Today, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) published the much-anticipated Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR), which complements the Safe Food for Canadians Act passed in 2012. The regulations are scheduled to come into force on January 15, 2019.

The result of years of consultations with industry stakeholders and consumers, the regulations will have a major impact on the way food is imported and exported to and from Canada. Among the most salient changes included in the SFCR are the following items:

- Businesses that import food or prepare food for export, or to be sent across provincial or territorial borders, will now need to have licences, as well as preventive controls that address potential risks to food safety.
- Most food businesses will also have to maintain traceability records that allow them to trace their food back to their supplier and forward to whom they sold their products. Retailers will only be required to trace their food back to their supplier, not forward to consumers to whom they sold their products.
- Canadian food businesses exporting foods that are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration can now leverage their SFCR licence to demonstrate that their food safety controls meet their U.S. importers' requirements under the U.S. Foreign Supplier Verification Program.

According to a press release issued by the CFIA, "The new rules will also be consistent with
international food safety standards, and will strengthen Canada's food safety system, enable industry to innovate, and create greater market access opportunities for Canadian food products exported abroad."

Gowling WLG’s Food & Beverage Group continues to monitor these developments closely. For more information about how the new licensing, traceability and preventative control requirements will affect your business, please contact Lewis Retik, Laura Gomez, Jon-Paul Powers, or any member of our team. The full regulations can be found on the Canada Gazette website.

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