

# CHICKEN FARMERS OF CANADA'S *Sustainability Report*



RAISING  
THE LOCAL,  
CANADIAN  
CHICKEN  
CONSUMERS  
TRUST.



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Canadians want to know where their food comes from, and the vast majority believe that it is important that Canadian chicken be labelled as such. Our new “Raised by a Canadian Farmer” logo lets you choose the chicken you trust.

By buying chicken with this brand, not only are consumers getting quality Canadian chicken, but they are also supporting Canadian farmers - farmers who protect bird health and welfare, who produce safe chicken for Canadians, who preserve the health of the land and their farms, and who provide value to Canada, and affordable food to Canadians through supply management.

That is what makes the Canadian chicken industry sustainable – the hard work, and the good work, of our farmers. And supply management is the system Canadian chicken farmers operate under that makes it all possible.

Our sustainability journey is a process of continual improvement. We have come a long way with the implementation of on-farm programs, with responsible antibiotic use, and with the growth in our industry which has contributed to the Canadian economy and helped support rural communities. But we'll always have more work to do and we will continually evolve to improve our practices and deliver on the expectations of Canadian consumers.

### CFC's key values of sustainability

Protecting bird health and welfare

Producing safe chicken for Canadians

Preserving the health of the land and of our farms

Providing value to Canada, and affordable food to Canadians through supply management

Here is what we have done so far, according to the values that guide our work.

## Protecting bird health and welfare

### Highlights

- Chicken Farmers of Canada is implementing a national, mandatory Animal Care Program that is enforced and includes third party audits
- The Canadian chicken industry is implementing a comprehensive Antimicrobial Use Strategy that involves surveillance, education, research, and reduction

This is what chicken farming is all about. Farmers' number one priority is for the well-being of the birds in their care. As part of this dedication, Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) created an auditable Animal Care Program designed to demonstrate and maintain the high animal care standards of Canadian chicken farms.

Audits of the Animal Care Program began in 2009 across the country. This was the culmination of years of research into best practices and the development of auditable standards that were practical to implement, as well as an extensive consultation process that involved over 40 external stakeholders reviewing the program.

It is critical that other industry partners support the program and the consultation process resulted in support for implementation being provided by:

- Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
- Restaurants Canada
- Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers
- Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council
- Further Poultry Processors Association of Canada

We're continually working to promote the program to consumers and downstream stakeholders to ensure that everyone is informed about this national standard that is implemented on farms from coast to coast.

The standards are based on the Code of Practice developed by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC). The Codes serve as our national understanding of animal care requirements and are developed with a diverse group of stakeholders including researchers, veterinarians, national animal



welfare organizations and farmers. CFC, along with other national poultry groups, recently completed the update to the poultry Code through NFACC and the Animal Care Program is now under revision to align with the new Code. The revision process is also being conducted with NFACC through their Animal Care Assessment Framework.

But there is much more to implementing a national Animal Care Program than just having good standards. Here is a list of the other elements we have put in place to ensure credibility and accountability in the program.

- The program is audited annually, ensuring accountability from every farm
- 100% of farmers are now certified on the program. The program is mandatory, ensuring participation and compliance from all farmers
  - All 10 provinces have made, or have approved making, the Animal Care Program mandatory
- The program has strict enforcement measures to offer additional assurance
  - Thanks to supply management, the provincial boards are able to use monetary penalties, a reduction in allocation or license suspension as measures of enforcement
- We ensure that the whole industry is informed and involved
  - Removal of certification is communicated to hatcheries and processors
- Third party audits of the Animal Care program are now conducted annually to offer credibility and ensure consistency across the country

We believe that good animal care starts with good animal health, and to protect the health of the birds, one of the tools farmers have available to them is antibiotics. Responsible use of these tools is critical to preserve treatment options for both humans and animals. The responsibility of resistance issues is shared between human and animal medicine and Canadian chicken farmers are doing their part by implementing an industry-wide antimicrobial use strategy. This strategy aligns with the federal governments' Action Plan on Antimicrobial

## Key elements of the industry Antimicrobial Use Strategy

Defining antimicrobial use and analyzing antimicrobial resistance trends

Reviewing best management practices and reducing antimicrobial use

Ensuring effective controls of antimicrobial use in Canada

Researching and determining the availability of alternative products

Educating stakeholders on the issues of antimicrobial use and resistance

Resistance and Use, of which CFC is supportive. The industry strategy reflects the objectives of the governments' 3 pillars of surveillance, stewardship, and innovation.

