

Enhanced Biosecurity for CFC's On-Farm Food Safety Program

The 2004 outbreak of avian influenza has led to a review of the biosecurity protocols contained within CFC's on-farm food safety program, *Safe, Safer, Safest*. During the review process, the biosecurity component of the on-farm program was compared to those being used by other commodity groups, as well as other biosecurity programs used throughout North America.

While the *Safe, Safer, Safest* program included the majority of standard biosecurity program requirements, there were a few specific areas that needed improvement. As a result, the CFC Food Safety Committee made a series of recommendations to CFC's Board of Directors. The Board recognized the necessity for strong biosecurity in order to protect the whole industry. Accordingly, the Board accepted the recommended amendments.

The CFC Food Safety Committee encourages all farmers to take appropriate action on these amendments in order to be prepared for the "flu season" this winter. These new amendments will not become auditable standards until October 2005 – this will provide sufficient time for new material to be circulated and for any changes that need to be implemented on farm to be performed.

The amendments to *Safe, Safer, Safest* are as follows:

New Mandatory Requirements

- Farmers and all people entering the barn must take precautions not to carry pathogens from outside the barn into the Restricted Area (RA) by way of their boots.
 - This can be accomplished by having a dedicated pair of boots at each barn, by using plastic boots, by using a boot washing station or by other acceptable means. A footbath is not an acceptable method of decreasing the risk of contamination.



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- Visitors and farm workers must follow the farmers' shoe or boot biosecurity procedure before entering the barn
- The farm manager or employee must accompany visitors when accessing barns to ensure that biosecurity is respected; alternately, the farm manager must be confident that the visitor has been educated on the farms' biosecurity protocols.
- If a farmer or farm employee is involved in, or comes into contact with, another type of commercial poultry operation, adequate biosecurity measures should be in place and described in the farmer's standard operating procedures.
- Feed truck drivers must not enter the poultry barn unless access is necessary.

New Highly Recommended Requirements

- Farmers should not raise other poultry or birds, especially waterfowl, on the same farm site as chickens.
- The entry points (i.e. roadways) to the Controlled Access Zone (CAZ) should be clearly identified (by a sign or physical barrier).



Please see Biosecurity p.2



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Biosecurity...

- A step-over, a door or some other physical barrier should be used to maintain separation between the CAZ and the RA by establishing a designated area for staff and visitors to change footwear and coveralls.

The purpose for these biosecurity amendments is to enforce the separation between the Controlled Access Zone and the Restricted Area by limiting common contact between the two areas. Limiting common contact ensures that the possibility of cross-contamination is prevented as much as possible. Limiting what comes into contact with your flock is the best line of defence against viruses and bacteria.

These biosecurity measures are to be used during normal "peacetime" when a disease is not suspected or confirmed. Further work is being performed to determine what different "levels" of biosecurity need to be enacted depending on a suspect case or a confirmed disease case.

Farmers must enforce all possible biosecurity measures on their farms at all times-not only during a crisis. Please contact your provincial boards with questions about biosecurity or one of the requirements of the *Safe, Safer, Safest* program.

Chicken farmers are determined to prove the quality and the safety of their product. *Safe, Safer, Safest* ensures that top-notch safety procedures and standardized safety systems will be found on each Canadian farm. This will also ensure that Canadian chicken farmers continue to produce safe and high quality product, as they have been doing for generations.



Global Trade Liberalization?

According to a recent report from ActionAid International entitled "Power Hungry: Six Reasons to Regulate Global Food Corporations," activities of multinational food and agribusiness companies and their subsidiaries – such as Nestlé, Parmalat and Unilever – threaten the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of farmers in developing countries (DCs).

Two decades of economic liberalization have enabled agri-food multinationals to expand enormously in size, power and influence around the world; as a result, they now tend to directly control the production of small-scale farmers making them contract growers rather than independent farmers. Moreover, instead of helping DCs generate vibrant farm economies, these multinationals are having anti-development impacts on rural communities.

The report reveals that in Brazil, 50,000 dairy farmers have been forced out of business, after a series of takeovers by Nestlé and Parmalat. Moreover, a wave of mergers, acquisitions and business alliances in the agri-food industry has concentrated enormous market power in these corporations.

