

THE CHICKEN FARMER

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Centre for Poultry Research Grand Opening

The Centre for Poultry Research (CPR), a joint project between McGill University and l'Université de Montréal, celebrated its grand opening on May 26th. The two facilities that make up the Centre — one at the Macdonald Campus of McGill (in Saint-Anne de Bellevue, QC) and the other at the Saint-Hyacinthe campus of l'Université de Montréal — were part of a \$7.5 million research complex that was funded with both government and private sources.

The CPR will provide researchers with access to the latest in cutting-edge technology to ensure that Canadian poultry farmers continue to raise safe, healthy and superior poultry. The initiative provides a venue for geneticists, pathologists, virologists and farmers to pool their know-how and provides a place for them to explore their passion for all aspects of the poultry sector.

The grand opening of the two facilities was held at the Montreal Science Centre and featured guided video tours of the new buildings along with several presentations. The event was well attended and was a great way to thank the many donors and industry stakeholders who were involved.

The Centre has been in progress for several years: first as a twinkle in 1998, then on paper, and finally as a reality in May 2005.

Funding for the initiative

Chicken Farmers of Canada and the Quebec provincial board, (*La Fédération des producteurs de volailles du Québec*) both made significant contributions (\$200,000 and \$250,000 respectively) to the project, demonstrating that research continues to be a key priority for farmers.

Provincial and federal government funding was also provided — \$2.11 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation, as well as \$2.11 million from the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport*.

Private sector donors, such as the St. Hubert restaurant chain, Cara Foods and other regional poultry industry



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Donald McQueen Shaver, seen here with one of the new donor boards, attended the grand opening and naming ceremony of the new Poultry Complex at McGill's Macdonald Campus. The donor boards will be posted at both of the new Poultry Research Centres.

stakeholders also include CFC and the Quebec Board. Their total contributions came to approximately \$3 million.

The new McGill centre

McGill University was pleased to name their new poultry facility in tribute to a generous friend and long-time supporter of research at McGill — Dr. Donald McQueen Shaver. Dr. Shaver has been a supporter of research and teaching at McGill for over 20 years. When Dr. Shaver retired in 1985 as President and CEO of Shaver Poultry Breeding Farms, his company was operating in 94 countries and its chickens produced one third of the world's white eggs.

In 1978, Dr. Shaver was named a Member of the Order of Canada. In 1990, he was promoted to Officer of the Order of Canada for being one of the country's foremost leaders in increasing food production and "an extraordinary ambassador for Canada, whose numerous honours and awards have brought prestige to Canadian agriculture."

The new facility completes the third and final component of The R. Howard Webster Centre for Teaching and Research in Animal and Poultry Science. It replaces an aged barn, originally built in 1907 and renovated in the 1950s.

To ensure the safety and health of the birds, the new building includes some high-level biosecurity measures that include:

- shower stalls in the entry hall
- antiseptic footbaths outside each research section
- high-pressure hoses to disinfect individual research areas when an experiment is completed
- a conveyor belt that runs in a separate corridor to remove manure and bedding

Please see CPR, p.2



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Poultry research at l'Université de Montréal

The new research centre at the *Université de Montréal* campus in Saint-Hyacinthe will be a key resource in the fight against pathogens, bacteria, viruses and parasites. The centre contains Canada's only Level 2 biosecurity research facility that is exclusively for poultry.


The new Level 2 lab has the following features:

- Shower in/out access
- Independent ventilation for each room
- Incubators/hatchers with 300 egg capacity
- A food safety laboratory
- Different types of research space that can

accommodate a variety of bird types

- Areas for further study

The facility needs a high level of biosecurity in order to work with microorganisms and pathogens so they can study disease management (by comparison, the National Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg where SARS research was done is a level 4 facility).

"By creating this Centre, McGill University and l'Université de Montréal are positioning themselves at the forefront of poultry research and will be able to rival the world's best universities," says *Université de Montréal* tenured professor, Dr. Martine Boulianne. "We will see the impact of our research on our dinner plates!" 

Following the Trends – Food Marketing Institute Show 2005

The Food Marketing Institute recently held its annual show in Chicago from May 1-3, 2005. This show gives attendees a glimpse of new products that will hit grocery shelves, along with an opportunity to hear industry experts speak on a variety of topics, including trends. The information at the show is all U.S.-based, however the trends in Canada are similar.

Carb Craze Crashing

A focus this year was the ebb of the low-carb diet craze of 2003 and 2004. A significant segment of the population embarked on that particular diet trend and proved to be instrumental in influencing companies' decisions to manufacture a multitude of low-carb food options and make them readily available in grocery stores. This segment of consumers tended to represent higher income earners with participation from both men and women, which is not usually the case with dieting.

In 2005, however, these consumers have taken a less restrictive view of carbohydrates. It is predicted that the demand for low-carb alternatives on store shelves will be significantly reduced by the end of the year. More and more consumers are choosing "good" carbs (like whole grains) over "bad" carbs (like refined white flour); they are paying less attention to calories and don't claim to be on any specific diet. In essence, they are making their own.

