

Chicken Farmers of Canada Statement on Animal Care

Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) takes pride in its progressive and innovative approach to animal care as demonstrated by our third-party audited, mandatory Animal Care Program that safeguards our flocks. CFC, representing Canada's 2,800 chicken farmers, is a leader and a partner in ensuring the care of birds along the supply chain.

CFC believes that the processes and standards that have been implemented on our farms and throughout the industry are proof of our industry's strong commitment to animal care, and that based on these the industry is in a solid position to promote the high standards of animal care within the industry to our customers and consumers.

CFC's Animal Care Program has been evolving since it was created in 2009. The elements that make this a strong program include:

- Our program uses one national standard that ensures consistency of requirements and record-keeping for all chicken farmers in Canada
- Our program includes annual farms audits
- Our program is mandatory
- Our program uses enforcement mechanisms in cases of non-compliance
- Our program offers the additional assurance of being 3rd party audited
- Our program has credible foundations in that it is designed based on the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys*, as developed by the National Farm Animal Care Council

CFC's Animal Care program covers issues of feed and water availability, density, litter management, health care practices, bird monitoring and environmental conditions among other areas. Highlights of Canadian production and the CFC Animal Care Program include:

- No chickens for meat consumption are raised in cages
- Maximum density limits are lower than those set by the Council of the European Union
- Litter is removed after each flock and replaced with fresh bedding, thereby minimizing ammonia impacts in subsequent flocks

- Management and breeding have helped to reduce mortality, condemnation rates and the incidences of ascites and leg health issues over the past decades

The implementation of CFC's Animal Care Program by farmers and the effectiveness of CFC's audit team are also subject to a 3rd party audit. NSF performs 3rd party audits using PAACO (Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization) certified auditors to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of CFC Animal Care Program. NSF is Canada's largest provider of food safety and quality services and is an Accredited Certification Body by the American National Standards Institute to ISO 17065.

While the program has been successfully implemented over the last 7 years, CFC's Animal Care Program is not static. As a next step in the evolution of CFC's Animal Care Program, CFC engaged competent experts through the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFAACC) to perform a full scientific review and to renew the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys*, which was finalized in June 2016.

This partnership involved the collaboration of farmers, veterinarians, processors, transporters, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, animal welfare enforcement representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, researchers, and representatives from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. This process included a public consultation period whereby all Canadians had the opportunity to contribute to the final Code.

There are various animal care programs available and that are being promoted. The benefit of CFC's Animal Care Program is that it uses the credible and science-based NFAACC development process. NFAACC's methodology uses the most recent animal care research and a solid collaboration of stakeholders from different perspectives to develop a *Code of Practice* that is robust and defensible.

With the updated *Code of Practice* in hand, CFC is now pursuing an Animal Care Assessment Framework through the National Farm Animal Care Council to renew CFC's auditable Animal Care Program.

CFC is also petitioning federal, provincial and territorial governments to implement a government recognition protocol for animal care, similar to the successful recognition protocol in place for on-farm food safety. Our objective is to have the animal care recognition protocol implemented through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's next Agricultural Policy Framework.



Although the *Code of Practice* has been updated, CFC continues to fund animal care research through the Canadian Poultry Research Council. As a primary focus of CFC's research programs, animal care research projects have focused on leg health, lighting and transportation among others. These research projects have helped shape changes to on-farm programming requirements, and will continue to guide programming in the future.

These animal care initiatives are over and above the steps the industry has taken relative to fitness for transport guidelines, policy changes to allow for transportation interruptions during inclement weather, reductions in transportation losses, and many other areas.

CFC understands its responsibility for animal care and we take our responsibility for upholding high principles of animal health and care on farm very seriously.

As evidenced, CFC will continue to work with the experts – including industry stakeholder organizations, the research community and government regulators – to continuously monitor and improve our animal care programming.