Snapshot:

- Trade within multinationals accounts for about 60% of all global trade
- In Côte d'Ivoire, four multinationals control 95% of cocoa processing
- In Peru, Nestlé controls 80% of milk production
- Three companies control 85% of the world's tea market



ActionAid is an international development agency whose aim is to fight poverty worldwide. Formed in 1972, the organization has built a history of working on behalf of the poor in 42 countries worldwide.

- Two companies handle 50% of the world's trade in bananas

In light of these facts, many countries and in particular DCs, desperately need some level of protection in order to develop their agricultural sector. To increase agricultural producer revenues, the agri-food multinationals need to be regulated.

Otherwise they will use and abuse their market power to drain wealth from rural communities by:

- raising the price of agricultural inputs
- engaging in unfair buying practices
- forming price-fixing cartels
- shutting local companies out of markets
- pushing down prices for farmers' goods

The gap between farm and retail prices is growing, and is wider in countries where agri-food corporations have concentrated market power. The World Bank estimates that the farm-retail price gap is costing commodity-exporting countries more than \$100 billion (USD) each year, and that anti-competitive behaviour by agri-food multinationals is a key cause.

Agricultural producers in Canada are fortunate to have collective marketing programs and supply management. This illustrates how important it is to maintain these tools that allow farmers to receive a fair share of each consumer dollar spent.





Government Looks at the Avian Influenza Outbreak

Last December, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture passed a motion authorizing a selected list of Committee members from all parties to conduct a fact-finding mission in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

The occasion provided a public forum for residents to discuss the lessons learned from the devastating outbreak of avian influenza in the Fraser Valley last spring. The public forum was held on January 18 and 19 and the standing committee will determine the need for a report to Parliament.

"For sanitary reasons, it was not appropriate for the Committee to travel to British Columbia during the avian flu outbreak," said Paul Steckle, MP (Huron-Bruce), Chair of the Standing Committee.

Instead, the Committee held an Ottawa briefing session in March 2004 and called for an eventual fact-finding mission after the outbreak.



The Committee members who attended the hearings in Abbotsford were:

- Paul Steckle, Chair (L)
- Gerry Ritz, Vice-Chair (CPC)
- Denise Poirier-Rivard (BQ)
- Rose-Marie Ur (L)
- Randy White (CPC)
- Peter Julian (NDP)

"It's good they're coming," Abbotsford MP Randy White, a special participant on the committee, said. "It's our opportunity to have our say without going to Ottawa."

Many requests were received to present to the committee during its two-day stay. The requests came from poultry

farmers, industry representatives, from individuals with backyard flocks and from poultry processors.

The visit to Abbotsford took place the day after Andy Mitchell, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) announced the completion of the CFIA's outbreak review.

"This (the outbreak) was an unprecedented event for industry, government officials and local residents", said Minister Mitchell. "We recognize there are always opportunities for improvement and we are committed to working with all stakeholders to follow-up on the lessons learned."

The CFIA recognized the necessity of a response to both its internal review findings, and those of the joint industry/government Poultry Forum held in October 2004.

As a key priority, the CFIA will be conducting a review of the current maximum values for the replacement of all livestock ordered destroyed as part of a disease investigation or outbreak response under the authority of the *Health of Animals Act*. This review process is expected to be completed in 2005.

Other activities identified during the internal review and the Poultry Forum include:

- enhancements to emergency preparedness plans
- supporting industry in the development of enhanced biosecurity measures
- approaches that will best limit the spread of disease during a potential outbreak

The poultry industry and the federal and provincial governments will continue to work together to ensure that Canada's poultry and egg farmers have access to the best resources available to respond to future disease outbreaks.



Food Freedom Day

As of Tuesday, February 8, the average Canadian had earned enough income to pay his or her grocery bill for the entire year. This is known as Food Freedom Day!

"When you are out this week buying your groceries, remember that you are getting some of the highest quality, safest and most affordable food in the world thanks to our Canadian farmers," said Bob Friesen, President of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA). "Think about this: Canadians will be working for many more months to pay off what they owe in taxes. But as of next week they will have made enough money to buy all their food for a year."

