

New logo for *Safe, Safer, Safest* program

Farmers have put a lot of hard work into implementing the on-farm food safety assurance program – *Safe, Safer, Safest* – and want to broadcast their accomplishment to everyone.

Boast your accomplishment! Show it off to the world!

To promote this dedication, and to demonstrate the pride that chicken farmers feel in implementing the program and their operations, Chicken Farmers of Canada has developed a logo for *Safe, Safer, Safest*.

The new logo incorporates CFC's recognizable chicken graphic with an encompassing blue ring representing protection. The logo signifies that the farm is certified under CFC's on-farm food safety assurance program.



This logo is the final step in the demonstration that the program has been implemented and that the on-farm audit has been successfully completed.

The logo has been printed on a 17" reflective aluminum sign that can be mounted at the farm – whether it is on the front gate or at another highly visible location. The signs are being distributed by provincial board offices. Farms that are already certified should be receiving a sign in the near future, whereas other farms will receive a farm sign upon completion of certification.



IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Canadians Elect a Conservative Minority Government
- 3 Avian Influenza Survey Results
- 4 Agriculture Trade Talks Resume

For provinces that already have farm signs, the provincial board and CFC will be looking at ways to incorporate the new logo into these signs.

The farm signs not only indicate that the farmer has been certified, but that the farmer is continuing to follow the good production practices and critical control points and is participating in on-going audits.

Auditor Training

As part of the on-going maintenance of the food safety program, a set of training sessions were held for on-farm auditors in the late fall. The prime objective of these training sessions was to update the auditors on the modifications to the food safety manual.

These training sessions brought auditors together from across the country to make certain that auditing practices are consistent – ensuring the program requirements are met and each farmer is audited on the same basis.

These in-class training sessions will be followed up with in-field group audits in the spring for practical experience and to ensure consistency among auditors.

CFIA Full Recognition


The credibility of CFC's on-farm food safety program is provided through the recognition process developed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in cooperation with the provincial and territorial governments.

This recognition process has three steps.

In 2002, CFC completed the first step of the government recognition process by obtaining Technical Recognition from CFIA for the *Safe, Safer, Safest* producer manual.

The second step is to develop a Management Manual for the food safety program based on a set of requirements stipulated by CFIA and the provincial and territorial governments. The Management Manual contains protocols and procedures on how to manage the activity of auditor training, farm certification, producer manual maintenance as well as the protocols for confidentiality etc.

CFC has submitted the Management Manual to CFIA to undergo a Technical Review process to ensure that CFC's manual meets the required standards. Once this review is complete (projected for spring 2006), CFC, in coordination with the provincial board offices, will finalize the implementation of these procedures.

This will lead to the third step, an external 3rd party audit of CFC's food safety program – successful completion of this step will result in full CFIA recognition. 



Canadians Elect a Conservative Minority Government

On January 23, 2006, Canadians from coast to coast cast their ballots in the 39th General Federal Election, and the final tally gave prime minister-designate, Stephen Harper, and his Conservative Party a minority government, ending twelve years of Liberal governance.

While being elected with a slight minority – 124 seats out of a total of 308 – the change in government is historic because it represents a major shift in power from Ontario and Quebec to Western Canada.

How the Parties fared

The Conservative Party managed to break into Quebec, winning 10 seats, a mixture of former Liberal seats and some from the Bloc Québécois. The Conservatives also built up their presence in rural Ontario, with 40 MPs entering the House of Commons in 2006. As in the last election (2004), the Conservative stronghold continues to be the west, where all 28 seats in Alberta and the majority of seats in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and B.C. have become Conservative.

The Liberals did better than the pollsters had predicted, and secured 103 seats with strong showings in Ontario (54 seats) and Atlantic Canada (16 seats), but losing 8 important ridings in Quebec.

In addition, the Liberals will also be losing their leader, as Prime Minister Paul Martin announced that he will not be taking the party into the next election. Martin will hold on until the next leadership convention is held in early 2007. Bill Graham, outgoing Foreign Affairs Minister, will become the official Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons.

Canadians elected 29 New Democratic Party MPs, including Olivia Chow, NDP Leader Jack Layton's spouse. It will be interesting to watch this dynamic team on the Hill and in the House of Commons. The NDP has its highest number of MPs since 1988, when the party was under the leadership of Ed Broadbent. B.C. was the home of many three-way races, with the NDP beating out both Liberal and Conservative candidates. With their increase in seats in the House of Commons, the NDP is in a good position to influence public policy and push forth their priorities.

