

THE CHICKEN FARMER

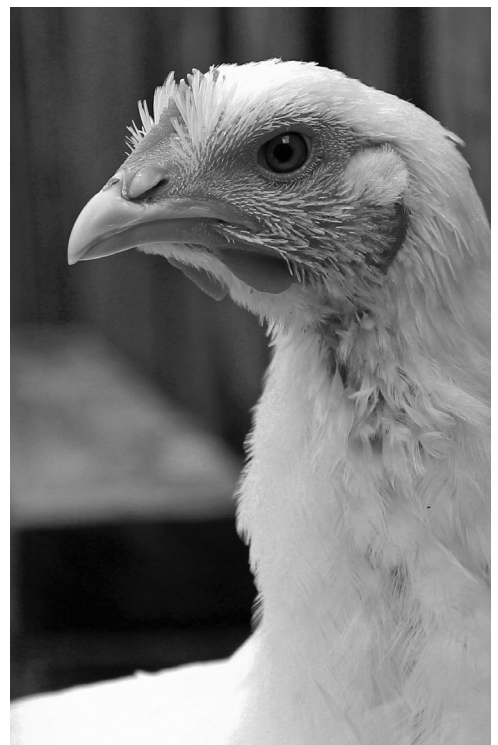
New Poultry Code of Practice is Complete!

The Code of Practice for Chickens, Turkeys, and Breeders, which has been under review through the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC), is now complete. Because of the number of sectors involved, this was one of the most complex Code development processes completed to date for NFACC.

The draft Code was made publically available on NFACC's website for a 60-day comment period ending December 4th last year. The Code Development Committee met twice earlier this year to review the nearly 900 comments that were submitted and to make any necessary changes to the draft. Comments were received, both from members of the general public as well as associations and companies representing both industry and animal welfare groups.

"The Code Development Committee has worked hard on developing the draft Code and the public comment period has allowed us to check our work with a broader representative group," said Vernon Froese, Chicken Farmers of Canada Director and Code Committee Chair. "Our Canadian Codes are developed through a unique

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process where all stakeholders work together to set the standard for animal welfare on Canadian farms. Chicken Farmers of Canada is proud to be a part of NFACC and of the Code process.”

The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals. There is a diverse group of stakeholders involved, bringing credibility to the Code process. These include farmers, transporters, veterinarians, animal welfare and enforcement agencies, retail and food service organizations, processors, governments, and researchers.

Chicken Farmers of Canada actively participated on the Code Development Committee, with Director Rudy Martinka also acting as our direct representative. Our Animal Care Program is based on the previous Code and will be reviewed and updated to be in line with the new Code.

Find out more about the Code development process in these two videos: *Raising the Bar: The Code Development Process* (the seven steps of a Code's development) www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2cvixnA_MQ and *Key Features of the Code Development Process* (features sustainable animal welfare improvements and public trust) www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFbyJlFqwnM.

The final draft of the Code is expected to be released June 15th. Stay tuned for highlights from the new Code in the next issue. 

Antibiotic Reduction: Proposed Targets for Preventive Use

The issues of antimicrobial resistance and use have garnered significant attention in both the public health and agriculture sectors.

For Chicken Farmers of Canada, antimicrobial resistance and use has been a critical priority – a fact that was demonstrated by our leadership in eliminating the preventive use of Category I antibiotics in May 2014. Further to this, decreasing the use of antibiotics of human importance is a key component of the industry's five-year strategic plan.

To this end, we commissioned a working group to determine the best antibiotic reduction strategy. The working group was comprised of farmers, veterinarians, feed mills, hatcheries, processors, and academia.

The working group has proposed the following strategy:

1. to eliminate the preventive use of Category II antibiotics by the end of 2018
2. to eliminate the preventive use of Category III antibiotics by a date yet to be determined

Chicken Farmers of Canada Directors have received this proposal and are now in the process of consulting with a broader set of national stakeholders to determine the feasibility and practicality of the proposed strategy. The Board of Directors has not yet taken a decision on the proposed strategy.

