



Canadian Food  
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne  
d'inspection des aliments

# Canada's Approach to Food Safety Equivalence

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Canada

# Overview of Canada's Approach

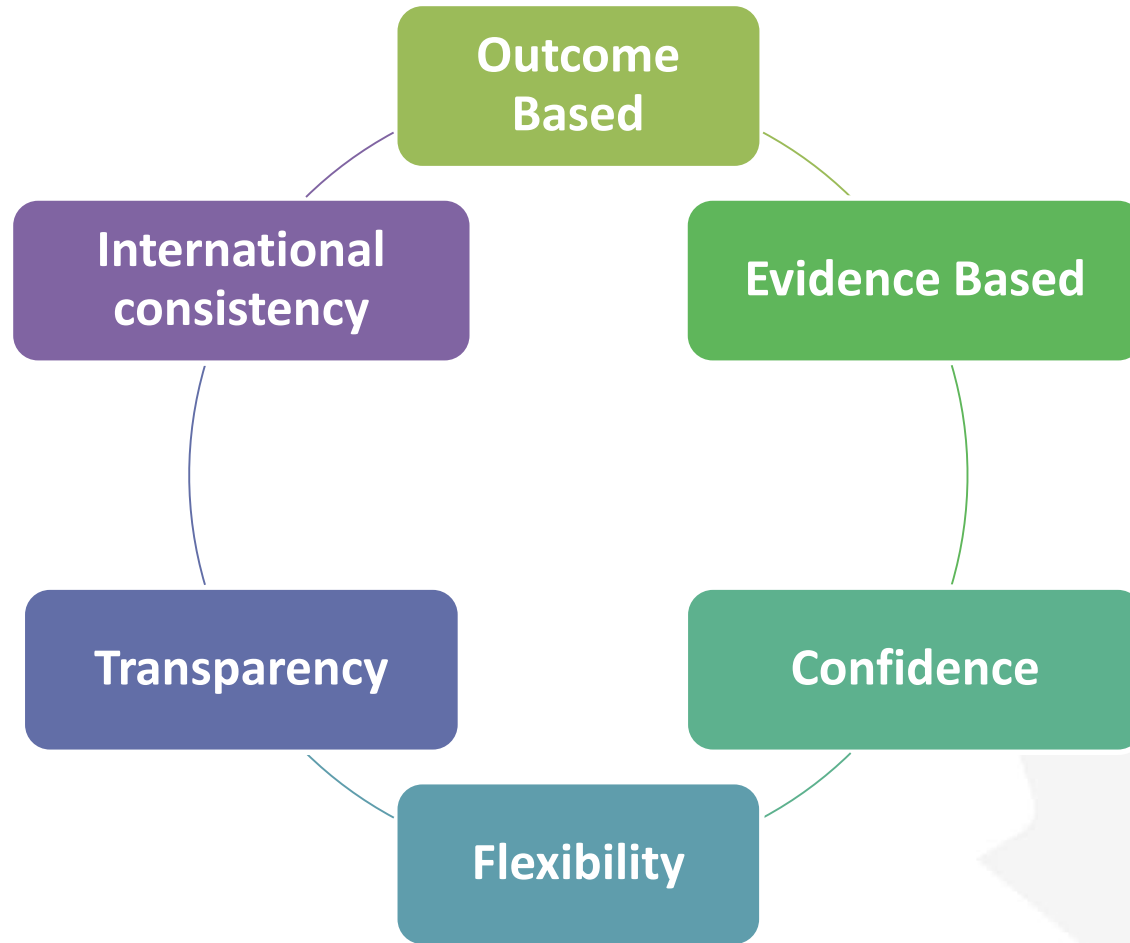
- Enhances Canada's food safety objectives and oversight of imported food while facilitating trade
- Equivalence is an effective tool that provides trading partners with flexibility in how they achieve comparable food safety outcomes
- Different food safety measures, groups of measures or inspection systems can meet Canada's appropriate level of protection

# International Obligations

Canada's approach to equivalence is aligned with international agreements and international standards, guidelines and recommendations (ISGRs):

- Article 4 of the *WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures* (SPS Agreement)
- Codex Alimentarius Commission ISGRs
- Bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements

# Guiding Principles for Equivalence Determination



# Equivalence Spectrum

Canada's approach provides flexibility to consider equivalence at many levels

Individual sanitary measure

System of inspection as a pre-requisite for trade

Commodity-specific or partial recognition

Food Safety System Recognition

# Example of Equivalence as a Pre-Requisite for Trade

Evaluation and recognition of meat and live and raw shellfish systems of inspection



