

Safe, Safer, Safest Completes Technical Review

Safe, Safer, Safest, Chicken Farmers of Canada's (CFC) On-Farm Food Safety Assurance Program, has cleared another hurdle on its way to achieving full recognition by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

In July, CFC received a letter of completion from the CFIA for the Technical Review Phase 2 process. The successful completion of the CFIA-led management manual review indicates that *Safe, Safer, Safest* adheres to the government's requirements and upholds the production of safe food at the farm level.

Phase 2's completion represents a coordinated effort by CFC and the provincial board offices to develop a functional set of procedures, while at the same time meeting the standard criteria set out by the government. The management manual proves to the CFIA (and consumers) that CFC's on-farm food safety system is well managed and contains effective controls.

CFC is only the second commodity in Canada to reach this stage of the recognition process. Dairy Farmers of Canada received their letter of completion in the spring of 2006.

Protocols and procedures in the management manual include methodologies for conducting an audit, granting certification, audit frequency, auditor training, confidentiality, conflict of interest and biosecurity during an audit, among others.

Having completed this step in the process, CFC – in close partnership with the provincial boards – will move to fully implement the management protocols and proceed toward full recognition of *Safe, Safer, Safest*.

Obtaining full recognition will involve undergoing a 3rd party audit by a CFIA-accredited organization to ensure that CFC is meeting the requirements as they are laid out in the management manual.

Steps of the Recognition Process

CFIA was identified to lead the recognition process, with provincial and territorial participation during the annual federal, provincial and territorial agriculture minister's meeting in



IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 • CFIA Appeals to Backyard Flock and Pet Bird Owners
- Russia Targets U.S. Poultry in WTO Spat
- 3 In Brief
- 4 Low Pathogenic Form of Avian Influenza Found in Michigan


Whitehorse in June 2001. The CFIA recognition process is a multi-party examination of the technical soundness and administrative effectiveness of on-farm food safety programs.

As part of the recognition process, CFC was required to perform several tasks and undergo three technical reviews, including third party audits, prior to receiving full recognition.



The first technical review was of the *Safe, Safer, Safest* producer manual and was completed in June of 2002. CFC was the first commodity in Canada to complete this review. The next step in the process was full implementation on all chicken farms in Canada. To this end, close to 75% of farms have been audited across Canada. In addition, several provinces including Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan have made the program mandatory, while others are moving in that direction.

The implementation of *Safe, Safer, Safest* represents extensive work by farmers and provincial chicken marketing boards to make this program a success. These participation rates put CFC in an excellent position to promote the program to all stakeholders and consumers.

Currently, there are over 19 commodities in Canada developing on-farm food safety programs. 

Activism Alert !

Late summer/early fall is usually the time when CFC advises provincial boards and producers to be extra vigilant about activist campaigns. It's a popular recruitment season for activist groups on campuses and in high schools.

Campaigns at schools and within activist groups could lead to illegal on-farm activities such as trespassing, breaking and entering, arson and vandalism.

In order to avoid taking unnecessary risks, we recommend that farmers keep farm gates closed and locked, lock all doors and windows, install effective lighting or improve existing lighting outside barns and, most importantly, report any suspicious behaviour immediately to the police and to the provincial chicken board.



CFIA Appeals to Backyard Flock and Pet Bird Owners

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has identified owners of backyard flocks and pet birds as a key target audience for messages on biosecurity. This led to the development of a CFIA pamphlet to assist backyard flock and pet bird owners with preventing, identifying and limiting exposure to contagious animal diseases. The pamphlet outlines a simple five-step process for maintaining bird health.

Titled "How to Prevent and Detect Disease in Backyard Flocks and Pet Birds", the pamphlet concentrates specifically on avian influenza and exotic Newcastle disease, two of the more virulent bird diseases.



These brochures work in tandem with existing and developing provincial programs to appeal to backyard flock owners. Copies have been included with this issue of *Chicken Farmer* at the request of the CFIA to widen the distribution.

We all share the responsibility of mitigating the risk of animal disease and it's important for us to know who our neighbours are. Feel free to distribute the brochures to neighbours with backyard flocks and pet birds, or leave them where they will be seen.

For more information from the CFIA, visit www.inspection.gc.ca or call 1-800-442-CFIA (2342).