The working group felt that a date of implementation for Category III antibiotics could not be assigned until Canada modified its regulatory approach to classifying zootechnical feed additives. Currently, Canadian farmers do not have access to the same number of zootechnical products (e.g. probiotics, prebiotics, enzymes, etc.) and the claims for which they are approved in other countries. The working group also considered the possibility of eliminating the therapeutic use of Category I antibiotics, although there was no consensus on this issue.

While demand for products from retailers and restaurants that meet the “Raised without the use of antibiotics” (RWA) label have increased recently, this is not the objective of the Chicken Farmers of Canada strategy. Rather, we are seeking a reduction policy that will respond to the need for reduced antimicrobial use, while at the same time maintaining antibiotic availability and efficacy for the benefit of animal health and welfare.

The proposed reduction strategy is aimed at eliminating the preventive use of Category II and III antimicrobials. The use of ionophores (Category IV) and chemical coccidiostats would continue to be utilized. The benefit of implementing a strategy is to provide confidence to consumers.

The proposed strategy does:

- Continue to allow the use of ionophores and chemical coccidiostats for prevention
- Continue to allow use of antimicrobials for treatment of sick birds
- Provide a phased approach eliminating the preventive use of antimicrobials that are important to human medicine
- Address the need for increases in production costs to be accounted for in the live price

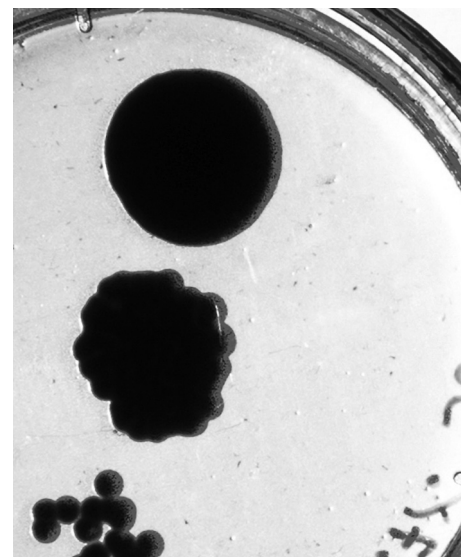
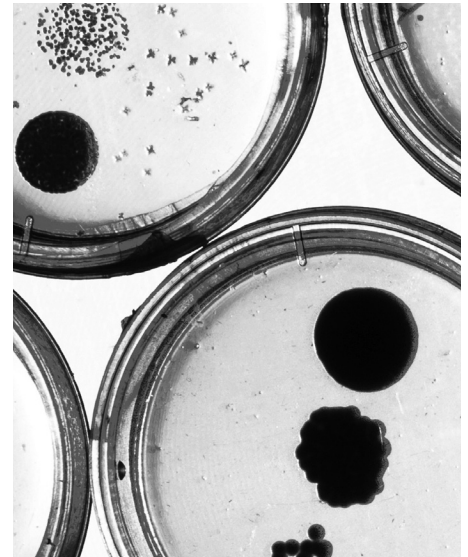
The proposed strategy does not:

- Push the industry towards “Raised without the use of antibiotics”
- Remove the ability to treat sick birds

The strategy is built on six key action plans that will be necessary to ensure success which are:

1. Industry-wide commitment
 - Commitment from all stakeholders is required to ensure success.
2. Increased access to and labelling of alternative products
 - Canadian farmers need access to similar antibiotic alternative products and claims that are available in other countries.
3. Support and Implementation of Best Management Practices
 - Extension services will need to be provided to all stakeholders in the chain to help implement production changes.
4. Economics
 - The live price for chickens needs to take into account increased production costs associated with the reduction strategy.
5. Surveillance
 - A credible surveillance program is needed that will provide feedback and benchmarking to farmers.
6. Promotion
 - A consumer relations strategy and a customer relations strategy to promote the industry's actions are needed.