Quebecers elected 51 Bloc MPs, down from 54 in 2004, still representing a strong showing for sovereignty supporters in Quebec. Quebec also elected the lone independent MP.

For the first time, the Green Party ran candidates in all ridings and increased their overall popular vote, but the party is still seeking their first MP.

New Prime Minister – New Cabinet

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Cabinet were sworn into office on February 6. The following is a list of key Ministers with whom CFC will be working closely in the near future:

Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: Hon. Chuck Strahl

Minister of International Trade: Hon. David Emerson

Minister of Health: Hon. Tony Clement

Minister of National Revenue: Hon. Carol Skelton

Minister of Finance: Hon. James Michael Flaherty

New Government – New Mandate

Prime Minister Harper and his government come into power with a new agenda for Canada; the following priorities will be listed in the upcoming Speech from the Throne:

- Clean up government with a federal accountability act
- Reduce taxes, starting with a GST cut
- Crack down on crime
- Establish guaranteed wait times
- Provide childcare money directly to parents

After delivering the Throne Speech, the Prime Minister and his team will get to work. The Conservatives will begin to work immediately with their provincial counterparts by handing over more responsibilities to the provinces and perhaps giving them more control over taxation. Changes to the GST do not require legislation and can thus be passed by Order-in-Council prior to the tabling of the first budget.

It is highly probable that the federal government will begin drafting a budget as soon as a new Finance Minister has been sworn into cabinet. The new budget will likely be delivered this spring.

New Government – New Direction for Agriculture

Agriculture – and supply management – was a part of the overall Conservative election platform, released January 13, 2006.

"A Conservative government will:

- Replace the Canadian agricultural income stabilization (CAIS) program with separate farm income stabilization and disaster relief programs. The new income stabilization program must become a simpler, more responsive program that properly addresses the cost of production, market revenue, and inventory evaluation. The federal government should be ready to pitch in when disaster strikes, funding disaster relief separately above and beyond its income stabilization program.
- Commit to adding an additional \$500 million annually to farm support programs.
- Speed up delivery of the \$755 million in emergency aid the government promised grain and oilseed farmers in November.
- Ensure that agricultural industries that choose to operate under domestic supply management remain viable. Canada needs efficient production planning, market-based returns to producers, and predictable imports to operate domestic supply management systems.
- Give western grain farmers the freedom to make their own marketing and transportation decisions. Western grain farmers should be able to participate voluntarily in the Canadian Wheat Board.

Continued from p.2, Election...



- Defend Canada's agricultural sectors when negotiating international trade agreements. A Conservative government will seek better market access for Canadian agricultural and agri-food products in foreign markets. We will support the phased reduction of all trade-distorting barriers and the rapid elimination of all agriculture export subsidies. We will pursue strong, rules-based trade liberalization in conjunction with all other countries that are members of the World Trade Organization.
- Implement a Green Cover Crop Program to protect prairie farmers. Severe flooding in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba has adversely affected the opportunity for farmers to harvest their normal crop. A Green Crop Cover Program will create a compensation fund for farmers facing the devastating consequences of crop damage caused by severe flooding."

New Government – New Challenges for CFC

Canada's five supply-management industries (the SM-5) will work with the new government, as we have done in the past, to ensure that the Canadian government continues to defend supply management at the WTO and that the Canadian negotiating mandate upholds the three pillars of supply management.

The SM-5 has developed a comprehensive strategy aimed at ensuring the ongoing government support for supply management by providing the new Ministers of Agriculture and of Trade with the tools they require to make the best decisions for our industries.

CFC also intends to continue to work very closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency on farm and food safety issues such as avian influenza.



Avian Influenza Survey Results

Ipsos Canada recently released results from the first wave (November 2005) of its syndicated avian influenza (AI) surveys that are planned over the next few months. Top line results were forwarded to CFC.

CFC conducts its own surveys, which allow for more thorough testing of chicken-specific key messages and tracking against results from our previous surveys.

CFC also conducted an AI survey in November 2005, slightly before the Ipsos survey was conducted. While a direct comparison of results cannot be conducted, it is interesting to look at the results of both surveys.

