



# A National Farm Animal Welfare System for Canada – 2019

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**NFAHW**   
**COUNCIL**

This document was prepared by the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council. The Council was formed in 2010 to advise governments and all other stakeholders in animal agriculture on matters of the health and welfare of farmed animals in Canada. The Council is funded jointly by non-government organizations with an interest in animal agriculture and federal, provincial and territorial governments. Council members are designated by their constituency because of broad expertise in animal health and welfare, public health and an interest in approaching topics and developing advice in the context of One Health. The National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council would like thank the working group composed of Council members and advisors, as well as our many industry and government partners for their time and expertise during the consultations that led to this document.

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# A National Farm Animal Welfare System for Canada

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## 1. Executive Summary

Safeguarding the welfare of farmed animals is important for animal producers, for the Canadian public, and for the animals themselves. In addition, systems for ensuring farm animal welfare are becoming increasingly significant for access to markets. In Canada, however, creating a credible, systematic approach to animal welfare is challenging because a wide variety of players are involved. These include tens of thousands of animal producers together with their veterinarians and their provincial and national associations, as well as breeders, processors, transporters, marketers, different levels of government, and a range of other organizations (Appendix 1). Hence, management of the issue must focus on the “horizontal” coordination of players because no “pyramidal” management structure exists.

In 2012, the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council, after wide consultation, issued 22 recommendations designed to help achieve a systematic national approach to farm animal welfare. Having reviewed these recommendations and subsequent stakeholder actions, and having identified some new concerns, the Council now makes 20 recommendations directed toward the following goals:

- to maintain support for the National Farm Animal Care Council
- to enhance animal welfare leadership
- to engage relevant service industries and professions (breeders, feed companies, engineers) as partners in the animal welfare system
- to involve relevant medical and social services in animal welfare interventions
- to improve the efficiency and coordination of research funding
- to support future-oriented and public-good research related to animal welfare
- to support relevant social science research and “one-welfare” research
- to ensure that the Codes of Practice are kept current
- to consider standards for “antibiotic-free” production systems
- to develop standards for species that currently lack a Code of Practice
- to work toward more uniform recognition of Codes of Practice in animal protection law
- to harmonize standards for humane slaughter
- to make high-quality animal welfare extension materials readily available
- to communicate Canada’s animal welfare system to the public
- to involve the retail and food service industries in comprehensive animal welfare assurance
- to develop animal welfare education materials for small-scale animal production
- to continue the development of Animal Care Assessment programs
- to extend the Council’s program of reviewing the welfare of animals after they leave the farm
- to promote producer-driven compliance activities
- to identify options for better transport enforcement

## 2. Background

There is a high expectation, both within Canada and internationally, that the welfare of food-producing animals will be respected. As international examples, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has created more than 100 pages of animal welfare standards with the agreement of its 180 member nations; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has begun visible engagement in promoting animal welfare among their member countries; and many global corporations now require their suppliers to demonstrate adherence to specified standards. Especially in the European and English-speaking countries, including Canada, some means of demonstrating humane standards is becoming embedded in the value chain of animal production, and producers in the future may find it necessary to be part of assurance programs in order to participate in main-stream markets.

In Canada, protecting animal welfare and demonstrating adherence to animal welfare standards involve certain challenges, although these are not unique to Canada. As examples, leadership in the animal-source food system is divided among many organizations including both national and provincial producer associations; enforcement of animal protection law is conducted differently in different jurisdictions; and the regulatory framework also varies among the different provinces and territories. The situation requires “horizontal” coordination among players because a “pyramidal” or top-down authority structure does not exist.

Beyond the issue of meeting societal expectations, promoting animal welfare has many benefits for both the animals themselves and for the people in the food industries. Many animal welfare problems – such as crowding, lameness, infectious diseases and lack of comfort – are stressful for the animals and may also lead to economic losses for producers and others. Moreover, most people who raise animals for their livelihood have a strong interest in the welfare of animals, and take satisfaction from working in a system with good performance and high standards.

In view of these considerations, early in its mandate the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council (“the Council”) reviewed the situation and issued a report with 22 recommendations.<sup>1</sup> Three years later the Council monitored progress on the recommendations and found that some had been accomplished, some are in progress and others needed to be modified.<sup>2</sup> In addition, new issues have arisen.