This strategy has been implemented since 2012. This is also the year when CFC began collaborating with the government for surveillance at the farm level for both antibiotic use and resistance. The Canadian Integrated Program for Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance (CIPARS) carries out this work through the Public Health Agency of Canada. Chicken farmers have granted the government access to their farms so that we can better understand these issues. From this data we have learned that the majority of antimicrobials used in poultry production are not used at all in human medicine<sup>1</sup>.

The biggest step in the Antimicrobial Use Strategy came in 2014 when the chicken industry eliminated the preventive use of Category I antibiotics - those most important to human medicine. It's a big step, and there are more to come. The industry is working right now to evaluate further antibiotic use reduction that will help address the issue of resistance while still ensuring we can protect the health of our birds.

1. A. Agunos, D. Léger, S. Gow, C. Carson, A. Deckert, R. Irwin and R. Reid-Smith, "Antimicrobial use monitoring in Canadian broiler flocks- Results from the CIPARS farm surveillance program (2014 update)," in *Proceedings of the sixty-fifth western poultry disease conference*, Vancouver, 2016.

Research and innovation is the foundation that provides farmers with the information and tools to be able to protect bird health and welfare – it's what helps us to continually improve. CFC is a founding member (along with the other national poultry groups) of the Canadian Poultry Research Council (CPRC), and the majority of CFC's research funds are directed through the council. To date the Canadian poultry industry has invested over \$3.5 million through CPRC, which has been matched by government and other agencies to over \$18 million. Nearly half of this research funding has been directed towards bird health and antibiotic alternative research, and approximately 22 projects have been funded to address animal welfare.

So whether it is ensuring antibiotic use is responsible, looking to the latest science to improve production practices, or implementing the Animal Care Program standards each and every day, Canadian chicken farmers are dedicated to protecting bird health and welfare.

## *Producing safe chicken for Canadians*

### Highlights

- Chicken Farmers of Canada is implementing a national, mandatory On-Farm Food Safety Assurance Program which has received full recognition from the federal, provincial, and territorial governments
- The Canadian chicken industry has an effective and responsive traceability system in place, as well as communication and operational plans for dealing with potential disease outbreaks

We believe that food safety begins on the farm. That's why we've implemented a program to ensure that we are providing Canadians with the safe, fresh, high-quality chicken they expect. And that's also why we have plans and protocols in place for traceability and effective response in the case of a disease outbreak.

The On-Farm Food Safety Assurance Program (OFFSAP) was implemented on chicken farms across Canada in 1998. OFFSAP emphasizes animal

health, cleanliness and safety throughout each step of the production cycle, and follows strict biosecurity measures to protect animal health and prevent flock infections from outside sources. The program was developed using HACCP principles, which is an internationally recognized approach to food safety.

OFFSAP sets out the standards that chicken farmers from coast to coast are implementing to ensure that all the chicken they produce is safe for their family, and all Canadian families. This includes adhering to mandatory withdrawal times for any medication administered to the birds, to ensure that no residues remain in the meat we eat. It's a common misconception that

chicken is "full of antibiotics", but it simply is not true. Antibiotic residues are actively inspected by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and are not an issue in Canadian chicken meat.

We are proud to report that in March 2013, CFC was granted full federal, provincial and territorial government recognition for the On-Farm Food Safety Assurance Program. CFC is the first commodity organization in Canada to achieve this level of government recognition for a food safety program. Recognition acknowledges that a food safety program has been developed with HACCP principles; conforms to government legislation, policy and protocols; and that a Management System has been implemented in an effective and consistent manner. Regular reviews are conducted by CFIA, the most recent being successfully completed in 2015 to indicate that OFFSAP remains current, technically sound, and consistently implemented. This achievement reflects the commitment of all chicken farmers to maintain a comprehensive, national food safety program.

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The CFC animal care and food safety programs are managed together under one system, so the elements described above which lend credibility to the Animal Care Program, apply equally to OFFSAP. Annual audits of both programs are carried out by approximately 35 trained and qualified auditors across the country.

All 10 provinces have now made OFFSAP mandatory. Thanks to our system of supply management, mandatory means just that – farmers must be certified on the program to sell chicken in Canada and there are enforcement measures in place to ensure compliance. As with the Animal Care Program, 100% of farmers are now certified.