# Example: Measures for the Classification of Shellfish Harvesting Areas

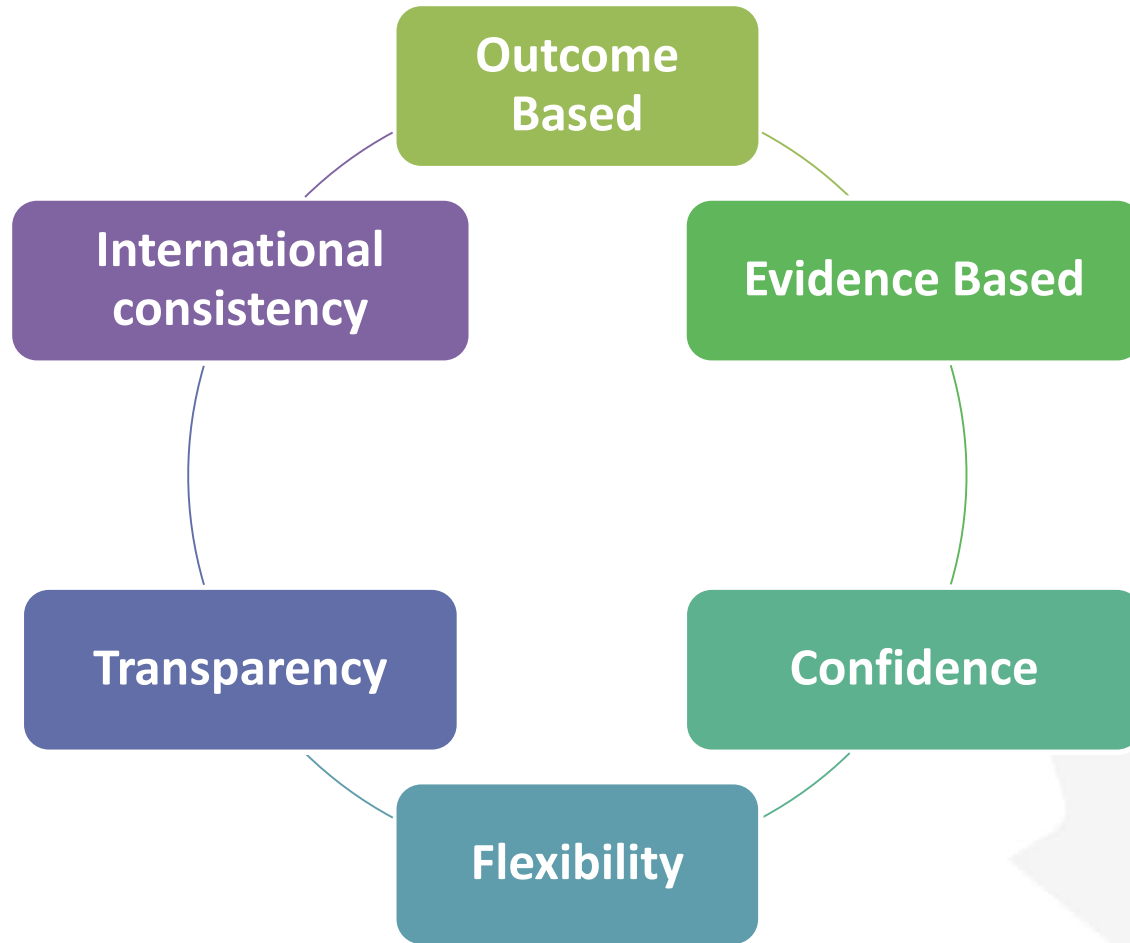
Shellfish  
Testing

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graph LR; A[Shellfish Testing] --> C[Ability to identify harvest areas that produce bivalve molluscs that are safe to eat]; B[Shellfish and Water Testing] --> C;
```

Ability to identify  
harvest areas that  
produce bivalve  
molluscs that are  
safe to eat

Shellfish  
and  
Water  
Testing

# Example Continued: Application of Equivalence





# Maintenance of Equivalence

- Canada may periodically reassess its recognition of equivalence to confirm that the alternative approaches or measures continues to provide at least the same level of protection as the provisions of the *Safe Food for Canadians Act and Regulations*.
- Ongoing bilateral communication is critical to maintain the recognition status, including proactive notification of any changes to its inspection system or legislation governing its inspection system.
- Governments have a responsibility to effectively communicate how different approaches can achieve the same level of protection from identified food safety hazards.

# Conclusion

- International guidance and ISGRs provide countries flexibility to consider food safety equivalence at many levels
- Recognition that different approaches can meet equivalent food safety outcomes enhances food safety and supports international trade

# Questions?