

Employees turn to **LABOURWATCH**^{dot.com}

In an effort to level the playing field with unions, CRFA supports an informational web site for employees about rights and responsibilities during union drives and decertifications. LabourWatch.com balances the increasing use of the web by unions to support their activities. The web site provides:

- Information in a question-and-answer format about unionization and decertification.
- Printable forms and instructions for revoking a union card or applying for decertification.
- Links to other web-based information sources on unions in Canada.
- Contact information for labour relations boards across Canada.
- Links to union-related stories on the web.
- Information access 24 hours a day, seven days a week – no password required.

The web site also provides important “do’s and don’ts” for employers. It does not replace the use of a lawyer or labour relations expert, but it will help employers:

- Be more informed about what can and cannot be done during union drives and decertifications.
- Provide an up-to-date training tool to use on-line or print out.
- Get basic information without having to commit financial resources.

Employees in a Saskatchewan business were successful recently in remaining union-free as a result of the independent and factual perspective of the LabourWatch materials they accessed during a union certification drive.

FOOD INDUSTRY GUARDS AGAINST BSE, FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

The widespread outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the U.K. and Europe has raised industry concerns about the devastating impact on business if this disease were to spread to Canada. Similarly, concerns have been raised about the economic consequences if there was a diagnosis of BSE (mad cow disease) in Canada.

As a result, CRFA has been in regular communication with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Health Canada, Agriculture Canada and other organizations in the food supply chain – particularly those representing meat and livestock sectors – to ensure appropriate measures are in place to prevent the spread of foot-and-mouth and BSE to Canada.

Members can access up-to-date information about both of these diseases by visiting CRFA’s website: www.crfa/bse_faqs.htm#9.

LabourWatch stickers are enclosed with this newsletter to help you keep the LabourWatch name top-of-mind.

Chicken hearings head into summer

CRFA is digging in for a prolonged battle to improve supply and pricing in Ontario’s chicken industry. Hearings before the Ontario Agricultural Appeal Tribunal that were to conclude in May have been extended through the summer, due to the complexity of the issues under review.



management, they face the constant frustration of product shortages and difficulty getting the size of meat required to serve their customers. To force a solution, CRFA launched a challenge against the chicken producers, who control chicken price and supply. CRFA will have a chance to present its case before the tribunal in July.

Foodservice operators are one of the chicken industry’s largest customers, purchasing 43% of Canadian-grown chicken. But under supply

The outcome of these proceedings will create the template for reform in Ontario’s chicken industry for the next three to five years.

News

CRFA News is published five times a year for members of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association.

Editor: Jill Holroyd

CRFA News

316 Bloor Street West Toronto, Ontario M5S 1W5

Tel: (416) 923-8416 or 1-800-387-5649


Fax: (416) 923-1450

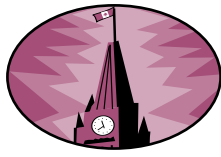
E-mail: info@crfa.ca

Web site: www.crfa.ca

Copyright 2001. Articles from CRFA News may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without written permission from CRFA.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 1556223

 Printed on recycled paper



Ottawa hijacks EI fund

Despite calls by CRFA for deep cuts to Employment Insurance (EI) premiums, Ottawa announced a paltry 15-cent reduction in the premium rate for 2001. This means that employers and employees will be overcharged to the tune of \$6.7 billion this year.

The Chief EI Actuary confirms that a rate of \$1.50 per \$100 of insured earnings would have been sufficient to cover EI program costs in 2000. Instead, the government raked in an extra \$7.3 billion in premiums, bringing the total EI surplus to an obscene \$33 billion.

Employee premiums drop from \$2.40 per \$100 of earnings to \$2.25 as of Jan. 1. Employer premiums drop from \$3.36 per \$100 of payroll to \$3.15. Maximum insurable earnings remain at \$39,000.

To ensure it can legally access your money for purposes other than EI and continue to overcharge you for insurance, the government is expected to re-introduce legislation that died when the election was called last fall. The proposed legislation allows Ottawa to set premium rates without consulting employers and employees and without considering the surplus in the EI account or the interest owing to the EI account.



ECONOMIC THINK TANKS SLAM EI LEGISLATION

Two influential think tanks have come out strongly against Ottawa's proposed pre-election changes to the Employment Insurance program.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) says in its semi-annual economic outlook that the EI changes could increase unemployment and limit economic growth. In particular, the OECD takes issue with the elimination of the intensity rule, which is meant to discourage repeat users by reducing their benefits.

In a report entitled "Make EI Fairer: Don't Open the Coffers to Well-Off Repeaters," the C.D. Howe Institute also is sharply critical of proposals to eliminate the EI intensity rule and the experience rating of the EI clawback.

These reports echo CRFA's criticism that removing the intensity rule and reducing clawbacks for high-income seasonal workers will create disincentives to search for work.

Election menu offers food for thought

During last November's federal election, CRFA's goal was to arm its members, and candidates, with information on three key foodservice industry issues – taxes, Employment Insurance and supply management.

- Almost 23,000 copies of the Menu of Issues were distributed to CRFA members, provincial restaurant association members, and candidates;
- CRFA staff, Directors and members contacted dozens of candidates across the country to outline industry issues;
- Hundreds of people accessed CRFA's election web site and hot line;
- Four out of five political parties responded to the Menu by spelling out their position on each of the issues. CRFA immediately posted their responses on the election web site. In addition to providing an information service to members, CRFA can now hold the parties accountable to their written positions as key industry issues flare over the coming year.



LabourWatch.com is on line!

CRFA is pleased to announce the launch of www.LabourWatch.com,



the first web site to provide information on employee rights and responsibilities during union drives and decertifications.

In an effort to balance the information that unions are putting on the web, LabourWatch.com provides:

- Straightforward questions and answers about unionization and decertification;
- Forms and instructions for revoking a union card and applying for decertification (where applicable);
- Information on federal and provincial labour laws;
- Contact information for labour relations boards across Canada;
- Links to other web-based information sources on unions in Canada;
- Links to union-related news stories on the web.

The web site also includes "do's and don'ts" for employers who find their workers involved in a union drive or decertification. CRFA members are encouraged to review www.LabourWatch.com and provide feedback to Joycel Reynolds at 1-800-387-5649.