

2011:03 ENSURING THE SAFETY OF THE CANADIAN FOOD SUPPLY

Whereas 1 the safety of Canada's food supply is a basic expectation for Canadians; and

Whereas 2 the risks of foodborne illnesses have increased significantly with the development of large scale farming and food processing as well as the globalization of the food supply; and

Whereas 3 in a national foodborne emergency under the current system, there is a possibility of confusion of roles between federal and provincial governments and between departments of the federal government; as well as a lack of communication between government agencies and laboratories responsible for testing; and

Whereas 4 the Auditor General of Canada pointed out in a 2009 report that federal inspection of imported plants and produce coming into Canadian ports was not adequate; and

Whereas 5 many shipments of unprocessed meat products enter Canada without inspection at border crossing points; and

Whereas 6 the risks associated with processes along the manufacturing chain of prepared foods may occur:

- a. directly with the addition of toxic substances: e.g. melanin added to powdered milk to increase its measured protein content, or
- b. indirectly: e.g. from livestock feed contaminated resulting in meat contamination or egg products containing high levels of dioxin; therefore be it

Resolved 1 that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that the Safety of Canada's food supply be a high priority for the Government of Canada; and be it further

Resolved 2 that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada in the event of a national foodborne emergency to ensure:

- a. recognition of the central role of the Canadian Public Health Agency in coordinating all levels of government and agency responses, and in communicating with the public; and
- b. effective systems of networking are in place between the government and the laboratories involved in testing; and be it further

Resolved 3 that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to give additional attention, via the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, to the safety of imported food through:

- a. improving and strengthening regulations over imported food and implementation and evaluation of existing regulations; and
- b. ensuring the equivalence at least to Canadian standards of the exporting country's food inspection system; and
- c. improving regulations of imported food to and from Canada including the principles of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points; and be it further

Resolved 4 that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the provinces and territories to increase co-operation in the area of food safety, improved inspection and harmonization standards, as well as on such topics as disease notification, including the possible re-introduction of listeriosis on the national notifiable disease list.