After further review and discussion, the Council now issues the present report that identifies where further action is needed. It is meant to build on the more general *National Farmed*

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<sup>1</sup> NFAHWC, 2012. *A National Farm Animal Welfare System for Canada*. Available at:

[http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/animal-welfare-statement/NFAHWC%20animal%20welfare%20vision\\_cover%20page\\_2012.pdf](http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/animal-welfare-statement/NFAHWC%20animal%20welfare%20vision_cover%20page_2012.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> NFAHWC, 2015. *Progress Report (2015): “A National Farm Animal Welfare System for Canada, 2012”*

Available at: <http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/NFAHWC%20Progress%20Report%202015.pdf>

*Animal Health and Welfare Strategy*.<sup>3</sup> The Council intends to monitor progress on the recommendations and, because of the long-term nature of some recommendations, report on progress after about 3 years.

### 3. Vision

Based on consultation and its own deliberations, the Council proposes the following vision for a national farm animal welfare system:

*For Canada to have a comprehensive farm animal welfare system that ensures the welfare of farm animals, reflects Canadian values, involves national standards that are informed by scientific research, and includes a suite of compliance tools and activities sufficient to ensure domestic and international confidence in the welfare of farm animals in Canada.*

### 4. Benefits

The system envisioned should:

- Promote the welfare of farm animals as a benefit in itself, together with correlated benefits in productivity and producer satisfaction
- Allow Canada to provide assurance of farm animal welfare standards to domestic and international customers through a system that has the confidence of all who are involved in the food system

Risks of failing to have such a system include:

- A fractured and incoherent situation as different producers, retailers and jurisdictions adopt different standards and compliance programs
- Erosion of public trust in the animal-source food system
- Pressure to adopt consumer or market demands that may not be consistent with animal health and welfare, environmental sustainability and food safety
- Possible future difficulty accessing certain markets

### 5. Components of a national system

A systematic national approach to farm animal welfare requires at least the following five elements:

- Leadership and coordination among the many players
- Research to underpin standards, innovation, training and communication
- Standards that specify good practices

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<sup>3</sup> CCVO/Farmed Animal Industry Joint Working Group, 2009. *National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Strategy*. Available at: <http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/background-materials/20090508%20-%20NFAHWS%20-%20National%20Framework%20FINAL%203.pdf>

- Education, extension and communication to create awareness of the system
- Compliance assurance activities (enforcement, certification) to ensure a high level of compliance.

In this document, the Council makes recommendations for further action for each of these components.

## 6. Leadership and coordination

The welfare of farm animals is influenced most closely by the tens of thousands of individuals who raise and handle animals directly on farms, ranches and beyond the farm gate, and by the veterinarians that service these activities. Broader leadership and coordination is currently provided by a wide range of organizations (Appendix 1) that emerged at different times to serve specific functions, but without an overall vision or planned system. As a result, there is a need to coordinate efforts and fill gaps.

The following two organizations especially provide broad-based national leadership and serve complementary roles:

***The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC)*** is a multi-stakeholder coordination body whose 27 partners/members (as of 2019) include the national organization for all major sectors of animal production plus related businesses (animal transport, slaughter), animal welfare organizations, the veterinary profession, research and government. It also has 21 associate members including restaurant and retail companies, animal health companies, and other allied businesses. NFACC was formed through a consultation and needs-identification process involving a national workshop in 2002 which identified the need for “a cohesive, capable body with an infrastructure and staff support” which would “link consumers, processors, retailers, producers and other groups” to achieve national coordination of farm animal welfare activities.<sup>4</sup> NFACC leads the development of Codes of Practice, develops the process for Animal Care Assessment Programs, and provides a forum for open discussion of farm animal welfare issues. It is funded by contributions from member organizations and by project funding for specific activities especially the development of Codes.

***The National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council (NFAHWC)*** is an advisory body that provides advice to senior levels of government (federal, provincial, territorial) and industry focused on all aspects of farm animal health and welfare, especially to guide the implementation of the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. It has 14 members (as of 2019) appointed to provide a wide spectrum of expertise including animal health, animal welfare, animal production and government. It evaluates topics of concern to

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<sup>4</sup> *Report of Proceedings: Farm Animal Welfare and Codes of Practice Consultation Workshop* (B. Ballantyne and D. Fraser, co-chairs), Gatineau, Sept 23-24, 2002. AAFC, Ottawa.

stakeholders including animal health surveillance, emerging diseases, antimicrobial resistance and animal welfare, and it often proposes solutions that require collaboration among industry sectors and different levels of government. Specifically regarding animal welfare, it provides advice on coordinating farm animal welfare activities within the country (as in this report), on research needs, and cross-boundary issues. It also promotes a “One Welfare” approach that encourages coordination of services to improve the welfare of both humans and animals. It is funded equally by three partners: federal government, provincial/territorial governments, and the animal industries.

