

## Factsheet Common Concerns of Food Safety

The demand is growing for foods that are locally produced and marketed. Many of these foods can be found at your local Public Market. As consumers browse the markets, different terms can be found to describe the types of foods vendors sell.

### **Hormones**

Hormones help increase an animal's growth rate and enhance the leanness of their meat. Hormonal growth promoters can be naturally occurring or synthetic products. They are approved for use in beef cattle; not dairy cattle. There are no growth hormones permitted to be used in poultry or pork production in Canada.

#### Natural Hormones

Some hormones that animals are treated with are naturally occurring in people and animals. These hormones are required for normal development, growth, and reproduction.

#### Synthetic Hormones

Synthetic hormones are man-made versions of natural hormones.

#### Are Hormones Safe?

Acceptable safe limits for hormones in meat have been set by Health Canada. Safe limits for human consumption are hormone levels that have no effect in humans. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) monitors all food products in Canada by sampling and testing.



### **Pesticides**

Pesticides help protect food and crops from pests, such as insects, weeds, and fungal diseases. If not controlled properly, pests can destroy crops.

Pesticides include all materials used to prevent, destroy, repel, attract or reduce pest organisms. All pesticides used in Canada must be registered by Health Canada.

### Are Pesticides Safe?

Small amounts of pesticide residue may remain on food after pesticides are applied. However, pesticides break down over time, meaning very little residue is left by the time we eat the food. The amount of pesticide residues that may be left on foods are at safe levels.

### Pesticide Regulation in Canada

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is responsible for approving pesticide use. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency monitors and enforces residue limits both in domestic and imported foods.



### **Antibiotics**

An antibiotic is a medicine that kills or inhibits the growth of microbes, such as bacteria and fungi. Antibiotics can be used to treat illness in animals and prevent disease.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency tests food to make sure that antibiotic levels are safe for humans. These levels have been determined by Health Canada. Provincial inspectors also check for antibiotic residues during the inspection process at provincially inspected abattoirs at the slaughter stage.

For more information on food safety, contact your local Food Safety Specialist, or visit the Department of Agriculture's food safety website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/foodsafety>