

# Canadian Meat Plant Suspended Over Food Safety Concerns

The Canadian Press

EDMONTON (Canadian Press) — The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has suspended the license of an Edmonton meat-processing plant over concerns for food safety.

The decision involving Capital Packers Inc. came Thursday.

The CFIA says adequate controls for food safety "are not being reliably implemented in the facility on a consistent basis."

The agency also says the company hasn't corrected deficiencies previously identified through CFIA inspections.

It has placed all products at the plant in northeast Edmonton under detention and control.

The agency says it is investigating whether products shipped from the plant pose potential risks to consumers, particularly related to listeriosis, a foodborne illness that can cause high fever, severe headache, neck stiffness and nausea.

"Capital Packers Inc. will not be able to resume operations until they have fully implemented the necessary corrective actions and the CFIA is fully confident in the plant's capacity to effectively manage food safety risks," the agency said in a news release.

On its website, Capital Packers describes itself as an 82-year-old, third-generation family-owned business.

It employs about 100 people.

The website said the company produces 153 varieties of fresh meats, 13 varieties of cooked meats, 151 varieties of smoked meats and nine varieties of pickled meats.

It said the company's market covers western Canada and the Northwest Territories.

Company officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

Back in September, the CFIA also suspended the licence of XL Foods in Brooks, Alta., the meat-packing plant at the centre of a massive recall of tainted beef.

Eighteen confirmed cases of E. coli were linked to the plant, which was closed for more than a month before its operating licence was restored in late October.

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Management of the plant was taken over by JBS USA, an American subsidiary of a Brazilian company. JBS USA has not yet decided if it will exercise its option to buy the plant.

Earlier this week, the Harper government passed legislation aimed at making the food system safer.

Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz said Canadian beef sales, both domestic and international, have not declined in the wake of the XL Foods scare.

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