Copies have been included with this issue of *Chicken Farmer*

Russia Targets U.S. Poultry in WTO Spat

Russia, the world's biggest poultry importer, has threatened new import barriers on U.S. meat unless an agreement is reached by October to let the former Soviet state join the World Trade Organization (WTO).

An existing agreement, drawn up in 2005, gives preferential treatment to the U.S. The accord was tied to Russia's membership in the WTO, and was an attempt to provide "equal rights with our partners, including the EU countries, where there is strong subsidization of production and export."

"The WTO is in a deep systemic crisis, which occurred because of the breakdown of multi-party talks on agriculture," the Russian Agriculture ministry also said. "Most WTO members link the breakdown to the inflexibility of the U.S."

Others see the EU as not giving enough on market access by, among other things, keeping high tariff rates.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has been seeking WTO membership in order to gain greater recognition of Russia's growing role in the world economy. So far, the U.S. has refused to approve the Russian accession and the two sides have been engaged in a war of words for months.

The main agreement under threat is a four-year accord signed June 15, 2005, setting annual quotas for U.S. meat imports at 1.25 million tons of poultry, 450,000 tons of beef and 502,000 tons of pork. It also sets reduced tariffs for imports above the quotas.

The U.S. currently has an 80% market share of the Russian import market. U.S. poultry sales to Russia last year were worth

\$667.2 million (USD), according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Russia currently imports 45 percent of its poultry needs, down from 70 percent four years ago.



EU poultry import quotas could be redistributed among other countries

The European Union poultry import quota to Russia in 2006 could be redistributed among other countries, mainly Brazil.

A factor has been that bird diseases have occurred in a number of European countries. For example, poultry meat and other poultry products from the Netherlands have been banned due to a new outbreak of avian influenza (H7N7) in that country.

The European quota on poultry meat was never set, so there is no agreement to break. This will enable Brazil and other exporters to gain more access to the large Russian import market. However, poultry imports to Russia are expected to decrease over the coming years as more domestic supply becomes available. Russia is aiming to source 80% of its consumption with domestic production within four years.

Fancy yourself a chef? Here's your chance!

Now it's your turn! Chicken Farmers of Canada would like to offer you the chance to share your recipes with us! Enter our recipe contest. Send along your original recipe to recipes@chicken.ca and you'll be entered in our draw for a chance to win a \$500.00 gift card to the store of your choice!

Please visit our website for full rules and regulations.

IN BRIEF

Guatemala to Sue U.S. for Dumping

After a month and five days of implementing the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the U.S., Guatemala is suffering from product dumping and is suing for unfair competition.



"The United States is dumping on us, selling us things and demanding we purchase what they want, but it does not accept our goods," said Guatemalan President Oscar Berger.

The statesman gave an example of the chicken trade, in which U.S. producers sell chicken legs, wings and parts at prices below their cost of production.

So far, no Guatemalan company has passed the strict U.S. health inspections and the country has been shut out of shipping products north. U.S. farmers also receive state subsidies, not only to produce, but also to export.

Berger said that his government will denounce the U.S. at the World Trade Organization for illegal practices.

Guatemala had considered increasing chicken import taxes, a measure requested by some Guatemalan businesses, but this will probably not occur, since it would lead to increased costs for consumers.

Productivity up across the country for Canada's egg industry

Canada's egg industry continues to show strong gains in efficiency and productivity, according to a new survey unveiled this summer by the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency (CEMA).

The latest Cost of Production (COP) survey, conducted by Vancouver-based chartered accountants Meyers Norris Penny, reveals significant increases in three key industry productivity factors. Since the industry's last survey in 1999, hens' rate of lay has increased 2.4%, the amount of feed required to produce a dozen eggs has decreased 4.8%, and the number of labour hours required to produce a dozen eggs has decreased 17.7%.



Conducted every five years, the COP survey measures the average cost of producing a dozen eggs nationally. Taken from a sample of 104 producers holding quota of at least 5,000 hens, the new survey is statistically representative of the whole industry.

New global group launches bird flu data sharing campaign

Over 70 scientists and health experts have formed a group to share genetic data on avian influenza (AI) infections, in hopes of better tracking mutations.

