

PRESS RELEASE-TRANSLATION

MAPAQ – BNQ Partnership

QUEBEC - A FORERUNNER IN FOOD SAFETY

Quebec, February 23, 2001 – The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (“MAPAQ”), Rémy Trudel, is pleased to announce the signing of an agreement with the “Bureau de normalisation du Québec” (BNQ). This partnership comes within the Québec government’s strategy to recognize HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) programs, and position the Quebec biofood industry as a leader in North America. Quebec will be the first to implement a unique system throughout the food chain to certify the use of these worldwide standards aimed at better controlling food safety.

The HACCP approach is based on the identification of hazards and the control of the risks associated with them. Its final goal is to improve the quality and safety of food products. The Quebec strategy aims at implementing this approach from the farm to the table.

HACCP systems are fast becoming the world reference in trade by clearly outlining the requirements between suppliers and buyers for food products. These systems are an incomparable tool for maintaining Quebec’s reputation as a top quality food supplier on domestic and foreign markets.

MAPAQ has identified the BNQ as the one-stop service for the development of standards and the certification of HACCP systems. MAPAQ specifically chose the BNQ because of accreditations it has already received from the Standards Council of Canada. In recent years, the BNQ has developed a HACCP system certification program in conjunction with its partners from Quebec’s agri-food industry.

“By combining their expertise and their strengths, MAPAQ and the BNQ are providing the necessary infrastructure so that Quebec businesses can be certified and recognized at national and international levels,” said the minister.

“MAPAQ’s initiative backs industry efforts to obtain government recognition. The BNQ is pleased to be associated with this first agreement. It confirms the BNQ’s interest and the major role it plays in developing the agri-food sector’s certification activities,” pointed out Serge Guérin, Chief Executive Officer of the “Centre de recherche industrielle du Québec” (“CRIQ”).

The implementation of HACCP systems throughout the food chain is one more step toward offering Quebec consumers food that is safe and of top quality.

“This approach will place Quebec products among the best in the world in terms of national and international standards,” concluded Mr. Trudel.

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