



March 2017

Dear farmers,

I want to first celebrate a job well done for our industry with the completion of our recent third party audit of the Animal Care Program. This first report shows that “the national Animal Care Program has been implemented effectively and maintained on an on-going basis.” It is thanks to the collective work of all farmers that we have these successes to celebrate and promote.

This achievement comes at a critical time when our downstream partners in the retail and restaurant sector are facing intense pressure about on-farm standards. Having this credible report to point to is critical in CFC’s efforts to promote the Animal Care Program and to maintain one national standard for animal care across all Canadian chicken farms. To this end, CFC is actively communicating with associations and individual companies to educate them about the program and its effectiveness.

With this in mind, I am writing to remind each of you of the responsibility you have to the birds you raise, to the industry, to your fellow farmers, to your customers and to all Canadian consumers for upholding high principles of animal health and welfare on your farm. We are counting on you to be vigilant against the mistreatment of birds.

Maintaining high animal care standards is integral to our job as farmers, and demonstrating this is a prerequisite in the current marketplace. Our Animal Care Program is an excellent example of the proactive nature of the industry, and we proudly stand behind the program, as it is consistent with the Code of Practice and international standards. With increasing attention on the broiler chicken industry, it is important that all farmers continue to consistently implement the Animal Care Program on a daily basis to maintain the program’s credibility.

It is important to note that if a farm is found not to be complying with the Animal Care Program standards, or is causing undue suffering to birds, they can face strict penalties or lose their certification based on provincial board regulations/policies. Additionally, while it is CFC’s role to promote and defend good management practices, there is no defense for the mistreatment of birds.

This is as important now as it ever was: every Canadian chicken farmer has a responsibility to uphold good animal health and welfare standards on their farm. It takes only one farm to discredit the industry, and to impact how restaurants, retailers, and consumers view our industry. All farmers should take the time to re-ensure tight security on farms, carefully screen and supervise employees, and take appropriate measures to exercise the utmost in due diligence.

Rightly or wrongly, our industry will continue to face ongoing scrutiny and we will have to combat continued attempts to erode consumer trust in our practices. This should serve as a reminder for all farmers to review your production practices to ensure that you are providing the highest level of animal welfare to be able to demonstrate appropriate animal care and to ensure industry's credibility and sustainability for years to come.

Sincerely,



Benoît Fontaine
Chair

