s expected, once the World Trade Organization resumed its activities at the beginning of September, negotiations intensified considerably. The talks on agriculture are one of the hottest areas. Meetings among experts and ministers from each of the key players took place throughout the past several weeks.

The general mood seems to favour the conclusion of a modalities agreement in Hong Kong this December. Although this is not the final agreement, but rather the level of ambition by which WTO members agree to negotiate, it will have a big impact in the long run as it establishes what they actually will need to implement in every country’s schedule of commitments.

There is much at stake for all of us in these trade negotiations and the closer we get to the Hong Kong Ministerial (December 13-18), the more active we must be in contacting our politicians and letting them know what we want and reminding them that Canada needs a good deal for all its farmers. Once again, this simple message has to be conveyed over and over: there is no room for cuts in our over-quota tariffs.

Recent developments and future agenda

September 13-14, Washington: Trade and agriculture ministers from the EU and U.S. met to discuss trade negotiations. The meeting was encouraging as both parties showed political commitment to advance the talks. They agreed that each would conduct its own technical analysis and would propose scenarios and options for tariffs and subsidies reductions.

September 14, Geneva: The WTO Trade Negotiations Committee had its first meeting after the summer break. Pascal Lamy, the new Director General of the WTO urged countries to get to work and have a draft modalities agreement done by mid-November. He is the former EU Trade Commissioner and his involvement in these negotiations was much anticipated and is now strongly felt. He wants the Doha Round to conclude as soon as possible.

September 22-24, Paris: A series of meetings took place between four key players in WTO trade negotiations: EU, U.S., Brazil and India. Some of the meetings allowed other countries to participate as well, including Canada.

The U.S. introduced a proposal for tariff reductions while the EU put four different tariff reduction scenarios on the table, with three options each. Some proposals covered reductions in domestic subsidies as well.

Week of October 3, Geneva: WTO negotiations on agriculture

October 10, Zurich: A mini-ministerial meeting hosted by the U.S. About 17 key countries were invited to participate, Canada included. Agriculture was high on the agenda.

October 11-13, Geneva: Another series of meetings, some of them at the ministers’ level, at the WTO. Among them, a G-20 ministerial meeting (the group of export oriented developing countries, where Brazil and India are leaders), and a second meeting of the WTO Trade Negotiations Committee. The presence of ministers in Geneva is supposed to give negotiators the necessary guidance to advance in drafting the modalities agreement.
Partners in Animal Care

Chickens are raised with care and conscientious manner.

**Code of Practice**

Animal care has always been a predominant concern in the minds of farmers. In fact, for the last 20 years all industry partners have worked to develop and refine the guidelines and regulations governing animal care practices in Canada.

For instance, chicken farmers follow the Recommended code of practice for the care and handling of farm animals: Chickens, Turkeys and Breeders from Hatchery to Processing Plant, which is a series of strict guidelines for the chicken industry.

This code was originally created over two decades ago and the most recent review was conducted in 2003 in cooperation with the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council, the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and with partners in all aspects of poultry production in Canada.

**A Leading Role**

The Canadian Agri-Food Research Council (CARC) provides leadership in coordination and networking of research and technology transfer and is a catalyst for building consensus on research prioritization in Canada.

In 1993, CARC was asked by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to take the lead, in cooperation with the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, in updating and developing codes of practice for the care and handling of farm animals. The development of the codes and the revisions that have been made represent the significance that all poultry stakeholders place on achieving appropriate animal care standards. A key emphasis is placed on updating the industry, and on updating the codes to meet contemporary management practices.

The codes are a symbol, both nationally and internationally, that the Canadian poultry industry promotes and adheres to animal care standards accepted by all stakeholders. The codes continue to be maintained on the CARC website (www.carc-crac.ca) and are copyrighted by CARC. Printed copies are also available and may be obtained directly from CARC.

**Proud Partners**

CFC is proud to be a part of the review process and firmly believes that animals should be treated with care. We work closely with our industry partners to ensure that stringent regulations on the care and handling of chickens are met and followed.

Some partners involved in the Codes of Practice are:

**Canadian Federation of Humane Societies**

The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (featured in our September issue of *Chicken Farmer*) is a national organization representing and speaking on animal welfare issues on behalf of more than one hundred provincial and local humane societies. Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and branches, and their more than 400,000 members.

**The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association**

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) has identified animal welfare as one of its three top priorities. The CVMA Animal Welfare Committee addresses a wide range of issues relating to animal welfare and veterinary involvement. The association has produced a series of animal welfare position statements (e.g. non-ambulatory animals, euthanasia, electro-immobilization), as well as general position statements (e.g. dentistry on animals, biologics, microchip implants) on a number of current issues.
Argentina chicken exports up sharply

Exports of raw and processed chicken soared over 70 percent in the first seven months of 2005 for Argentina poultry producers, to $47.7 million. The main growth was in fresh chicken; processed meat grew by 43 percent overall, to $4.5 million. Chile, Russia, the Netherlands and South Africa were the top destinations for fresh chicken; Germany, Congo and the Netherlands were the primary destinations for processed chicken meat.

