**Government of Canada Actions in Response to the United States Food and Drug Administration Statement on the current romaine lettuce E. coli O157 outbreak investigation**

The Government of Canada’s food safety partners (Canadian Food Inspection Agency [CFIA], Public Health Agency of Canada [PHAC], Health Canada [HC]) are aware of the new information shared by the United States Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with respect to their investigation into the current outbreak of E.coli O157.

As per the USFDA’s statement (hyperlink), preliminary trace back information points to romaine lettuce harvested in parts of California during the month of November 2018 as the potential source of the outbreak of E. coli O157 that has resulted in illnesses on both sides of the border.

Food safety is a top priority for the Government of Canada.

The Government of Canada, working in collaboration with industry, is taking the following immediate actions in order to give Canadians confidence that the produce they buy remains safe**:**

* The CFIA is advising the food industry, including importers, not to import romaine lettuce from the suspect areas identified in the U.S. FDA’s investigation, until further notice.
* The CFIA will implement additional control measures to verify that products from the areas identified in the U.S. FDA’s investigation are not being admitted to Canada. This includes, for example, greater scrutiny of product destined for Canada.

Working with PHAC and HC, the CFIA also continues its food safety investigation into the current outbreak of E. coli O157 illnesses associated with the consumption of romaine lettuce.  Information on the Canadian trace back activities is shared with the investigation’s partners in both Canada and the United States and aids American authorities with more data to inform their follow up activities.

In addition, the CFIA continues sampling of all produce through its ongoing microbiological surveillance programs for imported fresh vegetables and salads.  Samples from these programs are analyzed for pathogens, including E. coli O157. Romaine lettuce and pre-packaged salads containing romaine lettuce are included within this surveillance program.

The Government of Canada is committed to keeping Canadians informed as more information becomes available.