



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **Canadian Food Inspection Agency Announces Preharvest Testing Option for Romaine Imports**

**Salinas, CA:** Yesterday the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\) announced](#) it will accept either pre-harvest or finished product testing as part of its requirements for importing romaine lettuce into Canada between September 30 and December 31, 2021. The requirements apply to romaine lettuce grown in four California counties: Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Benito and Monterey. Products from those four counties must provide an attestation form and certificate of analysis for each shipment to demonstrate that the romaine lettuce does not contain detectable levels of E. coli O157:H7.

The California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (LGMA) has recently developed and approved [specific protocols for preharvest testing of leafy greens](#) that its members are required to follow. The protocols have been reviewed by CFIA and were a factor in their decision to allow the preharvest testing option. Last year CFIA accepted only romaine that had undergone finished product testing, which occurs after the lettuce has been harvested and packaged for sale.

*"We are pleased with CFIA's announcement because we strongly believe the preharvest testing option provides several benefits over finished product testing," said Tim York, CEO of the LGMA. "Although any kind of testing comes at a cost for lettuce farmers, preharvest testing is more efficient and less costly than finished product testing. It saves harvest, packaging and storage costs in the event the product tests positive for a pathogen. Importantly, testing lettuce prior to harvest before it's packaged for sale to consumers also provides further assurances that potentially contaminated romaine will not find its way into marketing channels.*

*"We want to emphasize the Canadian government has long recognized the efforts of lettuce farmers under the LGMA to ensure safety," continued York. "On a year-round basis, importation of leafy greens from California is limited to products supplied by certified members of the LGMA. Certified members of the LGMA must adhere to food safety requirements and are subject to regular audits by the California Department of Food and Agriculture."*

Congressman Jimmy Panetta (D – Carmel Valley, CA) who represents the farmers in the impacted area [issued a statement](#) last week, saying:

*"Last year, Canada's food safety testing procedures were announced and implemented tumultuously, resulting in the loss of safe, healthy product from the Salinas Valley. Since then,*



*we have worked closely with US Trade Representative, Food and Drug Administration, and US Department of Agriculture leadership, along with the California Leafy Green Marketing Agreement, to ensure we put forward a stronger, more efficient system. I am glad that, after months of collaboration, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has worked with LGMA and our California growers to improve the testing process and ensure Salinas Valley leafy greens can travel across our borders to feed communities around the world.”*

**[VIEW CFIA'S 2021 IMPORT REQUIREMENTS](#)**

**About California LGMA:** The California LGMA is a food safety program that brings farmers together to make lettuce and leafy greens safer. LGMA members produce over 70% of the Nation’s lettuce and leafy greens - adding up to over 30 billion servings a year. In an effort to provide consumers with safe leafy greens, the California LGMA verifies food safety practices, enforces through government audits and requires a commitment to continuous improvement. Learn more at [www.lgma.ca.gov](http://www.lgma.ca.gov)

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