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News Release

Auditor's Report Highlights Important Public and Environmental Safety Issues

REGINA, Sask., December 4, 2012 – The provincial government needs to do a better job of monitoring meat inspection safety in Saskatchewan, says Provincial Auditor Bonnie Lysyk in Volume 2 of her 2012 Report tabled today. In the Report, Lysyk draws attention to the fact that Saskatchewan is one of only three provinces in Canada that allows the sale of meat to customers without it being inspected.

Most meat sold to consumers in Saskatchewan is inspected. However, meat from 76 of the province's slaughter plants comes from an inspected plant where no inspection of the meat itself takes place. This means that in these facilities, only the **plant** is inspected annually for cleanliness and its ability to keep the meat cold. The **meat itself** (i.e., the animal, the slaughter process, and the carcass) is not subject to inspection. Furthermore, the actual quantity of meat handled by these plants is not tracked. "People depend on the safety of the food supply," says Lysyk. "The Ministry of Health should assess the risks to meat safety in the food supply, and consider updating its regulations accordingly." The report also notes deficiencies in the plant inspection process that the Ministry of Health is responsible for overseeing. "The Ministry needs to do a better job of setting out detailed sanitation instructions and reviewing inspection results from plants that are considered at higher risk of producing unsafe meat," says Lysyk. "It needs to verify that problems identified in these plants are fixed in a timely manner."

The report also highlights the Ministry of Health's lack of information about the level of diabetes-related care available throughout the province. "The Ministry doesn't know who has diabetes and if those individuals are receiving the recommended care that could reduce their risk of diabetes-related complications," says Lysyk. "Without this important information, it's difficult for the Ministry and regional health authorities to know if their programs are working well, or if they're on track to achieve their target of having 80% of people with chronic disease, including diabetes, receive care consistent with provincial standards by 2017."

Additional areas noted in the report as needing improvement include:

- › The Ministry of Education needs to provide more coordination and oversight to support school divisions in transporting students safely. School divisions need to monitor the performance of contractors hired to transport students
- › The Ministry of Health needs to monitor whether personal care homes act promptly to correct problems identified during Ministry inspections
- › Five Hills Regional Health Authority needs to improve its processes to help ensure that nourishing and safe food services are consistently provided to residents of its long-term care facilities
- › The Ministry of the Economy needs to do a better job of managing risks associated with cleaning up oil and gas wells
- › eHealth Saskatchewan requires a set plan for implementing an Electronic Health Record for Saskatchewan to ensure that public money is spent responsibly and effectively
- › The Ministry of Justice needs to ensure that offender data is both secure and accurate in order to prevent offenders from being released from correctional facilities at the wrong time



- › The Government needs to use the Summary Financial Statements to report its finances to the public, as the General Revenue Fund (GRF) statements they currently use have significant errors and are materially wrong (see News Release “Government General Revenue Fund Financial Statements Wrong, Says Provincial Auditor”)

The Report also details the Provincial Auditor’s follow-up work on past recommendations for 18 previous performance and information technology (IT) audits. The following agencies have implemented all of their recommendations in the specified subject areas:

- › The Ministry of Agriculture – Pesticide Regulation
- › Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation – Security Awareness
- › Ministry of the Economy (Public Service Commission) – Developing Leaders
- › Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority – Processes to Investigate Complaints
- › Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming – Monitoring Charitable Gaming on Reserves
- › Social Services – Securing Physical Information

Further details regarding these issues can be found in the accompanying Backgrounder. The full **Provincial Auditor’s 2012 Report - Volume 2** is available online at www.auditor.sk.ca.

The Provincial Auditor is an Independent Officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. The Office of the Provincial Auditor serves the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan by providing independent assurance and advice on the management, governance, and effective use of public resources.

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