the follow-up report to see how the departments are doing on this.

\* (15:50)

**Mr. Chairperson:** Yes, just thank you, Mr. Pedersen.

I just want to remind the committee that we are not here to pass the report, but we will accept the—have the committee agree that the—that we've completed consideration of Chapter 4, Food Safety as presented in the January '12 Auditor General's annual report to the Legislature, and once all of those chapters have been passed—or have been accepted, we will pass that report at that time.

So are there any further questions? Seeing none, is it agreed that the report be complete—that the completion of this report be deemed—or chapter 4, pardon me, not the report; I get confused on that myself—chapter 4 be completed? *[Agreed]*

This concludes the business of this committee, and being 3:51, what is the wish of this committee?

**Some Honourable Members:** Rise.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you.

Yes, before we rise, I just ask everyone to leave their committee reports—or the Auditor General's reports on your table, and we can use them at our meeting at 6:30 this evening as well. Thank you.

**COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 3:51 p.m.**

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