Chicken Farmers of Canada's national consultation will continue through June asking if the objectives are feasible, if the timelines are reasonable, and if the industry should also consider eliminating the therapeutic use of Category I antibiotics. **CF**



NEWS FROM THE HILL



Budget 2016

The 2016 Federal Budget was presented by Finance Minister Bill Morneau on Tuesday, March 22nd, focused on strengthening the economy, and growing the middle class.

Prior to the budget being announced, Chicken Farmers of Canada made a submission to both the Department of Finance and the Finance committee to outline the pressing issues facing the chicken industry in Canada.

More specifically, we highlighted that fixing the Duties Relief Program (DRP), and addressing the fraud that is occurring with the issues of spent fowl and specially-defined mixtures (SDM), would be of no cost to government, and would in fact create cost savings. This was made clear, in advance of March 22nd, when Chicken Farmers of Canada representatives met with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, as well as Finance committee members, to ensure the message was received.

Regrettably, the federal government did not use the budget opportunity to address any of the issues that have been afflicting the chicken industry for many years now, and overall only contained modest investments for Canadian agriculture.



REGRETTABLY, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DID NOT USE THE BUDGET OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS ANY OF THE ISSUES THAT HAVE BEEN AFFLICTING THE CHICKEN INDUSTRY

Agriculture investments outlined in the budget included measures in research and clean technology. Investments to strengthen and modernize Canada's food safety system will help farmers continue to provide safe, high-quality food to Canadians. With new funding from Budget 2016, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency can invest in systems that will help target inspection activities to the highest-risk domestic and imported foods. The CFIA will also enhance inspection activities abroad to assist in responding to food safety risks before they reach Canadian consumers.

While the chicken industry's issues have been ongoing for some time now, the announcement made with the conclusion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement included anti-circumvention measures to combat the fraud that has been occurring in the DRP, and with spent fowl and SDM. The budget referenced the TPP and the government's commitment to consulting Canadians, but did not address fixing our issues.

Chicken Farmers of Canada will continue to work with the federal government in ensuring the voice of our farmers is heard. **CF**

Third Party Audit of the On-Farm Food Safety and Animal Care Programs

Canadian consumers have high expectations of their farmers, from the assurance of a steady supply to ensuring excellence and best practices in food safety and animal care.

Canadian chicken farmers are proud to deliver on these expectations, with every flock they raise. Chicken Farmers of Canada's Animal Care and On-Farm Food Safety programs are concrete, accountable means of demonstrating the pride and commitment of farmers in raising the quality chicken Canadians can trust.

The On-Farm Food Safety and Animal Care Programs offer:

- A national set of standards to ensure consistency from coast to coast
- Auditable programs that ensure accountability from every farm
- Mandatory programs that ensure participation and compliance from all farmers
- Strict enforcement measures which offer additional assurance

To further demonstrate our commitment to On-Farm Food Safety and Animal Care, we are initiating 3rd party audits of its On-Farm Food Safety (OFFSAP) and Animal Care Programs (ACP) in 2016.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THE AUDITS?

Chicken Farmers of Canada has contracted with NSF-GFTC (Guelph Food Technology Centre) to conduct comprehensive audits covering all aspects of our on-farm program system by using PAACO-certified (Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization) auditors. The objective is to provide customers and consumers with confidence with regard to how chickens are raised in Canada.

Audits will be conducted:

- At the farm: producer audits will be conducted to ensure implementation of program requirements
- On the program auditors: Witness audits will be performed to evaluate auditor consistency
- At the national and provincial boards: National and provincial board audits will be performed to evaluate the management system implementation at the national and provincial levels

HOW MANY FARMS WILL BE AUDITED?

The audit sampling protocol has been determined by NSF-GFTC and is based on international standards (ISO Guide 65) – the square root of farms and provincial boards on an annual basis.

Each year, audits will be conducted on:

- 54 farms (spread across all provinces)
- 27 auditors (spread across all provinces)
- 3 provincial boards
- 1 national office

HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED AND REPORTED?

