



THE ONTARIO PRODUCE
MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Importing to Ontario

The following is a brief guide to importing fresh fruits and vegetables into Ontario. This is not the complete list of what you need to know, but it does provide information on some of the more important aspects of doing business in Canada.

[The Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation \(DRC\)](#)

People must join the DRC. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency no longer issues produce licenses in Canada. Canadian produce companies have switched to DRC memberships. In the event of a dispute, the DRC acts quickly to help to resolve a dispute.

The DRC deals with all types of disputes including condition, contract and payment issues. The DRC can help with disputes that arise between Regular Members domestically (e.g. within provinces or states, between provinces and states) and internationally. It can also help with disputes that arise internationally between Associate Members and Regular Members. To be covered, both companies need to be members before the dispute arises.

The DRC maintains a list on their website with members in good standing. Shippers should consult this list before entering into a business transaction with a party that is unfamiliar to them. This should be done in addition to checking with any credit rating services. Perhaps even more important, they will tell you who has been expelled from the DRC for violating rules or regulations. The best way to avoid a dispute is to deal with reputable firms.

[Safe Food for Canadians Act and the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations \(SFCR\)](#)

The produce industry in Canada is regulated under Safe Food for Canadians Act and the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR). The Act and the Regulations govern import, export, and interprovincial trade. The regulations spell out the requirements for grading, packaging, labelling, food safety and preventive controls, hygiene, traceability, food recalls and much more. They also set out the minimum grade requirements for commodities that have grade names in Canada.

[The Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\)](#)

The CFIA has a number of business-friendly resources to help people navigate the various permits and licenses that are required for different food businesses.

[Automated Import Reference System \(AIRS\)](#)

AIRS will guide you through the importing process by telling you what is allowed into Canada and what is prohibited, including plant protection requirements. Always check with AIRS before you import fresh produce into Canada.



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[Destination Inspection Service \(DIS\)](#)

The DIS is the CFIA's inspection service for produce that has moved interprovincially or internationally. The DRC states that the DIS is the preferred choice for destination inspections in Canada. It is the shipper's right under DRC rules to have a federal DIS inspection in the event of a dispute. Independent inspection services and marine surveyors should only be used if the shipper and the receiver have agreed to do so in writing, before an inspection is performed.

This page also contains links to the CFIA inspection manuals for fresh fruits and vegetables.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

For those commodities that do not have a CFIA inspection manuals, such as citrus fruits and bell peppers, the DIS relies on USDA manuals which are found [here](#) and [here](#). These links also provide access to official USDA visual aids for individual fresh fruits and vegetables.

Maximum Residue Limits for Pesticides

As part of the assessment process prior to the registration of a pesticide, Health Canada must determine whether the consumption of the maximum amount of residues, that are expected to remain on food products when a pesticide is used according to label directions, will not be a concern to human health. This maximum amount of residues expected is then legally established as a maximum residue limit (MRL) and is regulated under the [Pest Control Products Act](#) (PCPA). The CFIA collects samples throughout the year to analyze for MRL compliance.

More information is available [here](#).

Temperature Guidelines and Ethylene Compatibility

Buyers should be aware of what can and cannot ship together in the same conveyance. It is important to respect temperature ranges and ethylene sensitivity in transit and storage. More information is available on the [UC Davis website](#) and through the [Blue Book Services](#).

Licensed Customs Brokers

If you are importing produce into Canada, you will need the services of a customs broker to ensure that the import package that is submitted to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is accurate and complete.

The OPMA has members who are licensed customs brokers. A complete list of licensed customs brokers is also available on the [CBSA website](#).