Argentina traditionally produces slightly less chicken than Canada does (900 Mkg in 2004 compared to 946 Mkg here in Canada). They also export a similar amount of chicken with 114 Mkg over the past two years in comparison to the 150 Mkg exported from Canada in the same period.

Mississippi tallies agricultural losses from Hurricane Katrina

Mississippi’s poultry industry was hit especially hard by Hurricane Katrina, as approximately 300 poultry houses were destroyed and 2,000 others were damaged, the state’s department of agriculture and commerce estimated. Total agricultural losses from the storm in the region are expected to exceed $3 billion.

Mississippi accounts for about 10 percent of U.S. chicken production but much of the chicken produced in the region is exported to other countries, Russia in particular.

Prices in Russia rose approximately 18% in response to the shortfalls created by the losses.

Chickens can be selfish too

Researchers at the University of Alberta have discovered that hens can choose whether or not they’ll funnel the nutrients they eat towards themselves or their eggs. That phenomenon is a headache for producers who must figure out how to deal with less productive hens that “partition” nutrients needed for egg production into their own bodies. The birds that are channelling food into bodybuilding, instead of passing the nutrients along, are showing results including lower egg production and lower overall chick quality.

The research team has identified the importance of recognizing that poultry populations are made up of a collection of individuals – each with their own way of balancing their growth and reproductive priorities. The researchers have now broadened their focus to further explore the links between hen reproductive attitude and eventual broiler quality.
CFC and the SM-5 Meet Conservative Staffers

On Monday, September 19th, Chicken Farmers of Canada, along with other members of the five national supply management agencies (SM-5), held a briefing for Conservative assistants on Parliament Hill. You may recall that CFC and the SM-5 held a similar briefing last May for Liberal assistants.

With 15 political assistants in attendance, the goal of the session was to educate MPs’ assistants on the current realities of the dairy, poultry, and egg industries in Canada.

Among the political staff in attendance were senior assistants from the offices of Diane Finley, MP – Opposition Agriculture Critic; Ted Menzies, MP – Opposition International Trade Critic, and Senator St. Germain, Member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture.

Presentations included:

Who we are: An overview of the members of the SM-5 and their contributions to agriculture in Canada

Supply Management in Canada (The Three Pillars): An explanation of how supply management works in Canada and how it benefits both farmers and consumers

The State of Negotiations on Agriculture at the WTO: A brief history and technical explanation of the impact of the current international agricultural trade negotiations

What’s at stake: Potential impact of the trade negotiations on the 3 pillars and how the outcome of the WTO negotiations could affect Canada’s agriculture policy (post Hong Kong)

Where do MPs come in: What producers will be seeking from MPs/Senators/possible candidates leading up to the WTO meeting in Hong Kong

A question and answer period followed the presentations.

This briefing provided the opportunity to meet informally with political assistants from the Opposition and explain the issues facing the industry as well as the impact the current WTO negotiations will have on supply management in Canada. Participants were also able to discuss what MPs can do to ensure the future of supply management in Canada.

The breakfast briefing was a success and will hopefully lead to future – and better – access to opposition members of Parliament. While some good working relationships exist with some targeted opposition MPs, it has become increasingly important for the SM-5 to broaden its relationship base and reach out to other MPs as well. With this in mind, the SM-5 participants were also able to discuss what MPs can do to promote a no reduction policy in over-quota tariffs.

Scientists Narrow Down Causes of Campylobacter

The bacterium Campylobacter jejuni is a leading cause of foodborne illness in the United States. It can be traced to a variety of products including: poultry, cattle, swine, rodents, wild birds and such household pets as cats and dogs. Like some of the other types of foodborne illness, Campylobacter occurs naturally and is not an indicator or even a type of disease/sickness to the animals themselves.

Foodborne illness occurs when a person consumes food contaminated with pathogenic bacteria, viruses or parasites. This condition is often called food poisoning. Many cases of foodborne illness go unreported because their symptoms often resemble flu symptoms.

One of the keys to eliminating bacterial contamination and the causes of foodborne illnesses is to understand where they come from. Knowing where a pathogen can enter or affect the food chain is critical to implementing safeguards or eradication measures. In developing the Safe, Safer, Safest manual, the biological hazards of pathogens were taken into account, and process requirements were developed to reduce these hazards as much as possible.

While investigating the links to poultry, researchers found that the connection probably lies in the birds’ lungs, according to some recent U.S. research by three scientists working for the U.S. Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

Microbiologists Mark Berrang and Richard Meinersmann and animal physiologist Richard Buhr studied Campylobacter at several different stages.

When detected (it was not found in all samples), the Campylobacter was found to be of similar type and quantity, regardless at which stage the samples were taken. It was consistently found to be in the respiratory tracts and only occasionally in the abdominal cavity.

“This suggests the respiratory tract is an important source of Campylobacter” they conclude.

Safe, Safer, Safest – CFC’s on-farm food safety assurance program – has been designed to incorporate strategies that will reduce the presence of pathogenic bacteria. For example, proper pest control will help to eliminate rodents and other pathogen carriers. A complete cleaning and disinfecting of the entire barn (floors, walls, ceiling, machinery etc.) is the key to preparing the barn and ensuring that nothing is passed from flock to flock.