The 3rd party audit provider will be providing Chicken Farmers of Canada with separate reports covering the implementation of the programs at the national and provincial levels, the implementation of the OFFSAP and ACP program requirements at the farm level, and reports on the competence and consistency of the program's auditors.

These reports will be used to address any non-conformances within the system which will ensure that the integrity and implementation of our on-farm programs remain at the highest standard.

Chicken Farmers of Canada will continue to ensure that the whole industry is informed and involved. Industry reports will be shared with processors, retailers, and restaurants. These reports will provide an overall assessment of the effectiveness of program implementation at the farm level, of auditor consistency, and of management system performance. As always, provincial boards will continue to communicate to hatcheries and processors relative to the certification status of farmers. 



CPRC UPDATE

PROBIOTIC FORMULATIONS WITH IMMUNE ENHANCING ACTIVITIES FOR CHICKENS

Probiotics are live organisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host through improvements to the intestinal microbial balance. Several species of bacteria have probiotic activities. In poultry production, interest in probiotics stems from their use as alternatives to antibiotics and also as a strategy for control of microbes that cause food-borne illness in humans, e.g. *Salmonella*. The mechanism of action of probiotics in poultry is thought to include the maintenance of normal intestinal microbiota, changes in metabolism, and improvements to feed intake and digestion. Administration of probiotics has been shown to improve weight gain and feed utilization and to decrease mortality of poultry. Treatment with probiotic bacteria, particularly *Lactobacilli*, is capable of modulating multiple aspects of immune responses and can also enhance immune competence in chickens.

The Approach

Despite the beneficial effects, a limited number of probiotic products are currently available with proven immune enhancing capabilities in chickens. Dr. Shayan Sharif and his research team from the University of Guelph have developed a defined probiotic formulation containing several *Lactobacilli* with the ability to enhance immune responses and reduce *Salmonella* burden in chickens. These *Lactobacilli* were obtained from the intestines of healthy chickens, as these bacteria are normal inhabitants of the chicken intestine. Effects on growth, feed efficiency, immune system development, and immune responsiveness of birds were measured to further evaluate this probiotic formulation and to determine its safety and optimal route of administration. The long-term objective of this research is to develop cost-effective probiotic formulations for chickens that can enhance production, reduce colonization of food-borne pathogens, and enhance immune competence.

The Experiments and Results

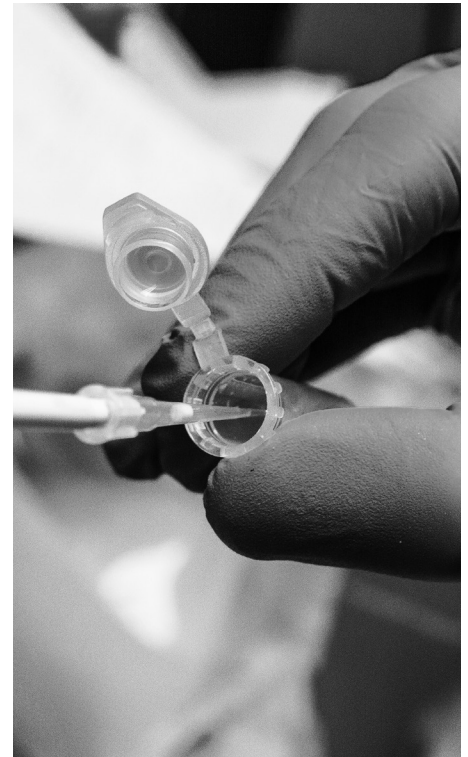
The safety of the selected probiotic formulation was assessed to ensure its suitability for use as a probiotic product. Laboratory (in vitro) and live-bird (in vivo) trials demonstrated that the probiotic formulation was capable of decreasing *Salmonella* colonization at specific doses, and could be delivered via a number of ways without reducing its effectiveness. Administration of this probiotic formulation into eggs (in ovo) had no adverse effects on hatchability and general condition of the hatching chicks. Chicks all had *Lactobacillus* present in their intestines at the time of hatch. The post-hatch growth performance of broilers that received probiotics was examined and the overall body weight gain, feed intake, and feed conversion ratio were comparable to those of the chickens receiving antibiotics in their rations. Chicks received the probiotic treatment on day of hatch or in ovo to determine how early colonization with probiotic *Lactobacilli* affects the development of the intestine. Overall the results demonstrate the ability of probiotic formulations to promote the development of the intestine.