In addition to the Councils, and apart from the many organizations that focus on specific animal species or issues, other relevant national organizations include: the Canadian Animal Health Coalition which conducts a range of projects and activities in support of farm animal health, the Public Trust Steering Committee of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture which promotes public trust in all aspects of agriculture, and the Canadian Quality Assurance Program Alliance which develops on-farm quality-assurance programs.

To enhance leadership on farm animal welfare, the Council makes the following recommendations.

### **1. To maintain support for the National Farm Animal Care Council**

NFACC is crucial to achieving a coherent and systematic approach to farm animal welfare in Canada. It currently relies on year-to-year funding from its membership dues, combined with temporary and largely project-based funding especially for the Codes of Practice. Stable and predictable funding for the organization is crucial for the farm animal welfare system in Canada.

*It is recommended that government agencies, producer organizations and all sectors of the animal-source food system ensure that NFACC has the funding it needs to continue providing national leadership.*

### **2. To enhance animal welfare leadership**

Many producer and other organizations provide leadership in animal welfare, but may not have staff with training in animal welfare science and policy.

*It is recommended that all organizations that provide leadership in animal welfare review their needs and, as appropriate for their size and circumstances, secure relevant training for existing personnel or hire appropriately trained individuals.*

### **3. To engage relevant service industries and professions**

Many professions and service industries have important effects on farm animal welfare but some are not well integrated into the animal welfare system. While veterinarians and processors are well recognized as key players, others include:

- animal breeding and genetics companies whose genetic selection can profoundly influence animal health and welfare
- feed companies which formulate diets and often provide management advice to producers

- engineers whose building designs need to reflect the Codes of Practice and other building codes (e.g. for fire prevention)
- animal handlers, including poultry catchers, animal transporters and auction markets, whose actions play crucial and sometimes highly visible roles in farm animal welfare
- authorities responsible for building codes who need to ensure that buildings where animals are raised include appropriate measures for animal safety including fire and emergencies such as electrical outage.

Because the relevant issues vary among different animal species and production systems, producer organizations are best positioned to engage with their relevant service industries.

*It is recommended that national producer organizations facilitate the involvement of relevant service industries – including breeders, feed companies, engineers, animal handlers and relevant authorities – in addressing animal welfare, that NFAACC engage with relevant national bodies to encourage the involvement of service industries, and that governments ensure the involvement of relevant service industries in regulatory reform.*

#### **4. To involve relevant medical and social services in animal welfare interventions**

Serious breakdown of animal care sometimes occurs when owners or staff experience health problems, mental illness, or financial or family hardship. In such cases, both human and animal welfare are likely to benefit if the people involved have support from medical and social services appropriate to the agricultural community. In addition, special circumstances (disease outbreaks, fires, floods, market disruptions and the need to depopulate facilities) can cause major stress to the people involved as well as major problems of animal welfare. Some mechanisms and organizations are in place to involve medical and social services in such situations. Progress to date includes the founding of the Do More Ag Foundation, the suicide-prevention program of the Union des Producteurs Agricoles in Quebec, and a producer-funded project in Ontario on mental health literacy and emergency mental health response. However, approaches tend to differ and the current programs tend to be specific to individual provinces or regions. National consultation, combined with awareness of programs in other countries, is needed to identify good models with sustainable funding, as well as gaps where services are not available.

*It is recommended that NFAHWC lead a consultation on effective ways of involving medical and social services in cases of serious breakdown in animal care, and in special circumstances such as disease outbreaks and disasters, and how best to secure such services when they are needed.*

## 7. Research

Animal welfare research supports animal management practices, standards, communication materials and compliance-assurance activities. A review of research capacity was commissioned by the Council and led by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The report, issued in 2014, identified several areas of weakness in farm animal welfare research in Canada.<sup>5</sup> It leads to the following recommendations.

### **5. To improve the efficiency and coordination of research funding**

The review found that scientists are highly dependent on industry funding and yet some industry sectors have inefficient methods of funding research. In some cases, for example, the funding comes as small grants from different provincial or other agencies which may have different priorities, application procedures and reporting requirements. This leads to (1) duplication of effort in the industry as different agencies create their own mechanisms for allocating research funds, and (2) a drain on research because scientists spend so much time – in some cases the majority of research time – applying for and administering relatively small grants. In contrast, some sectors achieve much greater efficiency through national coordination and the use of larger, longer-term research support, for example through NSERC Industrial Research Chair awards which fund comprehensive 5-year research programs rather than small individual projects.