The group, called the Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data (GISAID), told the journal *Nature* in a letter that AI information sharing had been "inadequate." Some of the nations hit hardest by AI outbreaks such as Thailand, Vietnam and China have not been sharing data.

GISAID director Peter Bogner said that sharing data is imperative, but so is protecting the interests of participant nations. Some countries may be reluctant to share data because they have been exploited in the past.

The World Health Organization will reportedly not be an official part of the organization, but supports the group's aims.

Chicken farmers to try trees to cut odours

Delmarva's poultry industry's (Delaware/Maryland/Virginia) collaboration with the University of Delaware may bring a solution to the odours at some chicken farms.

University researchers found that planting trees around chicken houses can reduce odour. A grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will pay for a full-time employee and equipment to start planting trees next spring.

Bill Satterfield, Executive Director of the Delmarva poultry industry group, announced a supplement to the grant of free consultations for growers interested in reducing odour.

A study conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that poultry farms account for 26.7% of ammonia emissions from man-made sources. It also estimates that animal agriculture accounts for 50% to 85% of total man-made ammonia volatilization in the United States.

By capturing those emissions (in particular), the trees help improve air quality overall. Satterfield said the tree plantings could take several years to reach all 2,000 poultry farms on the peninsula.

Delmarva produces about 1.5 trillion kg of chicken per year, or about 10% of the total U.S. production. In comparison, Canada produced 981 Mkg in 2005.





Low Pathogenic Form of Avian Influenza Found in Michigan

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has confirmed that the low pathogenic form of the H5N1 avian influenza virus was found in samples collected in mid-August from two Michigan wild mute swans. This strain has been detected several times in wild birds in North America and poses no threat to human health.

The USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) confirmed the presence of the "North American strain" of low pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in one of twenty samples collected from the two wild mute swans. Preliminary test results announced on August 14th indicated that an H5N1 strain could be present in two of the collected samples while genetic testing ruled out the possibility that either of the samples carried the highly pathogenic strain of H5N1 avian influenza that is circulating overseas.

Low pathogenic strains of avian influenza commonly occur in wild birds and typically cause only minor sickness or no noticeable signs of disease in birds. This includes the low pathogenic North American strain of H5N1 which is very different from the more severe highly pathogenic H5N1 circulating in parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. Highly pathogenic strains of avian influenza spread rapidly and are often fatal to domestic poultry.

The swans were sampled as part of the expanded avian influenza surveillance program. They were showing no signs of sickness. Genetic analysis of the virus conducted at NVSL in Ames, Iowa, suggested a similarity to a low pathogenicity strain that was previously been found in Manitoba (October 2005).

The swans were sampled August 8th on the coast of Lake Erie in Monroe County, Michigan. Initial screening tests indicated the presence of an H5 avian influenza virus and confirmatory testing at NVSL confirmed the H5 and the N1 subtypes.

Alaskan Wild Bird Surveillance Results

No highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza virus has turned up in any of the 13,000 wild migratory birds that federal and state officials have tested since April 26th, the U.S. government announced at the end of August.

The USDA said about 113 birds tested positive for other types of avian flu. Those results were expected, officials said, because there are 144 avian flu subtypes that commonly circulate in wild birds

with little or no impact on their health or the health of other animals. Most forms of the virus pose no threat to domestic poultry or humans and do not produce noticeable illness in wild birds.

Although no highly pathogenic H5N1 virus has yet been detected, the detection and early warning program will continue to study the 26 species whose migratory patterns would have likely put them in contact with the H5N1 virus before arriving in Alaska, the USDA said.

Canada Continues its Own Wild Bird Survey

Launched in May, the 2006 Canadian Wild Bird Influenza Survey samples and tests both live and dead migratory and resident birds. The species of most interest are birds that normally live in wetlands or other aquatic habitats, since these birds represent the ultimate global reservoir of the avian influenza gene pool.

Canada is coordinating its survey approach with the United States and will therefore focus on the east coast as the U.S. has stepped up its testing in the western migratory routes and concentrates on Alaska.

The goal is to complement and extend, not duplicate unnecessarily, surveillance for avian influenza in wild birds that is to be carried out by the United States. Reciprocal sharing of survey results among Canada, the United

States and Mexico is included in the study's objectives.

Early detection through wild bird surveillance represents Canada's first line of defence in protecting animal and human health. 🦆



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