In order to determine the effects of the formulation on immune response and protective immunity, the researchers measured the response to Avian Influenza Virus in chickens treated with the probiotic on the day of hatch. Results show that probiotic treatment improves the overall immunity of chickens and their ability to fend off influenza virus. The immune enhancing activity of the probiotic formulation was not limited to immunity against avian influenza virus and similar results were obtained when the probiotic formulation was used with a *Salmonella* vaccine. Overall, this study showed that under normal conditions, there is virtually no difference in some of the key production parameters in broilers fed antibiotic- or probiotic-supplemented diets. Also, chickens fed probiotics had lower *Salmonella* burden in their intestines and also had higher immunity against avian influenza virus and *Salmonella*.

THE FINDINGS

The findings show that this probiotic formulation is safe and highly effective in terms of reducing *Salmonella* burden in broiler chickens. This *Lactobacillus*-based probiotic has the capacity to enhance immune competence of broilers. Probiotics and antibiotics had comparable effects on production parameters. This research demonstrates that probiotics can provide a safe and effective feed supplement in broiler production.

This research was funded by the Canadian Poultry Research Council and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. 



THE NEW CPRC WEBSITE IS NOW LIVE! WWW.CP-RC.CA
CHECK IT OUT TO READ ABOUT RESEARCH PROJECT
REPORTS, UPDATES ON CPRC ACTIVITY AND THE
STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE ORGANIZATION. THE NEW
2015 ANNUAL REPORT HAS JUST BEEN POSTED AS WELL!

How to Generate 4,500 Jobs? Stop Illegal Imports

For many years now, the Canadian chicken industry has been losing market opportunities due to existing import control loopholes: a lack of verification of spent fowl imports, the growing use of specially defined mixtures to generate supplementary imports, and the inappropriate application of the Duties Relief Program to supply managed commodities.

There is a growing body of evidence that chicken is being illegally smuggled into Canada by being intentionally mislabeled as spent fowl. In 2015, Canada imported the equivalent of 95.5 per cent of the United States' entire spent fowl production, and spent fowl imports have been the highest ever in the first quarter of 2016, with 29 million kg entering the Canadian market in just three months.

In 2015, more than 3.5 million kgs of supplementary imports was generated by the intentional formulation of chicken products into non-import controlled specially defined mixtures through the simple addition of sauce. And finally, even though the Duties Relief Program was neither designed for and nor intended to apply to the agricultural sector, with up to four years to re-export and allowing product substitution, use of this program has been rapidly increasing, with chicken imports growing from 2.1 million kg in 2011 to 96.3 million kg in 2015.

Not only have these border control circumvention actions directly deprived Canadian chicken farmers of approximately \$139 million in farm cash receipts, they have also deprived the Canadian economy of at least \$112 million in taxes, \$335 million in contributions to the GDP, and nearly 4,500 jobs.

These issues date from long before Canada decided to enter into the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations. Yet it was only in its press release regarding the conclusion of TPP negotiations on October 5, 2015 that the Canadian government pledged it would intensify its work on finding long-term, meaningful fixes to end these border control circumvention practices.

According to its own press release, these fixes would include establishing a mandatory certification process for spent fowl imports, preventing importers from circumventing import quotas by simply adding sauce to chicken products, and excluding supply managed products from the Duties Relief Program. Chicken Farmers of Canada has even helped with the certification of spent fowl imports through the development of a DNA test the government can use to identify broiler imports that have been mislabeled as spent fowl.

However, more than seven months have passed since the government's announcement, and the industry is still waiting for any of these files to be moved forward. The Canadian chicken sector continues to suffer from the lack of government action on these issues, and the level of import circumvention abuse is increasing daily.