*It is recommended that all sectors of animal production review their research-funding programs and seek coordinated, collaborative methods of funding research that will be cost-efficient for the sector and for the research enterprise.*

### **6. To support future-oriented and public-good research**

During the review, scientists reported that much industry funding for research is awarded for relatively short-term projects that address immediate industry needs. As a result, some important future-oriented and “public-good” research receives too little attention. Topics that deserve more emphasis include:

- Research for regulatory purposes, for example to support regulations on humane slaughter, religious slaughter, pre-slaughter management, and transport for some species.
- Research on special situations including management of compromised animals and euthanasia of animals for disease control.
- Research on the welfare of animals off-farm including auctions and assembly yards.
- Research on ways to balance animal welfare concerns with other public-good issues such as environmental safety, food safety and the use of antimicrobials.

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<sup>5</sup> NFAHWC, 2014. *Animal welfare research capacity project*. Available at:

[http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/animal-welfare-research-capacity/NFAHW%20Council\\_Recommendation\\_Animal%20Welfare%20Research%20Capacity\\_2014.pdf](http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/animal-welfare-research-capacity/NFAHW%20Council_Recommendation_Animal%20Welfare%20Research%20Capacity_2014.pdf)

- Research to develop or test alternative production systems that could meet public expectations in the future but are not widely used at present.
- Basic research to improve fundamental understanding of animal welfare, and methods to assess and improve welfare, including poorly studied underlying factors such as genetics.

In addition, some animal producer organizations noted that for research that addresses potential changes to Codes of Practice on issues such as a space allowance and pain management, public funding is needed in cases where industry-funded research may not be perceived by the public as credible.

*It is recommended that NFAHWC partner with producer organizations to encourage public funding through granting councils, governments and the Canadian Agricultural Partnership for long-term and public-good research related to animal welfare.*

### **7. To support relevant social science research and “one-welfare” research**

There is also a need for additional research in the social sciences especially in the following areas:

- the effects of human factors on animal welfare including the selection and training of staff, and the correlation between producer well-being and animal welfare
- effective approaches to knowledge transfer
- the range of values present among the Canadian public, how these can be taken into account in standards and policies, and how public perceptions can be informed by knowledge of the farm animal welfare system in Canada
- the experience of producers with Animal Care Assessment Programs in order to streamline the programs and facilitate producer participation.

In addition, while there is considerable research on economic aspects of production, additional research is needed on the economic consequences of adopting new production methods designed to meet animal welfare requirements.

*It is recommended that producer organizations and others that fund farm animal research expand their funding priorities to include more work done in the social sciences, including the role of human factors in animal welfare, the values of Canadians, the use of Animal Care Assessment Programs, and economic implications of animal welfare measures.*

## **8. Standards**

Animal welfare standards need to be informed by science, outcome-based wherever possible, reviewed and revised regularly, in compliance with relevant international standards, and developed and revised through a recognized process that is open, consultative and trusted. The standards need to be respected and applied in a consistent manner throughout the country, although with sufficient flexibility to reflect the diversity of sectors and management systems. National animal welfare standards currently include (1) Codes of Practice for on-farm production and for transportation, (2) regulations for transportation and slaughter, (3) animal protection law. The following further actions are needed.

### **8. To ensure that the Codes of Practice are kept current**

Codes of Practice for on-farm production have been revised and published for all the major species during the past 10 years. This reflects the remarkable efforts of the National Farm Animal Care Council which uses an established process involving scientific review, multi-stakeholder involvement, and public consultation.<sup>6</sup> The Codes serve as the basis of national, industry-driven Animal Care Assessment Programs for some species. The Codes include “requirements” which may provide guidance for courts in identifying generally accepted practices of animal management, as well as “recommendations” which are generally seen as non-obligatory advice on good practice and pathways for future improvements. Because Codes of Practice play a central role in Canada’s farm animal welfare system, they need to be updated regularly.

*It is recommended that government agencies and all sectors of the animal-source food system ensure the financial and other resources for Codes to be reviewed every 5 years and updated at least every 10 years.*

### **9. To consider standards for “antibiotic-free” production systems**

There is a growing trend for production of animals in systems that restrict the use of antimicrobials to meet demand for “antibiotic-free” products. In some cases, this may simply involve segregation of animals that have been treated with antimicrobials, but there is a risk that medication may sometimes be withheld in cases of illness. Clear guidance is needed to ensure that animals do not suffer in production systems where the use of antimicrobials is restricted.

*It is recommended that in future revisions of Codes of Practice, NFACC consider including standards to protect animal welfare in the production of “antibiotic-free” products.*

### **10. To develop standards for species that currently lack a Code of Practice**

Certain groups of animals (e.g., ducks, geese, ratites) are not currently covered by Codes of Practice, and may even lack standard recommendations on such critical issues as transport, lairage and slaughter. Moreover, in some cases there is no national or other organization positioned to provide leadership on such standards.

