



Ontario Contract Meat Inspectors Group
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 14, 2003

Inspectors seek support for modernized meat safety system

TEESWATER/PETERBOROUGH – Ontario’s contract meat inspectors are seeking support for the modernization of the province’s meat safety system.

The Ontario Contract Meat Inspectors Group represents inspectors who work on contract in 204 provincially-inspected plants. The Group has written a letter to 130 Ontario food industry associations, including the Ontario Cattlemen’s Association, the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, 4-H Ontario, and similar organizations.

“Ontario contract meat inspectors are asking you to speak out publicly – and quickly – in favour of a fully modernized, fully funded meat safety system that will protect Ontarians’ lives and ensure a prosperous meat industry in this province,” the letter reads.

Inspectors sent the letter after the Toronto *Star* revealed details of an Ontario Cabinet document that reported serious problems with the provincial meat inspection system. Among other things, the document reports that low wages and a lack of benefits are contributing to “critical” turnover rates among contract meat inspectors.

“Currently, the majority of inspectors have been on the job less than three years and on occasion several inspectors have worked in plants alone without having fully completed comprehensive training,” the Cabinet document says. The document recommends steps for solving the problem.

Food safety concerns have serious consequences for the farm economy, the inspectors say.

“Most people who live in our cities and towns do not understand farming, or the food industry,” their letter says. “They do understand food, however. And if they feel that the meat for sale in their local stores is not safe, they won’t buy it. And when they don’t buy it, our entire agriculture sector suffers – retail outlets, farm families, the meat-packing industry, and inspectors together.”

The letter asks farm groups to “encourage your members to think about food safety when they vote on Oct. 2.”

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