Other Trends

The food guide in the U.S. was recently overhauled, placing a new emphasis on the relationship between food intake and physical activity. There is also recognition that one size of food plan does not fit all; this prompted the creation of 12 different "food pyramids" aimed at being interactive and helpful for all types of consumers.

Among the other interesting trends reported at FMI:

- Young adults (18 to 30) are interested in protein claims;
- Americans are buying more fresh sandwiches in restaurants and eating one frozen dinner entrée per week;
- Restaurant use of fruits and vegetables is on the rise;
- Consumers are using fewer fresh foods at home;
- The importance of convenient foods continues to rise;
- One in six dinner meals is from a restaurant;

- Consumers are looking for positive benefits from their food — purchases of fortified and functional foods continue to increase;
- A larger percentage of Americans are managing their weight for appearance as opposed to health.

American palates are changing. Citizens are looking for bold, exotic, hot, authentic, fresh, healthy and spicy foods. Americans consider these foods "traditional": Chinese, Italian, Mexican, Greek, Japanese, Cajun/Creole, Soul Food and Kosher. An "exotic" choice would include Vietnamese, Thai, Korean, Mongolian, Middle Eastern, Caribbean, Indian and Ethiopian.

Organics


Organic foods continue to grow in popularity in the U.S., where sales of organic foods and beverages reached \$10.9 billion in 2004, representing an 18% growth over 2003. However, only 30% of the U.S. population claimed to use organic foods, representing a decline of 19% from 2003.

The Natural Marketing Institute (NMI) has learned that organic attributes were more important to consumers than the foods themselves.

The NMI divides organic consumers into 3 segments – Devoteds, Temperates and Dabblers:

- Devoteds make up 9% of the U.S. population and contribute 40% of spending on organic foods;
- Temperates represent 17% of the population and contribute 50% of spending;
- Dabblers constitute 4% of the population and contribute 10%.

Here are some interesting trends discovered by the NMI:

- 98% of the Devoteds agreed that it is important that their store have foods that are grown without pesticides. 6% of the Temperates agreed.
- 75% of the Devoteds agreed that it is important that their store have foods grown on farms that practice sustainable agriculture. 51% of Temperates agreed.
- 88% of Devoteds agreed that it is important that their store have organically grown foods. 56% of the Temperates agreed with that statement. 



2005 Activity Report: Avian influenza project coordinator

The Canadian poultry sector is being proactive in addressing the issues and concerns associated with the prevention of and preparedness for avian influenza (AI) and other foreign animal disease outbreaks. This process ultimately involves developing appropriate responses to specific disease triggers and the development of industry recovery plans.

As previously reported, the four national feather agencies (Chicken Farmers of Canada, Canadian Egg Marketing Agency, Canadian Turkey Marketing Agency, and Canadian Broiler Hatching Egg Marketing Agency) in conjunction with the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council hired Bob Burden on February 21, 2005 as the AI Project Coordinator. His role will include ensuring the coordination of activities associated with AI preparedness, and also ensuring a consistent communication between all parties.

The following briefly outlines the basic context of each priority area, the activities accomplished to date, and what is expected to happen in the next few months.

1) The development of an emergency protocol that can be implemented within 24-72 hours following suspicion of a foreign animal disease outbreak

The national agencies have worked closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to develop and implement a framework protocol document. The intent of this protocol is to significantly reduce the amount of time required to make a decision on a pre-emptive cull.

A working session was conducted in B.C. on Tuesday April 26th and proved to be an excellent venue to work through the specific details of this protocol. The working group included CFIA, provincial veterinarians, all three levels of government, public health stakeholders, law enforcement officials, producer representatives, and provincial and federal emergency measures specialists.

Participants raised concerns about the application of the protocol, identified weaknesses from a provincial context and developed a process to address the weaknesses.

Ongoing Activities

CFIA has indicated that they are willing to work together to facilitate the extension of this process to other provinces. It is critical that the specific structure of the provincial industry demographics, provincial lab capability, and other response infrastructure features be incorporated in the disease response planning.

Provincial representatives are also currently reviewing the updated foreign animal disease eradication support plans (FADES). FADES are emergency response plans that specify roles and responsibilities of governments and organizations during a foreign animal disease outbreak.

2) The development of a funding framework for producer (and other stakeholder) compensation

The ultimate purpose of compensation under the *Health of*

Animals Act is to help ensure that producers report potential disease concerns to authorities in a timely fashion, and not suffer financial hardship as a result. The nature and amount of compensation must be fair.

There were a significant number of issues raised by the industry during the AI crisis last spring. The CFIA has committed to working with the industry to address these issues.

Ongoing Activities

CFIA has recently announced that it will be performing a review of the compensation maximums under the *Health of Animals Act*. The industry is hopeful that this review process, expected to be completed by the end of 2005, will help address issues encountered last spring. The issue of compensation cannot be separated from emergency planning activities and a number of valid approaches that could be simply implemented and fairly administered are being explored.