*It is recommended that animal production sectors that lack a Code of Practice work with NFACC to find feasible means of generating appropriate standards.*

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<sup>6</sup> NFACC, 2019. *Development process for Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals*. Available at: <https://www.nfacc.ca/code-development-process>; Fraser, D. 2015. Turning science into policy: the case of farm animal welfare in Canada. *Animal Frontiers* 5 (3): 23-27.

### **11. To work toward more uniform recognition of Codes of Practice in animal protection law**

Some provinces reference the Codes in provincial animal protection law whereas others do not, and the wording used to reference the Codes varies among jurisdictions.<sup>7</sup> Although courts may, at their discretion, use the Codes of Practice to identify generally accepted practices whether or not the Codes are referenced in relevant law, the lack of consistency creates a potentially confusing situation where legal protection of animals may vary from province to province. Ideally, provinces and territories would move toward a common approach. Because the Council of Chief Veterinary Officers (CCVO) has representation from each province and territory with significant livestock production and is linked to regulatory expertise, it would seem best placed to explore feasible options.

*It is recommended that the CCVO advise on means of achieving more uniform recognition of the national Codes of Practice in provincial/territorial animal protection law.*

### **12. To harmonize standards for humane slaughter**

Regulations for humane slaughter include federal Humane Treatment and Slaughter Regulations (included in Part III of the Meat Inspection Regulations) which apply to federally registered slaughter plants (plants whose products are allowed to cross provincial, territorial or international borders). Other humane slaughter regulations exist in some provinces and apply to provincially registered plants. Ideally Canada would have uniform humane slaughter standards. A step toward a uniform national standard might be achieved if the provinces and territories were to harmonize with the federal regulations for humane slaughter, for example by referencing federal regulations in provincial regulations or proposing a core set of national standards based on the federal regulations and Manual of Procedures. The CCVO, with its connections to federal and provincial/territorial governments and regulatory issues, is well positioned to give advice.

*It is recommended that the CCVO, with appropriate consultation, review and recommend options for moving toward the alignment of humane slaughter standards across the country.*

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<sup>7</sup> Fraser, D., Koralesky, K.E. and Urton, G. 2017. Toward a harmonized approach to animal welfare law in Canada. *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, 59: 293-302. Available at: <http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/animal-welfare-law/Fraser%20et%20al%202018%20Toward%20a%20harmonized%20approach%20to%20animal%20welfare%20law%20in%20Canada.pdf>

## 9. Education, extension and communication

As a structured, science-informed approach to animal welfare assurance becomes increasingly established, there is a need to communicate the approach and its outcomes to all players and to the public. Valuable initiatives to date include national conferences and forums such as those convened by NFACC, NFAHWC and Humane Canada, provincial meetings such as the annual Alberta Livestock Care Conference, and extension materials produced by organizations such as the former Ontario Farm Animal Council and Alberta Farm Animal Care. The following recommendations are designed to expand these activities.

### **13. To make high-quality animal welfare extension materials readily available**

With tens of thousands of independent animal producers in Canada, sharing of information poses a major communication challenge, especially when many provincial governments have reduced their traditional efforts in agricultural extension. Moreover, farm staff in Canada function in different languages and at different levels of literacy. Some excellent educational materials and opportunities have been created. Examples include the “Canadian Livestock Transport” training program managed by the Canadian Animal Health Coalition, and the “Caring for Compromised Animals” publications of the former Ontario Farm Animal Council. However, educational materials developed in one province may be unavailable or unknown elsewhere, with the result that opportunities are lost or efforts are duplicated. A collaborative approach to developing and sharing materials could improve effectiveness and save cost.

*It is recommended that producer and extension organizations identify high-quality education/extension resources on animal welfare including animal handling, and that NFAHWC make these readily available, perhaps through a webpage.*

### **14. To communicate Canada’s animal welfare system to the public**

Communicating with the public is also a challenge. The public often associates good animal welfare simply with certain production systems such as “free-range”, whereas science-informed standards generally involve multiple factors including disease prevention, nutrition and handling skill, and they often specify desirable outcomes rather than prescribing specific production methods. Hence, science-informed standards do not necessarily correspond to public beliefs about animal welfare. As Canada consolidates its farm animal welfare system based on comprehensive standards and Animal Care Assessment Programs, there is a need to communicate the nature and significance of this system to the public and to agencies (retailers, restaurants) that deal with the public. Fortunately, some provincial organizations (such as Alberta Farm Animal Care) are already engaged, and animal agriculture has potential allies including Farm & Food Care and the Public Trust Steering Committee of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

*It is recommended that all stakeholders increase their efforts at communicating Canada’s animal welfare system to a broad public audience.*