The Canadian government is right to take time to consult with Canadians on the TPP, and to conduct a thorough assessment of the trade deal's potential impacts. It is also wise for the Canadian government to monitor where the U.S. and Japan land regarding their decisions on the TPP as without these two countries the agreement cannot come into effect.

It is however equally incumbent on the government to put an end to border control circumventions that have long been inflicting economic damages on the Canadian chicken sector. Closing the loopholes on these three border control circumvention measures, which again are in no way connected to the TPP, will go far towards ensuring the continued success of the Canadian poultry industry – even in the face of the market share that will be lost should the trade agreement be eventually ratified.

The government of Canada is increasingly overdue on its own stated commitments to Canadian chicken farmers. It is time we are given the opportunity to grow more chicken in Canada instead of having our market undermined by illegal imports. **CF**





2016 Census of Agriculture Benefits Farmers

The Census of Agriculture is now on the horizon. In early May, you received a letter with easy to follow instructions on how to complete your questionnaire.

Census of Agriculture data are the definitive source of community-level data. By drawing on these data, decision-makers will be assured that they are acting in the interest of farmers, farm communities and agricultural operations.

Farm organizations are heavy users of census data and draw on this information to formulate policy recommendations, produce communications and outreach work, and conduct market development.

Regional, provincial and federal government policy advisors use Census of Agriculture data to help develop programs related to farm support and to evaluate the impact of natural disasters (such as floods, droughts and storms) on agriculture. This allows for a quick reaction when a natural disaster does occur.

The Census of Agriculture has other benefits:

- It identifies trends and provides factual information on emerging issues, opportunities and challenges within the agricultural community.
- Its questions cover a wide range of topics, such as land use, crops, livestock, agricultural labour, machinery and equipment, land management practices, and farm finances.

Support your community and complete your Census of Agriculture questionnaire in May 2016! It can be completed by anyone who is responsible for, or

knowledgeable about, the day-to-day management decisions of your farming operation. As required by the *Statistics Act*, the information you provide will be kept confidential and used only for statistical purposes.

Important changes made to the online questionnaire for 2016:

- Streamlined and easy to complete
- Shorter and 30% faster to complete than in 2011
- Respondents are no longer required to provide detailed farm expenses
- Automatically adds totals and skips questions that don't apply to your operation.

Completing your questionnaire online is quick and easy:

- Go to Statistics Canada's website at www.statcan.gc.ca and select the online questionnaire
- Use the secure access code you will receive in the mail in May and conveniently complete your questionnaire.

As a farm operator, you are legally required to participate under the *Statistics Act*. Although it is not the ideal time for completing questionnaires, conducting the Census of Agriculture at the same time as the Census of Population streamlines procedures and saves tax payers millions of dollars.

You can find out more about the Census of Agriculture here: www.census.gc.ca. **CF**



Got House Flies in Your Poultry Barn? Are you Searching for Control Options?

Poultry barns provide an ideal environment for house fly populations to thrive if sufficient control methods are not in place.

Controlling house fly populations is important for maintaining a healthy barn environment. Without control methods, large fly populations can:

- damage equipment and increase biosecurity risk
- decrease poultry production
- affect relationships with neighbours

Flies can also be carriers of food-borne diseases, carrying bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *E. coli* from one location to another.

Controlling flies involves the combined use of different methods:

- barn management
- biological control
- mechanical control
- chemical control

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' (OMAFRA) book, "House Fly Control in Poultry Barns," describes integrated pest management practices and provides information on different control methods for effective house fly control. The book is a great resource that can help you tailor fly control strategies to match your unique farming situation.

Visit ontario.ca/cca2 to download a PDF version of the book. You can also order free copies from ServiceOntario at ontario.ca/publications or 1-800-668-9938.

Visit ontario.ca/livestock for links to poultry resources, such as nutrient management and biosecurity information, and ontario.ca/cbly for information about poultry housing. Contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300 or ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca for more information on pest management, normal farm practices, and poultry farming. 