



First COVID-19 case confirmed in Alberta processing plant employee

For limited distribution to industry stakeholder boards and staff

March 27, 2020

Calgary, AB

Situation Snapshot:

An employee of Harmony Beef, a beef processing facility in Alberta, is confirmed to have COVID-19. The slaughter portion of the facility has been temporarily closed while cutting operations continue.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) continues to indicate that they do not anticipate any food product recalls or withdrawals from the market due to COVID-19 contamination. Currently, there have been no reported cases of food or food packaging being associated with the transmission of COVID-19.

Our industry and governments have been working diligently to ensure food and health safety within plants and that we keep processing plants open and supplying food for Canadians. We are confident that CFIA and Harmony Beef will resolve this temporary situation with short-term impacts to the supply chain. We continue to have the utmost confidence in Canada's food safety systems.

Facilities have undertaken comprehensive measures to reduce the potential of illness in their workers including: taking temperatures of employees before the start of work each day, additional cleaning and disinfection for high touch surfaces, monitoring of hand washing with soap and water by quality assurance personnel, use of a sanitizer to disinfect hands and the requirement for employees to self-monitor and not to come to work if observable symptoms are present.

Health and food safety is paramount in all agriculture and food production operations in Canada. The above protocols are in addition to regular cleaning and sanitation.

Key Messages

- An employee of Harmony Beef is confirmed to have COVID-19.
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has indicated that there are no food safety concerns.
- The Canadian beef industry is working closely with stakeholders to ensure that steps are taken to get the plant back to capacity, while ensuring the health and safety of the plant's employees.
- We are confident that CFIA and Harmony Beef will resolve this temporary situation with short-term impacts to the supply chain and continue to have the utmost confidence in Canada's food safety systems.
- Please refer any media requests to CCA's communication manager Michelle McMullen at mcmullenm@cattle.ca. Harmony Beef also has a spokesperson available.

Will there be food recalls?

The CFIA continues to indicate that they do not anticipate any food product recalls or withdrawals from the market due to COVID-19 contamination. Currently, there have been no reported cases of food or food packaging being associated with the transmission of COVID-19.

Will the plant be shut down?

The slaughter portion of the facility has been temporarily closed by the CFIA. Cutting operations are continuing. We hope that the plant will be up and running in a timely manner following the full implementation of COVID-19 protocols.

Have plants been taking extra precautions for COVID-19? If so, how?

Yes. Employers of packing facilities have developed robust policies in consultation with CFIA and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

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How large of an impact will this have on the industry and supply chain?

We are confident that CFIA and Harmony Beef will resolve this temporary situation with short-term impacts to the supply chain. Harmony's historic kill capacity is 3000-4000 head/week which 5.4 per cent of total kill capacity in Canada.

For further information, contact:

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