### **15. To involve the retail and food service industries**

Some retail and food service companies require suppliers to meet specifications designed to assure customers about the welfare of animals in their products. Some such requirements (e.g., that slaughter plants pass recognized humane-slaughter audits) lead demonstrably to improved animal welfare. However, for other requirements (e.g., that laying hens should be in cage-free systems), the animal welfare outcomes are likely to be uncertain or to depend strongly on additional factors such as weather, space and management skill. Some sectors have established committees (e.g., Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef) that involve representatives of retail and food service industries and provide a means of communicating directly with these players. In addition, and especially for sectors that lack such mechanisms:

*It is recommended (1) that retail and food service companies continue to be involved in the NFACC process and ensure that their purchasing requirements are well informed and likely to support good animal welfare, (2) that NFACC continue to invite retail and restaurant companies to be involved, and (3) that the Retail Council of Canada promote awareness of the NFACC process to its members.*

### **16. To develop animal welfare education for small-scale animal production**

With the increase in urban and hobby-level keeping of animals, there is a need to raise awareness of animal welfare in these special populations. Issues include the needs of the animals, basic principles of animal management such as biosecurity and the Codes of Practice, and the responsibilities of animal owners including provision of veterinary care, preventing disease spread, and traceability when relevant. Examples of progress to date include the *Urban Hen Manual* of Alberta Farm Animal Care, a program on small-scale sheep production by the Canadian Sheep Federation, and the BC Ministry of Agriculture's *Small Flock Poultry Health* manual and *Keeping Flocks Healthy* manual for sheep and goat owners. There is also a need to promote responsible purchase of animals including on-line buying and its implications for traceability.

*It is recommended that provincial governments, producer organizations and animal welfare organizations, with the cooperation of scientists, develop educational materials adapted for small-scale (including urban and hobby) animal production, and engage with municipal authorities to promote responsible animal ownership.*

## **10. Compliance assurance**

Compliance assurance requires a suite of compliance-promoting activities including quality-assurance programs, means of ensuring producer engagement, and enforcement of regulations. Considerable progress is being made in assuring compliance with the national Codes of Practice, especially through the Animal Care Assessment Programs that are being developed and implemented, plus producer-driven compliance activities and other means. The Council recommends the following further actions.

### **17. To continue the development of Animal Care Assessment programs**

Animal Care Assessment programs based on the Codes form a central element of a national farm animal welfare system. Typically, a national producer organization develops the program and provincial producer organizations lead implementation, ideally incorporating some form of third-party verification. Most programs follow the guideline developed by NFACC,<sup>8</sup> although sectors with extensive management systems (sheep, horses) report certain challenges with this model. Implementation has now begun in some sectors. Communication among sectors would allow sharing of experiences and effective methods and approaches.

*It is recommended (1) that national producer organizations in all animal production sectors develop Animal Care Assessment Programs, (2) that this be done following the process established by NFACC as much as possible so as to achieve harmonization, (3) that experiences with Animal Care Assessment Programs be communicated among sectors to allow sharing of successes and challenges, and (4) that the outcomes of assessment programs be reported.*

### **18. To extend the Council's program of reviewing the welfare of animals after they leave the farm**

For some animals, movement off the farm involves multiple handling events (loading, off-loading, assembling groups) that may involve auction markets and assembly points which are open to the public. Such handling and mixing of animals raises concerns for animal welfare, animal health and biosecurity, especially for the more vulnerable categories of animals such as culled or end-of-production animals. In response to such concerns, the Council convened a national consultation on the management of cull dairy cows in order to identify problems and solutions.<sup>9</sup> There is a need for similar review of other categories of animals to protect animal welfare and biosecurity throughout the marketing process.

*It is recommended that NFAHWC extend its process of reviewing animal welfare and biosecurity in the marketing process, especially for vulnerable groups of animals.*

### **19. To promote producer-driven compliance activities**

Some of the most effective measures for compliance assurance are driven by producers and others within a sector. Examples include:

- In some supply-managed commodities, regulatory bodies require producers to comply with animal welfare standards.
- The Alberta Livestock Protection Network – a partnership between Alberta Farm Animal Care, the provincial government, the Alberta SPCA, and other enforcement agencies –

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<sup>8</sup> NFACC (undated). *Implementing Codes of Practice: Canada's Framework for Developing Animal Care Assessment Programs*. Available at:  
[www.nfacc.ca/resources/assessment/animal\\_care\\_assessment\\_framework.pdf](http://www.nfacc.ca/resources/assessment/animal_care_assessment_framework.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> NFAHWC (2017). *The Management of Cull Dairy Cows in Canada*. Available at:  
[http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/cull-cow/NFAHW%20Council\\_Recommendation\\_The%20Management%20of%20Cull%20Dairy%20Cows%20in%20Canada\\_2017.pdf](http://www.ahwcouncil.ca/pdfs/cull-cow/NFAHW%20Council_Recommendation_The%20Management%20of%20Cull%20Dairy%20Cows%20in%20Canada_2017.pdf)

creates communication between producers and enforcement personnel and involves producers in correcting problems.