Our commitment to continuous improvement extends to producing safe food as well. We are currently on our 5<sup>th</sup> version of OFFSAP, with regular updates to ensure the standards are up to date with

the latest science. And CFC has invested in over 40 projects through CPRC related to bird health and food safety research.

OFFSAP ensures proactive biosecurity measures are in place to keep pathogens out. However, even with the greatest precautions, disease outbreaks can still happen, and we've ensured that the industry is prepared for that too. We want to do everything possible to minimize any potential impacts on the birds, and on chicken farmers' ability to continue producing safe chicken for Canadians. That's why CFC and all ten provincial boards maintain up-to-date Emergency Response Plans to deal with these rare incidents. These plans are in place to address both operations and communications in an emergency situation. They set out protocols and procedures to ensure that actions are taken quickly and effectively to limit disease spread, and that communication between all stakeholders is clear so that everyone remains informed and able to effectively support the operational response.

In addition to this, each Provincial Board is part of an Emergency Response Committee with industry, CFIA and provincial governments. All Provincial Boards have either formal or informal data sharing agreements with provincial governments and CFIA to ensure emergency response is fast and efficient.

As part of our work on emergency response, in 2006 CFC began participating on the Industry Government Advisory Committee established to lead the development and implementation of the National Agriculture and Food Traceability System. Because of our supply management system, the Canadian chicken industry already meets the government traceability objectives with bird movement through the supply chain well-documented. As an example, all commercial chicken farms are mapped by GPS and within 24 hours, in the case of a disease outbreak, premises can be identified and data can be generated to implement movement controls.

There's a lot that goes into producing safe chicken for Canadians – and Canadian chicken farmers take great pride in doing it.





## ***Preserving the health of the land and of our farms***

### Highlights

- Canadian chicken farmers have adopted practices on the farm to reduce environmental impact
- The chicken industry's environmental footprint has the lowest greenhouse gas intensity
- Canadian chicken farms are healthy and vibrant, welcoming new entrants each year to a strong community of family farms

The health of our birds and the health of our farms go hand in hand. Healthy farms means not only protecting the natural environment but also protecting the health of farm workers through safe farm practices, and ensuring farms remain healthy and vibrant by encouraging new entrants to the industry.

No one depends more on the land, soil, and water than farmers. Through the implementation of sustainable, good production practices, chicken farmers are taking steps to ensure that our industry is environmentally sustainable. For example, approximately 60% of Canadian chicken farmers are enrolled in their provincial Environmental Farm Plan. This program evaluates farms in terms of environmental strengths and potential risks and farmers then develop action plans to address those risks.

We know through our most recent farmer survey in 2014 that 74% of Canadian chicken farmers have

made, or are planning to make, improvements to their operation regarding environmental issues. For example, these farmers already have, or are planning to:

- Improve electricity usage (67%)
- Improve heating efficiency (51%)
- Improve ventilation (49%)
- Improve storage of manure (42%)
- Improve water treatment (37%)

Here is a short list of some other examples of the innovative practices that farmers have adopted to reduce environmental impacts of the farm:

- Renewable geothermal heating
- High efficiency lighting
- Interventions to reduce phosphorus in the manure
- Covered manure storage with an impermeable liner to prevent groundwater contamination
- Biomass as a heat source

As those examples show, our commitment to continuous improvement extends to environmental practices as well. In fact, CFC is currently in the process of conducting an environmental life cycle assessment of Canadian chicken. This is an internationally recognized approach to assess the impacts associated with all stages of production, and will help the industry determine which aspects of production are efficient and where improvements can be made to reduce environmental impacts.

As with protecting bird health and welfare and producing safe chicken, the industry is also looking





to the latest science to help improve the environmental performance of our farms. To date, CFC has invested in 12 different research projects through CPRC looking at environmental issues and solutions for the poultry industry.

In terms of environmental footprint, we know through research that per unit of protein, the Canadian chicken industry has the lowest greenhouse gas emission intensity - 10.6 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent - among all the livestock commodities<sup>2</sup>.

Protecting the health of the land would not be possible without healthy farmers and a strong network of new and young farmers to carry on the work of the older generations. There are approximately 2,800 chicken farmers in Canada, and over 90% of farms are family-run. And the Canadian chicken industry is growing – in fact, about 4% of our farmers are young farmers, between 18 and 29 years old. Between 2013 and 2014 alone, over 20% of farmers built new barns, did substantial upgrades to new barns, or both. Chicken farmers of Canada are also proud sponsors of the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum to support the new generation of farmers in Canada.

