



## COOPERATION REQUIRED FOR AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION INNOVATIONS

### THE ISSUE

Canada provides an unparalleled environment for research and development in the field of plant and animal biotechnology. However, navigating the regulatory landscape to gain approval for these developing products and technologies is onerous. The system needs to be more responsive to the food safety and nutrition opportunities of today and tomorrow.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- A more streamlined regulatory system with greater cooperation among and between the government departments would improve the current operating environment for companies pursuing regulatory approvals in Canada.
- As novel foods are developed with improved nutritional profiles, technology developers should be allowed to test these ingredients before final regulatory approval.

### BACKGROUND

- A novel food is a food derived from a plant, animal or microorganism that has been genetically modified for improved health benefits.

#### Examples

*Food:* The elimination of trans-fats, increased anti-oxidant content.

*Agriculture:* Seeds resistant to pests, produce higher yields, ability to grow in sub-optimal conditions such as drought.

- When companies wish to gain regulatory approval for their product, submissions must be made to multiple government departments.
- Three different government departments (Health Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Environment Canada) have responsibility for the varying regulations required for commercialization of novel foods and other regulated products.
- Approval of an application under one set of regulations can be stalled due to varying information requirements from other government departments. This prevents a product from being commercialized in a timely fashion.





- Under the current Health Canada regulatory system, technology developers have no defined review times. The absence of defined and predictable timelines hinders product development and delays the commercialization of these innovative products.
- Technology developers require the ability to conduct clinical or human research on novel foods to support future health claims as early as possible. There is currently no framework in place at Health Canada to allow for any human testing (e.g. sensory evaluation) of any food containing a novel food.
- Meanwhile there are frameworks in place in Canada to allow for clinical research of new drugs, unapproved pesticides, environmental research on plants with novel traits (Directive 2000-07: Conducting Confined Research Field Trials of Plants with Novel Traits in Canada) and animal testing with novel feeds (T-3-160 Supplement 1).
- The Canadian food industry needs to begin testing using novel foods. This will allow for proper coordination of product innovations from the commercial launch of the seed, bringing products with improved nutrition to Canadian consumers.