- Some provinces have “hot-lines” which allow producers or members of the public to report animal welfare concerns and thus facilitate a process of producers helping producers to resolve animal welfare problems.
- Dairy Farmers of Ontario takes the lead in contacting dairy farmers who have sent compromised animals to auction.

These compliance-promoting activities provide promising approaches that could improve compliance, increase public trust, and promote self-correction within the sector, but the approaches are limited to certain jurisdictions and sectors. There is a need for consultation and stock-taking to compare the various initiatives, to assess the need and scope for greater cooperation between enforcement and industry organizations, and to make recommendations. Because of its connections with producer organizations, relevant government agencies and animal welfare organizations, NFACC would seem a logical body to lead such a consultation.

*It is recommended that NFACC create awareness of current producer-driven compliance activities and encourage the extension of such programs to other industry sectors and jurisdictions.*

#### **20. To identify options for better transport enforcement**

Federal Transportation of Animals Regulations apply to all animals transported in Canada, and those entering or leaving Canada. However, there is a widespread perception that enforcement is not sufficient, or not sufficiently uniform, across the country. The situation might be improved if provincial officials were authorized to enforce transportation regulations. Some provinces have their own regulations, but a more uniform standard might be achieved if federal and provincial/territorial governments entered into an agreement, like those seen in Ontario and Quebec, to allow provincial officials to contribute to the enforcement of federal regulations, or if provincial/territorial regulations referenced the federal regulations. The CCVO would appear best suited to give expert guidance.

*It is recommended that the CCVO, with appropriate consultation, review and recommend options to achieve more effective and uniform regulation and enforcement of animal transport.*

## 11. Summary of recommendations

1. *that government agencies, producer organizations and all sectors of the animal-source food system ensure that NFAACC has the funding it needs to continue providing national leadership.*
2. *that all organizations that provide leadership in animal welfare review their needs and, as appropriate for their size and circumstances, secure relevant training for existing personnel or hire appropriately trained individuals.*
3. *that national producer organizations facilitate the involvement of relevant service industries – including breeders, feed companies, engineers, animal handlers and relevant authorities – in addressing animal welfare, that NFAACC engage with relevant national bodies to encourage the involvement of service industries, and that governments ensure the involvement of relevant service industries in regulatory reform.*
4. *that NFAHWC lead a consultation on effective ways of involving medical and social services in cases of serious breakdown in animal care, and in special circumstances such as disease outbreaks and disasters, and how best to secure such services when they are needed.*
5. *that all sectors of animal production review their research-funding programs and seek coordinated, collaborative methods of funding research that will be cost-efficient for the sector and for the research enterprise.*
6. *that NFAHWC partner with producer organizations to encourage public funding through granting councils, governments and the Canadian Agriculture Partnership for long-term and public-good research related to animal welfare.*
7. *that producer organizations and others that fund farm animal research expand their funding priorities to include more work done in the social sciences, including the role of human factors in animal welfare, the values of Canadians, the use of Animal Care Assessment Programs, and economic implications of animal welfare measures.*
8. *that government agencies and all sectors of the animal-source food system ensure the financial and other resources for Codes to be reviewed every 5 years and updated at least every 10 years.*
9. *that in future revisions of Codes of Practice, NFAACC consider including standards to protect animal welfare in the production of “antibiotic-free” products.*
10. *that animal production sectors that lack a Code of Practice work with NFAACC to find feasible means of generating appropriate standards.*

11. that the Council of Chief Veterinary Officers (CCVO) advise on means of achieving more uniform recognition of the national Codes of Practice in provincial/territorial animal protection law.

12. that the CCVO, with appropriate consultation, review and recommend options for moving toward the alignment of humane slaughter standards across the country.

13. that producer and extension organizations identify high-quality education/extension resources on animal welfare including animal handling, and that NFAHWC make these readily available, perhaps through a webpage.

14. that all stakeholders increase their efforts at communicating Canada's animal welfare system to a broad public audience.

15. (1) that retail and food service companies continue to be involved in the NFACC process and ensure that their purchasing requirements are well informed and likely to support good animal welfare, (2) that NFACC continue to invite retail and restaurant companies to be involved, and (3) that the Retail Council of Canada promote awareness of the NFACC process to its members.