3) Consider and make recommendations on the national surveillance protocol

CFIA is planning a Canada-wide survey to determine the prevalence of low pathogenic (H5 and H7) avian influenza in Canada and to help establish protocols for an on-going avian influenza surveillance program.

All five national feather organizations support, in principle, CFIA's initiative to conduct an AI survey across Canada in the fall of 2005. The industry understands how important it is to both comply with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) rules, and to develop a benchmark of the current industry status.

The industry continues to work with CFIA to develop the surveillance protocol in order to reach the intended objectives while reducing the impact on farmers.

4) Develop a plan of action for the disposal of dead stock

This issue remains a provincial responsibility and protocol development will be dependent on the status of specific environmental legislation. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is currently developing a summary document of strategies and methods.

5) Support biosecurity activities

There are a number of provinces that have already completed a detailed biosecurity process document. Poultry Disease Emergency Response Plans from Ontario, B.C., Alberta, and New Brunswick were reviewed. While the level of detail varies, all appear to address the main areas of concern.

Ongoing Activities

The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (BCMAFF) has recently provided funding for the implementation of a broad spectrum of biosecurity

Continued from p.3, AI ...

programs. The next steps are to set up an Industry Advisory Committee and develop a strategic plan for the distribution of the funds. We hope to work closely with this group to help develop templates for evaluating the logic for implementation of specific activities in other provinces.

It is recognized that each province has a different operating reality, and what works in one will not necessarily work in another. However, there are some common standards that each segment of the industry can, and should work towards, regardless of geographic location. These are being identified.

In addition, we are currently pursuing funding opportunities that would enable the development of a producer biosecurity workshop series that could be implemented in every province. This series would be regionally delivered so that specific local operating factors are addressed.

Next Steps

On June 8th, CPEPC hosted an AI meeting in Calgary, Alberta during their annual summer convention. CFIA President Richard Fadden, CFIA's AI Coordinator Doug Steadman, Richard Tudor-Price from AAFC and Bob Burden (the poultry industry's AI Coordinator) joined other members of CFIA's team and feather industry participants to review the progress so far towards foreign animal disease outbreak preparedness.

This meeting demonstrates the collaborative effort between industry and the CFIA in developing emergency preparedness plans.

We will continue to monitor the issue closely and will report further on AI and other foreign animal disease outbreak preparations in future issues of *The Chicken Farmer*.

The EU agenda – To liberalize, or not to liberalize; that is the question

The European Union (EU) — and the United States — have recently had a series of clashes with China over the export of textile products. The dispute continues to make headlines and is certainly worth reviewing, as it highlights the ambiguous game that the EU has been playing at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Officially, the EU has been a champion in promoting the Doha Round as the one that will generate many benefits, especially for developing countries. Unofficially, their negotiating stance has been the exact opposite. For example, the decision to harmonize the tariffs of the 10 new EU members with the existing schedule.

The decision to harmonize tariffs will result in less market access for certain products where the EU plans to both reduce the additional tariff rate quota (TRQ) and establish a higher in-quota tariff rate. Despite the increase in consumers, (75 million people are being added with the 10 new members) the EU will continue to enforce low TRQs, thus limiting certain imports.

"Do as I say, not as I do"

In 2004, a group of non-government organizations (NGOs) lobbying for the protection of African poultry farmers launched a protest campaign against EU shipments of excess (and cheap) chicken products — also known as dumping — to African marketplaces. The cases of Senegal and Cameroon are the most noteworthy.

Poultry from local enterprises in these two countries sells for between 1.80 Euros (€) and €2.40 per kilogram (about \$2.88 - \$3.84 CAD/Kilogram). Their markets are currently

being flooded by EU imports being sold for only €0.50 per kilogram (\$0.80 CAD/kg).

Consequently, imports of frozen poultry in Cameroon have skyrocketed from 978 tons in 1996 to 22,154 tons in 2003. Senegal has experienced a similar situation with a 1,000% increase in imports over the last five years. About 70% of Cameroon's and 40% of Senegal's chicken farms have gone out of business.

At the time, Alain Melot, chairman of France's poultry trade association, simply declared that the EU imports represented "a good way of feeding a population with a weak purchasing power."

The shoe is on the other foot now

On January 1, 2005, the roles were reversed as import quotas on Chinese textile imports were removed as per the Uruguay Round agreement signed 10 years ago. This time, it's the EU market that is currently being flooded and up to 2.5 million jobs in Europe are in jeopardy. The EU wasted no time in moving to protect its industry by raising its textile tariff to 12%, four times higher than what it was prior to phasing out the quotas.

The situations described above clearly highlight the true nature of the trade talks and highlights the existence of sensitive sectors in every trading nation. Theoretically, there is broad support for free trade. But in reality, who can be sure?

So much for trade liberalization!

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