

The Challenge to the Minister

Call Helen Johns, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs at 416-326-3074

Tell her a few simple steps will protect the integrity of Ontario's food safety system.

1. Improve the wages and working conditions of Ontario's meat inspectors.
2. Hire permanent meat inspectors to do the front-line inspection work.

Yes, I'll join the campaign to support Ontario Meat Inspectors

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Pr ov. _____

Postal code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Send me more campaign materials

Put me on the campaign email list

Send to:

Ontario Contract Meat Inspectors Group

c/o 100 Lesmill Rd.

Toronto, Ontario

(416) 1-800-268-7376 ext 383.

www.meatinspectors.org



Food Safety Alert

**Staff turnover puts
your food
AT RISK**

**A few facts about
Ontario's food safety system**

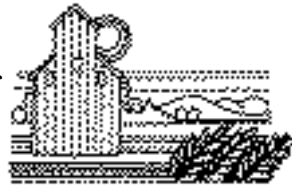
Meat inspectors

the front line of defense for your food safety

Ontario meat inspectors inspect over 200 provincially-licensed abattoirs. They review slaughters, check facilities, collect samples for laboratory analysis, and stamp meat to indicate the product has been inspected.

In 1997, the Ontario government replaced permanent inspectors with 'contract' inspectors. Only 10 inspectors have permanent status and 130 are 'contract'.

In 2001 The Provincial Auditor said: food safety deficiencies that *"could pose risks to human health were noted during annual licensing audits of abattoirs but were not corrected in a timely manner."* The Auditor recommended that the Ministry should ensure corrective actions from the audits are completed to help minimize food safety risks. The Auditor also recommended that inspectors should follow-up on and adequately document the completion of all operational tasks.

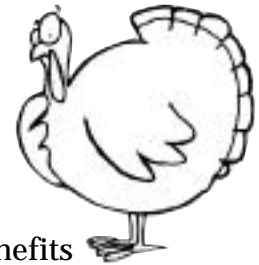


The Ministry agreed with the Auditor's concerns and said:

"the success of this process is highly dependent on recruitment, retention and training of staff. Therefore, the Ministry has commissioned a study to review ways of improving program effectiveness through an enhanced human-resources strategy for the meat inspection program." (Report of the Provincial Auditor 2001 p. 29)

Here are the Facts about 'contract' meat inspectors:

- 32 per cent turnover of inspectors every year.
- Inspectors leave the job because of high workload, stress and insecure working conditions.
- Not enough training for new hires.
- Longer working hours, expanded job duties and no job security. The majority of inspectors work between 40–50 hours per week.
- Inspectors cover the costs of the food safety system themselves. Inspectors individually pay for travel costs and uniform cleaning.
- No pay raise in ten years. No benefits and no pension.
- Over the past three years many human resource studies have been conducted and yet there are no public results.
- No democratic voice in the system. A legal loophole denies inspectors union representation.



Precarious work means a precarious food safety system.