16. that provincial governments, producer organizations and animal welfare organizations, with the cooperation of scientists, develop educational materials adapted for small-scale (including urban and hobby) animal production, and engage with municipal authorities to promote responsible animal ownership.

17. (1) that national producer organizations in all animal production sectors develop Animal Care Assessment Programs, (2) that this be done following the process established by NFACC as much as possible so as to achieve harmonization, (3) that experiences with Animal Care Assessment Programs be communicated among sectors to allow sharing of successes and challenges, and (4) that the outcomes of assessment programs be reported.

18. that NFAHWC extend its process of reviewing animal welfare and biosecurity in the marketing process, especially for vulnerable groups of animals.

19. that NFACC create awareness of current producer-driven compliance activities and encourage the extension of such programs to other industry sectors and jurisdictions.

20. that the CCVO, with appropriate consultation, review and recommend options to achieve more effective and uniform regulation and enforcement of animal transport.

## 12. Appendix 1. Organizations and abbreviations

***The National Farm Animal Care Council (NFAACC)*** leads the development of Codes of Practice, develops the process for Animal Care Assessment Programs, and provides a forum for open discussion of farm animal welfare issues. It is a multi-stakeholder coordination body whose 27 partner organizations include the national organization for all major sectors of animal production plus related businesses (animal transport, slaughter), animal welfare organizations, the veterinary profession, research and government, together with 21 associate members including restaurant and retail companies, animal health companies, and allied businesses.

***The National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Council (NFAHWC)*** is an advisory body that provides advice to senior levels of government (federal, provincial, territorial) and industry focused on all aspects of farm animal health and welfare, especially to guide the implementation of the National Farmed Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. It has 14 members appointed to provide a wide spectrum of expertise in animal health, human health, animal welfare, animal production and government. Its advice spans animal health surveillance, emerging diseases, antimicrobial resistance and animal welfare, and it has focused especially on topics that require coordination among industry sectors and different levels of government.

***The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)*** enforces the Transportation of Animals Regulations, and the federal Humane Treatment and Slaughter Regulations in federally registered slaughter plants. CFIA is also mandated to ensure the humane killing of animals in the event of disease outbreaks in Canada, and it participates in the development of national and international standards.

***Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)*** promotes a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to addressing animal welfare issues, in part by funding and participating in the development of Codes of Practice, and by providing guidance on issues related to regulation, trade and international coordination.

***The Council of Chief Veterinary Officers of Canada (CCVO)***, consisting of the Chief Veterinary Officer from each federal, provincial and territorial jurisdiction, provides a national forum for intergovernmental discussion of animal health and welfare issues in Canada. It promotes science-based policy on animal health and welfare issues including zoonotic diseases, and provides recommendations on animal health and welfare to senior levels of government and to non-government bodies.

***Humane Canada (formerly the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies)*** is the national federation of SPCAs and humane societies. It promotes communication and cooperation among animal protection NGOs across Canada, including organizations that carry out enforcement of

animal protection law. Humane Canada also represents animal welfare organizations in national matters including the development of standards.

***The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC)*** is an independent, quasi-regulatory organization that oversees the use of animals in science in Canada. It sets standards, provides educational materials, and conducts inspections of scientific facilities. Its standards apply to animals, including farmed animals, used in scientific research and teaching.

***The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)*** provides national leadership in animal welfare by preparing science-informed position statements on animal welfare issues and developing educational tools for veterinarians on issues such as pain management. The CVMA also develops or participates in the development of standards, and provides continuing education in animal welfare for veterinarians.

***The Canadian Animal Health Coalition (CAHC)*** undertakes a range of projects related to farm animal health including emergency management and movement of livestock. It also manages the Canadian Livestock Training Program for truckers.

***Various species-specific veterinary organizations*** provide important guidance, especially on animal care and health practices.

***Producer associations***, both national and provincial, take part in the development of standards, commission and fund research, produce educational materials, and organize meetings and educational events. Some are currently implementing Animal Care Assessment programs.

***Several universities*** conduct research on animal welfare, provide leadership development through courses on animal welfare to agricultural and veterinary undergraduates, and provide in-depth training in animal welfare science and policy at the post-graduate level.

***Provincial Farm Animal Care organizations*** exist in several provinces. They create communication among sectors, hold educational events, and encourage compliance-related activities.

***Provincial and territorial governments*** are the responsible authority for animal welfare within each province or territory. Provincial and most territorial governments have some form of animal protection legislation. Some governments enforce the legislation directly through government staff, and some delegate enforcement, either partly or completely, to the police or to an animal protection agency.