

# CMD 502

## **502 - Investigating Canadian Consumers' Ratings of Concern for Issues of Food and Environmental Safety Associated with Agriculture: Initial Analysis**

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### **Research Summary**

This project seeks funding to provide for graduate student support toward the initial base-line analysis of the food and environmental quality importance rankings ascribed by 882 respondents to a Canada-wide survey applied in January 2003. The analysis proposed in this project will provide the basis for a subsequent project and anticipated associated application to the Network relating to a proposed future survey of Canadian consumers to be conducted in 2005. It will be proposed in the subsequent application that a component of that survey seek a similar body of data, for purposes of comparative analysis, in order to assess whether there have been changes in concern rankings in the light of subsequent publicity relating to particular potential food safety events (most notably, isolated incidents of discovery of beef animals affected by BSE) which had not been discovered at the time of the 2003 survey. The analysis of the 2003 survey data, which is the focus of the current application, will form a baseline against which possible subsequent changes in attitudes to food safety issues can be gauged.

### **Significance of Research**

It is widely believed that issues of food safety and quality are major drivers of consumers' attitudes to and preferences for food. However, there is little information on the relative importance, to Canadian consumers, of different food safety issues. Nor is there comprehensive analysis of whether particular socio-demographic characteristics of individual consumers are important elements affecting Canadian consumers' attitudes to food safety and related preferences for specific food quality attributes. Similarly, relatively little is known about Canadian consumers' attitudes toward the environmental consequences of agriculture. Knowledge in these areas would aid in understanding consumers' demand for food safety and consumers' preferences for selected issues of environmental quality associated with agriculture. The project would complement the information recently made available by the recent survey on consumers' perceptions of food safety and quality by Ipsos-Reid that was commissioned by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC, 2004).