

News Release

Communiqué

Minister for
International
Trade



Ministre du
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U.S. REGULATIONS REGARDING IMPORTS OF FRESH

FISH AND FOOD PRODUCTS

International Trade Minister, John C. Crosbie, announced today that reports indicating that all fresh food products imported into the U.S. would have to be inspected at the border were incorrect.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials have assured Canadian authorities that the reports are based on a misunderstanding of an upcoming change in their regulatory procedures with respect to imports of perishable foods. FDA advises that the new requirements apply only with respect to sampled products, and furthermore that only a very small percentage of total imports of fresh food products are sampled.

The change will require such sampled products to remain under the control of the first importer of record, whether a broker, wholesaler or other level of trade until the FDA issues a release. Previously, sampled products could be sold direct to retailers pending FDA clearance, if so desired.

Confusion occurred in the Seattle area apparently due to a misleading directive issued locally indicating that all perishable products would be so affected.

FDA have promised to issue release of the products under sampling (if they do not violate food and drug regulations) by 5:00 P.M. on the day following the importation or sooner. The product can then be released to the ultimate consumer.

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The new regulations appeared to give rise to one problem shipment in Seattle. That problem has been resolved. Representations have been made at senior levels of the U.S. Government and consultations have been entered into to ensure that there are no further complications.

The Minister stated that the Department will monitor the situation closely and if problems arise appropriate representations will be made on behalf of affected Canadian exporters.

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