



## COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

### *Canada–US Bilateral Agreement on Shellfish Sanitation*

**SUBJECT CATEGORY:**

Marine / Oceans

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:**

Canada - United States

**FORM:**

Memorandum of Understanding

**STATUS:**

- Signed by Canada March 4, 1948
- In force in Canada April 30, 1948
- In force internationally April 30, 1948
- Ongoing - Remains in force unless one of the parties gives 30 days' notice

**LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:**

**Lead:** Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)  
Environment and Climate Change Canada

**Partners:** Environment and Climate Change  
Canada (ECCC), Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
(DFO)

(CFIA, ECCC and DFO are signatories to  
Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program MOU)

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:****Web Links:**

- [Text of Canada-US Bilateral Agreement Regarding Sanitary Practices in the Shellfish Industries and Related Matters](#)
- [EC Marine Water Quality Monitoring program](#)
- [Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program](#) (CFIA website)
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada [Shellfish Harvest Closures](#)

**Contacts:**

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

**COMPENDIUM EDITION:**

January 2016

**REFERENCE #:**

C-M&O-2/EN

**OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this agreement is to ensure that bivalve molluscan shellfish traded between the two countries is harvested and processed in accordance with accepted food safety / sanitary principles.

**KEY ELEMENTS**

The agreement requires Canada to:

- maintain common sanitary principles governing the harvesting and processing of shellfish;
- inform the United States on compliance with those principles;
- facilitate international evaluations of its shellfish processing facilities and growing areas if requested.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

Adhering to the sanitary principles under this agreement ensures that the U.S. market is open to exports of Canadian molluscan shellfish. In 2012, Canadian exports were valued at approximately \$140M (DFO data).

**CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT**

This agreement is important to Canada in maintaining market access for our exports to the U.S. Canada's shellfish sanitation commitment is delivered by the Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP), a program shared by Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) under a memorandum of understanding.

**RESULTS / PROGRESS****Activities**

Canada met key commitments by adhering to the protocols and standards of the CSSP. Environment and Climate Change Canada conducts annual bacteriological marine water quality surveys of shellfish growing areas, and performs assessments of land-based sanitary pollution impacts. CFIA regulates the handling, processing and export of shellfish and conducts monitoring for biotoxins in growing areas. DFO regulates fishery closures and harvester licencing, and manages the shellfish resource and aquaculture operations in some provinces.



### **Reports**

Canada is subject to periodic evaluations by the United States to ensure compliance with the agreed sanitary principles. The most recent evaluations of the CSSP on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts were conducted by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2013. The findings concluded that Canada had no significant deficiencies in shellfish sanitation and that the CSSP is providing an equivalent level of public health protection as the U.S. National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

### **Results**

In order to ensure Canada maintains shellfish sanitation standards under the Agreement, Environment and Climate Change Canada since 2009 tripled water quality monitoring frequency in all approved shellfish harvest areas of Canada, and has employed world-class hydrologic computer modelling to provide greater confidence that sanitary contamination risks in adjacent harvest waters are mitigated.

To improve of knowledge and application of sanitary practice identified in the Agreement, Canada and the US are collaborating on a joint food safety risk assessment on noroviruses in molluscan shellfish. The results of the assessment will inform the refinement of shellfish sanitation policies in both countries.