Awareness of AI in the Ipsos survey was slightly higher than in CFC's survey, with 97% saying they are aware of AI compared to the 93% in CFC's survey. This could have been due to increased media attention shortly after CFC's survey was conducted, when avian influenza was discovered on a duck farm in British Columbia.

The Ipsos survey found that half of the population is rather unclear on the current situation. Also, 2 out of 10 are very concerned about the issue and 1 in 10 is very concerned that someone in their household will get sick from AI. Comparatively, 38% of those polled in CFC's survey somewhat to strongly agreed that they knew all they needed to know about AI. CFC's survey also showed that a majority of Canadians believe the virus will mutate into a human form, but they don't think it will affect them personally.

Consumption was another topic covered by the two surveys. Results tended to vary, but the CFC results showed that less than 1% of consumers had reduced their consumption of chicken due to concerns about AI.

CFC and other industry partners will continue to survey and monitor consumer trends to ensure that our industry remains responsive to their needs and concerns at any time.





Agriculture Trade Talks Resume

The first "agriculture week" planned for this year kicked off on January 23rd as WTO members gathered in Geneva and reflected on the Hong Kong Ministerial results. According to Chairman Falconer, the meeting took the form of a "silent appreciation" of the current status and recognition by delegates that political input is crucial to push the negotiations forward.

The U.S. and the EU in particular remain divided over what needs to be done to move the talks forward. Washington believes, as do many other Members, that the EU must come forward with an offer of deeper tariff cuts. However, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson summarily rejected this view insisting, as he had before and during the Hong Kong ministerial, that Brussels would not consider doing so until large developing countries such as Brazil and India proffered greater access to their own industrial goods and services markets.

Davos Mini-Ministerial

At the same time, a blame-game took center stage as ministers prepared for the Davos (Switzerland) mini-ministerial meeting of January 27 and 28, at the end of the "agriculture week". They started accusing each other of failing to take steps to break the deadlock in the Doha Round negotiations.

As was the case last year, foreign and trade ministers present at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos held an informal meeting with the ministers responsible for WTO issues.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss the next steps of the WTO Doha Round following the Hong Kong Ministerial in order to bring the negotiations to a close by the end of this year. Steve Verheul, chief agriculture negotiator, John Gero, chief negotiator, and Don Stephenson, Canada's ambassador, attended the meeting on behalf of Canada.


Ministers reiterated the commitment to the objectives agreed in Doha and Hong Kong. They addressed the decisions necessary to drive the Doha Round to a successful conclusion in 2006. In particular, they looked into the practical steps the negotiating groups should take to meet the deadlines set in Hong Kong. They agreed to promptly step up their own efforts with a view to bridging divergences. They agreed to stand ready to get involved whenever necessary to solve outstanding issues requiring political decisions and also acknowledged that progress should be made in all areas to reach a balanced overall outcome.

Doha Work Program – Timelines for 2006

To prove their determination, Ministers adopted a work program addressing all aspects of the negotiations and their respective timelines. In agriculture, Ministers agreed to respect all deadlines outlined in the Hong Ministerial Declaration:

- to establish full modalities no later than April 30, 2006, and submit comprehensive draft schedules based on modalities by July 31, 2006
- to complete disciplines on export credit guarantees or insurance programs, exporting state trading enterprises (STEs) and food aid by April 30, 2006 as part of the modalities

The reality is, with the months of January and February now in the books, WTO members have just two months in which to meet their end-of-April deadline for completing full modalities.

Already, whispers have started to float in Geneva stating that it does not matter so much if the April deadline is missed providing there are real negotiating movements underway. Many delegates believe that it would even be possible to delay the modalities package until the end of July 2006. Anything is possible, as long as the overall deadline of December 2006 is observed! 

Avian Influenza Damages Global Poultry Market


The ongoing spread of avian influenza (the Asian form of H5N1) is estimated to have caused an 8% drop in global trade in poultry products while pushing up prices by nearly 20% since 2003. This was the conclusion in a special report on the trade impact of the avian influenza outbreak prepared by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) at the end of 2005.

The report indicated more changes may occur as the disease continues to move within Asia and across to the Middle East and Europe.

Many countries have banned the import of poultry products from disease-hit regions. This has caused domestic poultry

product prices in the flu-hit countries to decline as exportable supplies moved back into local markets.

The FAO report points out that these trends will only be temporary, as chicken has constantly performed well in the past decade in terms of popularity and in per capita consumption.

Canada has not experienced any measurable impact on either prices or consumption. 

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