The health and safety of those who work on the farm is a key component of sustainable farms. That's why provincial worker safety and farm safety programs are in place throughout the country. These help to educate and emphasize ways to avoid

accidents and control hazards on the farm.

Whether it's adopting more environmentally friendly practices on the farm or welcoming new entrants to the industry, Canadian chicken farmers work to preserve the health of the land and the health of their farms.

***Supply management is the foundation that makes the Canadian chicken industry sustainable, and makes everything we do possible.***

## ***Providing value to Canada, and affordable food to Canadians through supply management***

### Highlights

- Supply management allows farmers to invest with confidence in their operations, for the industry to contribute positively to the Canadian economy and give back to local communities, and for consumers to be assured of a steady supply of fresh, high-quality chicken at a reasonable price.

Supply management is the foundation that makes the Canadian chicken industry sustainable, and makes everything we do possible - from implementing and enforcing on-farm food safety and animal care programs, to funding innovation and research, contributing to the Canadian economy, and giving back to Canadian communities.

Supply management began for the Canadian chicken industry in 1978. It's a risk management method that allows farmers across the country to match their production to Canadian demand. In other words, we carefully figure out how much chicken Canada will need and farmers make sure to produce that amount.

The average price farmers receive is about \$1.58 per kg of chicken as the flock leaves the farm. This "live price" mostly goes toward covering the cost of feed and chicks and it's the only price chicken farmers get to negotiate.

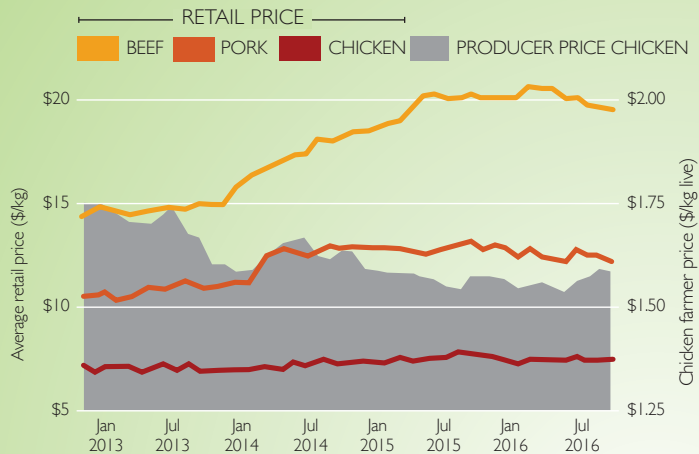
In terms of economic contribution, the Canadian chicken industry:

- Sustains **87,200** jobs
- Contributes **\$6.8 billion** to Canada's Gross Domestic Product
- Pays **\$2.2 billion** in taxes

And supply management provides food affordability for Canadians. By using this system, consumers are assured a reliable supply of fresh, high-quality chicken at a reasonable price.

2. J.A. Dyer, X.P.C. Vergé, R.L. Desjardins and D.E. Worth, "The Protein-based GHG Emission Intensity for Livestock Products in Canada," *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*, vol. 34, pp. 618-629, 2010.

Chicken is the least expensive and most popular meat protein in the country – having risen by only 7.1% since 2013, compared to 33.7% for beef and 19.2% for pork.



With farmers receiving a fair return for their work, supply management also eliminates the need for subsidies or relying on taxpayer dollars: it allows for a healthy, sustainable industry where farmers can reinvest with confidence in their communities and business.

Canadian chicken farmers also support rural communities through their day-to-day business. The chicken industry purchases 2.7 million tonnes of feed and grain from local feed mills, and nearly 662 million chicks from local hatcheries annually, supporting other farmers in turn.

Canadian chicken farmers believe that it's important to give back to our communities and support those who are less fortunate, and the stability of supply management allows us to do that. For example, CFC has been a proud partner and supporter of the Ottawa Food Bank since 2007. Our annual Chicken Challenge food donation program provided \$50,000 worth of frozen chicken products to the Ottawa Food Bank in 2016. This brings our total contributions since we became partners and supporters in 2007 to \$430,710. And Provincial Boards have additional campaigns and programs that give back to local communities and support those less fortunate. 🐔

Canadian chicken farmers are proud to provide value and stability to Canada and Canadians through supply management.

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