According to Statistics Canada, in 2003, Canadians spent 10.6 per cent of their disposable income on food. That number has dramatically decreased over the years. In 1997

Canadians spent over 12.5 per cent of their disposable income on food. By comparison, in Australia Food Freedom Day falls on February 12th, in Japan – February 20th in Iceland – February 27th, and Mexicans don't reach Food Freedom Day until March 4th!

The CFA wants to highlight the issue of the farmer's share of the consumer grocery dollar. Between 1997 and 2003, the price Canadian consumers paid for food increased by 13.8 per cent. By contrast, the average price received by farmers for their produce increased by only 2.1 per cent. This means the prices paid by consumers for food increased over six times more than the prices received as a return to farmers!





IN BRIEF

CFC takes advantage of great opportunity

Every winter, the world's longest skating rink, the Rideau Canal, welcomes more than one million visits from residents and tourists who enjoy a whole range of festivities and outdoor activities.

People of all ages come to enjoy the canal on skates, on foot and on sleds. This historic navigable waterway becomes a magical 7.8-kilometre roadway of ice in the very heart of Canada's Capital. This year, the Rideau Canal Skateway celebrates its 35th season!

To pursue this outstanding tradition, Chicken Farmers of Canada has become a Corporate Friend of the Rideau Canal Skateway. This will help maintain this famous international attraction and will support the outstanding operational programs that continue to improve public facilities and events on the Skateway!

Some of the other Corporate Friends include:

- RBC©
- CAA
- Beavertails®
- University of Ottawa
- Ottawa Senators Foundation

This is an example of corporate citizenship that has the added-value of linking Chicken Farmers of Canada with another tourist activity in the Capital. Our sponsorship package provides visibility at the canal, at National Capital Commission events and in regional advertising during Winterlude.

Tsunami Relief

CFC Directors have decided to support the tsunami relief efforts. A donation of \$10,000 will be given to the Canadian Red Cross to help with the cleanup and long term effects of the December 26th disaster.

The death toll is nearly 200,000, while another 500,000 were injured and nearly 2 million others are homeless across the 11 countries that were devastated on Boxing Day.

"The outpouring of care and generosity has been overwhelming here in Canada – and around the world," says Canadian Red Cross Secretary General Dr. Pierre Duplessis. "We'll have enough to complete our tsunami relief, recovery and rehabilitation programs over the next ten years."

The 181 national societies belonging to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) have collected \$1.4 billion for tsunami aid so far – including \$160 million from individuals, corporations and governments of Canada.

Class Action Suit could reshape U.S. chicken industry

A Texas courtroom is the scene for a fight between chicken farmers and Pilgrim's Pride in a class action lawsuit that could shake up the U.S. chicken farming industry.

The basis of the lawsuit is what the farmers consider unfair and manipulative business practices by Pilgrim's Pride. The farmers are resisting the limitations imposed by a new growing contract and unfair pressure to drop legal claims against the company.

Farmers are complaining that Pilgrim's Pride is forcing all growers to sign new contracts, even though many of the existing contracts are not yet due. In the new contract, the growers must agree to drop any claims – such as a personal claim or a class action lawsuit against Pilgrim's Pride – and that any future issues must be handled by arbitration with limits in place for damages.

The lawyer for the farmers, Kelly Tidwell of Texarkana, Texas, included a request that a notice be sent to all growers informing them of their rights, especially those they would give up by signing the new contract. Farmers allege that they were coerced into signing the new contract when threatened with the withholding of chicks. A supporting transcript from a taped conversation was submitted with the motion.

Pilgrim's Pride filed the following response.

"... (The chicken farmers) do not proffer any evidence that growers Pilgrim's contacted about signing new contracts were threatened, abused or coerced in any way about exchanging their alleged rights in this lawsuit for those new contracts."

Pilgrim's Pride says the new contracts were necessary with its acquisition of WLR Food Inc. and ConAgra Poultry to create uniformity in its contracts for all its growers.

"... Moreover, (the chicken farmers) have no occasion whatsoever to question or critique when Pilgrim's will commence in unifying its grower contracts. (The chicken farmers) are not privy to Pilgrim's business decisions and can only present rank speculation as to what those business decisions mean."

Pilgrim's Pride is asking U.S. District Judge David Folsom, who has oversight of the case, to refuse the chicken farmer's request to send notices to all of the Pilgrim's Pride chicken farmers about their rights.

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